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THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT AND THE RETRACTION OF PARAMOUNTCY  
IN INDIA 1935-1947

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MADELEINE MOËD

Department of History

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## ABSTRACT

The Political Department and the Indian Political Service stand accused of sins of omission and commission. The evidence suggests that they were badly hampered by ill-conceived training procedures, a lack of manpower and above all the incoherent policy of the British government towards the Indian states.

The failure of the 1935 federation Act which formally established the Political Department was not due to princely intransigence inspired by political officers. Between 1935 and 1947 the Political Department embarked on a vigorous programme of combining the resources of the smaller states to strengthen them as viable partners in a new India. Their lack of success in effecting the federation of the states with India in 1947 was not a result of the disinclination of political officers to implement reform as much as their inability to do so. Many princes were also unwilling to sacrifice a measure of sovereignty for efficient government and paramountcy precluded forcing internal reform on the princes.

Paramountcy was never clearly defined and thus its retraction in 1947 took place amidst confusion and misunderstanding on all sides. The Indian Political Service was always treated as secondary to the Indian Civil Service and the states to British India. Britain's emphasis on constitutional change in British India, reflected in the Cripps Mission of 1942, the Cabinet Mission of 1946 and the rush towards independence in 1947 resulted in her inattention to the Political Department and the princes which culminated in the abandonment of both in 1947.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

There are the usual abbreviations such as Vol., ibid and op cit. apart from these the following have been used. For details on the other documents referred to see the bibliography.

WJ	<u>Wavell - The Viceroy's Journal</u>
TP	<u>The Transfer of Power Papers</u>
MB	<u>Mountbatten Papers</u>
H.C. DEB.	Hansard - House of Commons Debates
Cmd	Command Paper

## INTRODUCTION

In the historiography of the British Raj the Indian states occupy a central position, but little has been written on the Political Department which guided, goaded and guarded the states on behalf of the British Crown.

There are of course the autobiographies of former political officers to go on. The best known are A C Lothian's Kingdoms of Yesterday, (1962); E M Forster's Hill of Devi: Letters and Journals While Secretary to the Maharaja of Devi (1965); Sir K Fitze's Twilight of the Maharajas (1956); Sir E Wakefield's Past Imperative: My Life in India 1927-47 (1966); Sir Conrad Corfield's The Princely India I Knew From Reading to Mountbatten (1975) and more recently Lord H Trevelyan's Public and Private (1980). Useful as these works are in providing personal glimpses of a political officer's life, they are not enough for a serious history of the Political Department. In the same category are the popular histories which have appeared; Jan Morris's Pax Britannica (1968; 1978); Charles Allen's Raj - A Scrap-Book of British India (1977) and Plain Tales from the Raj (1975) and L Collins and D Lapierre's Freedom at Midnight (1975). (The latter is scarcely history at all).

What else is available can be categorised into either general histories or works dealing with specific themes. The most commonly cited general histories of the Raj are L Mosely's The Last Days of the British Raj (1961) with which issue is taken in Appendix G of this thesis; H V Hodson's, The Great Divide: Britain India Pakistan (1969); and R J Moore's three specially important works, The Crisis of Indian Unity, (1974); Churchill, Cripps and India (1979) and Escape from

Empire (1983). But every one of these texts touches on the Political Department only in discussion of the states.

An offshoot of the general history is two collections of essays which have chapters on the Indian states; C H Philips and D Wainwright's The Partition of India, Policies and Perspectives 1935-47 (1970), and B R Nanda's Essays in Modern Indian History (1980) but in both these works the detail on the Political Department is also missing.

More specifically, histories of the Indian states themselves, range from the romantic approach of Rosita Forbes' India of the Princes (1939), a frequently cited work which ignores the Political Department, to a more analytical study like A P Nicholson's Scraps of Paper: India's Broken Treaties, Her Princes and the Problem (1930). The latter is a more scholarly work which attempts to cast the Political Department in the role of the evil genius of the Raj. V P Menon's, The Story of the Integration of the Indian States (1956) stands out as a prime example of history written to justify rather than to explain events. Menon deals with the Political Department in some detail but does not question the old facts gleaned from Nicholson. A far more empirical approach is that of U Phadnis, Towards the Integration of the Indian States (1968) which contains much substance on the Political Department. But as a work containing so much useful material it seems to have gone strangely unnoticed by historians. A case in point is Barbara Ramusack, The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire: Dissolution of a Patron-Client System 1914-1939 (1978) whose information on the Political Department is essentially lightweight.



At the end of the 1970's the British records down to 1947 were opened to scholars and from this vantage point S R Ashton produced British Policy towards the Indian States 1905-39 (1982) which contains a detailed, informative and original view of the Political Department. (It is gratifying to note his use of Phadnis). A complementary study is Ian Copland's The British Raj and the Indian Princes published in the same year which features the Political Department prominently but concentrates mainly on the Bombay Political Department up to its amalgamation with the central Department. (The book is obviously an extension of his essay, more limited in scope 'The Other Guardians: Ideology and Performance in the Indian Political Service', in R Jeffrey, People, Princes and the Paramount Power : Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States.) Another essay in Jeffrey is J Manor's "The Demise of the Princely Order: A Reassessment".<sup>1</sup> It is highly critical of the Political Department and has been dealt with in more detail in the thesis. A later published work apparently written in the 1930's is Sir W Barton's The Princes of India (1983). This devotes a fairly balanced but shallow chapter to the relationship between the princes and the Political Department. All these works lack substance on the Political Department and so not one of them serves as a wholly adequate source on the subject.

More useful references on the basic structure, training and recruitment of the Indian Political Service are provided by those books which deal with the Indian Civil Service. Since political officers came originally from either the Army or the Indian Civil Service, these are necessary additions to the subject of the thesis. But even

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1 R Jeffrey, op cit, pp.275-305.

in this category there are only three works of any weight, L S S O'Malley's, The Indian Civil Service 1601-1930 (1931), Sir E Blunt's, The Indian Civil Service (1937) and R Hunt and J Harrison's The District Officer in India (1980). The latter represents a welcome return to the focus on the localities of India, as first explored by the Cambridge historians, J Gallagher, A Seal and G Johnson, ( the best introduction to which is their collection of essays entitled Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870-1940, 1973). There is also a growing number of journal articles on the Indian Civil Service.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, there is one publication which concentrates solely on the Political Department, T C Coen's The Indian Political Service (1971). This has become the basic text for any discussion of the Political Department and deservedly so since it is one of a kind. The book has merit in that it deals exclusively with the recruitment, composition and functions of the Political Department. For a book written within the confines of the available material before the opening of the records in the late 1970's it is remarkably comprehensive. This begs the fascinating question that if Coen was able to write such a work given the limited sources, why has no one managed to capitalise on what is now available?

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2 See T H Beaglehole, 'From Rulers to Servants: the I.C.S. and the British Demission of Power in India', Modern Asian Studies, 11, 2, (1977), pp.237-255; S Epstein, 'District Officers in Decline: The Erosion of British Authority in the Bombay Countryside, 1919 to 1947', Modern Asian Studies, 16, 3, (1982), pp.493-518; A Ewing, 'The Indian Civil Service 1919 - 1924: Service Discontent and the Response in London and Delhi', Modern Asian Studies, 18, 1, (1984), pp. 33-53; D Potter, 'Manpower Shortage and the End of Colonialism: The Case of the Indian Civil Service', Modern Asian Studies, 7, (1973) pp. 47-73.

Coen is not completely alone. Two journal articles: M Fisher's, 'Indirect Rule in the British Empire: The Foundations of the Residency System in India (1763-1858)', in Modern Asian Studies, 18, 1, (1984), and W Murray Hogben, 'An Imperial Dilemma: The Reluctant Indianization of the Indian Political Service', in Modern Asian Studies, 15, 4, (1981) investigate the Political Department and Service but neither takes its examination beyond the 1930's. Since the Political Department was reconstituted in 1937 under the 1935 Federation of India Act there is an urgent need to pick up the story there. This thesis goes back to the origins of the Political Department and traces its development through to 1935, picking up details of training and recruitment. But the essential focus is on the Political Department after 1935, since no one else seems to have taken up the challenge.

The general historiography of British India seems to have taken two directions. On the one hand there are the historians who are beginning to take a much closer look at the underlying forces of the decolonisation of India.<sup>3</sup> An important contribution to the field has been made by the appearance over a period of five years (1978 to 1982) of the twelve volumes of India -The Transfer of Power 1942-47, edited by P N S Mansergh and others. The documents they contain ranging from Viceroy's Conference Papers to private telegrams, taken from a vast number of records, span every aspect of the Raj leading to the British withdrawal in 1947. Without them no study of British India and the Political Department is complete. On the other hand there is the

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3 See B R Tomlinson, The Political Economy of the Raj: 1914-1947, R J Moore, Escape from Empire; R Jeffrey (ed), Asia - The Winning of Independence; and the whole collection of essays in The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, XII, 2, (Jan 1984) - A Special Issue - Perspectives on Imperialism and Decolonisation.

emphasis on locality studies, inspired by the Cambridge historians, as alluded to above. These studies had concentrated on the local roots of the Indian nationalist movement<sup>4</sup> and the development of indigenous industry under British rule and its effects on the Raj.<sup>5</sup> In both areas neither Marxian nor non-Marxian historians hold sway.<sup>6</sup> Broadly speaking, however, it is the latter who have entered into the debate on decolonization while the former take the line that neo-colonialism in the form of the exchange of formal for informal control is a more satisfactory explanation for the contraction of empire.<sup>7</sup>

Either way one factor which David Potter suggests has emerged, is that

an explanation for the end of colonialism is unlikely to be found within the boundaries of the subject country ... One practical conclusion to be drawn from this generalisation is that the area of specialists - those whose perspective is to look within the colony for explanation - have so far been unable to account satisfactorily for political events like the end of colonialism because, quite simply, they haven't been looking in the right place.<sup>8</sup>

Moore echoes this sentiment; "the social background, social attitudes and constitutional theories of British policy-makers in Britain no

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4 See R K Ray, 'Three Interpretations of Indian Nationalism' in B R Nanda (ed), Essays in Modern Indian History; and C A Bayly, The Local Roots of Indian Politics.

5 See for example R Chandavarkar, 'Worker's Politics in the Mill Districts in Bombay between the Wars' in Modern Asian Studies, 15, 3, (1981), pp.603-647.

6 The most recently significant scholar in this field is R F Holland, particularly in European Decolonisation 1918-1981: An Introductory Survey.

7 See for example R Rowthorne, 'Imperialism in the 1970s - Unity or Rivalry', New Left Review, Sept-Oct 1971, pp.31-35.

8 D Potter, op cit, p.73.

less than in India, were important in the devolution of empire".<sup>9</sup>

Add to this list the mechanics of government in maintaining empire and the result is a combination of political and local history which has regrettably been overlooked in the scramble for the 'world-view'. Finberg has suggested that the local historian, "with his feet planted firmly on the ground, has a clearer and truer view, within his limited horizon, than the national historian surveying a vast field from his elevated watch-tower."<sup>10</sup> Political history with its side-bars of administrative, diplomatic and constitutional history must be rescued from its Gibbon and Macaulay reputation and humanised. This thesis is a step towards that, an attempt to fill the gaps left by others who have worked on or neglected the Political Department. "History", stated E H Carr, "is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past".<sup>11</sup> Thus far the history of the Political Department has been unimpressively silent.

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9 Moore, 'Recent Historical Writing on the Modern British Empire and Commonwealth: Later Imperial India' in Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, IV, (1975), p.66.

10 H P R Finberg, 'Local History' in H P R Finberg (ed), Approaches to History, p.114.

11 E H Carr, What is History, p.30.

## CHAPTER 1 - PARAMOUNTCY ITS ORIGINS AND STRUCTURE

The Political Department and paramountcy control in India dated back to the time when the British East India Company, which had established its first trading post at Surat in 1612,<sup>1</sup> watched very carefully the many rivalries which resulted from the gradual disintegration of the Mughal empire over India after 1717. From this multitude of rivalries arose independent states whose number grew and dwindled in accordance with the political circumstances. By 1818 the company had established itself as the supreme power in India. It had also been drawn into the internal politics of warring states and thereby became the master of fortified areas in Bombay, Bengal and Madras.<sup>2</sup> Its influence was ultimately extended over a vast area of India through treaties made with many independent princely states who exchanged the overlordship of the Mughals and Marathas<sup>3</sup> for "the company Bahadur"<sup>4</sup> and British paramountcy.

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1 See A B Keith - A Constitutional History of India 1600 - 1935 and B B Misra - The Central Administration of the East India-Company 1773 - 1834 for details of East India Company rule. Also referred to as the EIC.

See V A Smith (ed P Spear) - The Oxford History of India for details on the Mughal Empire and its demise; also S Ashton - British Policy towards the Indian States 1905 - 39 pp. 8 - 11 for a different aspect of Mughal rule.

Also see R C Majumdar, H C Raychaudhuri & K Datta - An Advanced History of India, p.191 for the history of early India.

2 These were the three Presidencies, as they were designated, and the basis of the provinces of British India.

3 1817 - 18 - last Maratha war, Marathas defeated. The Marathas were a formidable and highly disciplined Hindu people, with a sophisticated government headed by the peshwa or prime minister, and who ruled most of the Deccan and Central India by the late 17th century.

4 I Copland, The British Raj and the Indian Princes, p.40. The term "bahadur" comes from the Hindi word meaning hero or champion. It was used in India to denote a distinguished person and was used as a term of respect.

Yet paramountcy as such seems to have originated in India with the French rather than the British. The Marquis of Dupleix, Governor-General of French India from 1742 to 1754 devised the system of supporting a ruler to the extent that without French military protection the ruler could not maintain his power. The object was to "secure a local Indian authority amenable to himself"<sup>5</sup> so that he could then "dictate policy",<sup>6</sup> which meant in practice the "use of Indian authority to ruin English trade".<sup>7</sup> It was one of Dupleix's military lieutenants, de Bussy,<sup>8</sup> who successfully implemented this policy in Hyderabad and entered into the first treaty of this kind with the Nizam of Hyderabad in about 1752 by using his military force to give the Nizam the throne. According to Political Department records the earliest known treaty between the English Company and an Indian ruler was in 1730. This was a treaty signed with Sawantwadi, a small state in the Bombay presidency. It "established an offensive alliance" against piracy.<sup>9</sup> But Panniker dates the beginning of the subsidiary treaty system "as a method of defence without expenditure"<sup>10</sup> as late as 1765. Generally, until 1813 when French power was finally broken, the company's treaties with native rulers were concluded more in the spirit of equal partnership than dominance.<sup>11</sup>

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5 Smith, op cit, p.461.

6 P Spear, A History of India vol.2, p.80.

7 Ibid.

8 Bussy Castelnau, Charles Patissier, marquis De, joined French East India Company 1736, served under Dupleix at sieges of Madras 1746 and Pondicherry 1748, adviser to Nizam of Hyderabad 1752 - 8.

9 L/PJ/13/552 :f2. Note by the Political Department, 26 July 1943.

10 K M Panniker, Indian States, p.8.

11 L/PJ/13/552 :f2.

During this time the structure of the company changed. Lord North's<sup>12</sup> Regulating Act of 1773<sup>13</sup> reorganized the EIC's affairs both in England and in India. The Act established the post of Governor-General and advisory council in the Bengal Presidency. They had theoretical supremacy over the other two Presidencies and were responsible for declaring war or peace with Indian princes or powers, or negotiating treaties with them.

As British power grew in India treaties now concluded in the period 1814 to 1857 (particularly by Lord Wellesley<sup>14</sup>) included statements of submission by rulers to British supremacy.<sup>15</sup> But even under Wellesley there was no pre-planned policy towards the Indian states and this remained the case until the arrival of Lord Dalhousie,<sup>16</sup> the seventh Governor-General, whose doctrine of lapse<sup>17</sup> angered many rulers but established British paramountcy in India once and for all almost by default.

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12 North, Frederick, second Earl of Guildford; British prime minister 1770-82.

13 P J Marshall, Problems of Empire, p.114. Clause IX, An Act of establishing certain Regulations for the better management of the East India Company, as well in India as in Europe. 13 Geo III, C.63.

14 Wellesley, Richard Colley, Marquis of; Governor-General of India 1797-1805.

15 See Panniker, op cit, p.10 for an example of such a treaty.

16 Ramsay, Sir James Andrew Broun, tenth Earl and first Marquis of Dalhousie; Governor-General of India 1847-1856.

17 The doctrine of lapse allowed for the annexation of states in which there was no direct heir, or because of perceived misgovernment. The Hindu custom of adopting an heir in such cases was ignored. Over 8 independent states were annexed by this policy, including the Kingdom of Oudh in 1846, an action which contributed directly to the Indian Mutiny of 1857.



Such paramountcy, or indirect rule, as a method of government, was never clearly defined by its practitioners nor could it have been as the paramountcy Britain exercised "could not remain static; it had to grow and change according to circumstances."<sup>18</sup> But two eminent British authorities, Sir William Lee-Warner<sup>19</sup> and Harcourt Butler<sup>20</sup> attempted the task of definition. The complexities of paramountcy defeated them both. The former asserted that no clear-cut policy could be devised from the mass of treaties, sanads<sup>21</sup> and engagements and a "body of political practice or usage" had to be 'built up' to accommodate all the aspects of agreements made by the EIC".<sup>22</sup> Butler's attempt at definition arose out of the controversial proceedings of the Indian States Committee in 1928.<sup>23</sup> The Indian states were demanding clarification of paramountcy, arguing that it derived from the original treaties etc., in order to secure themselves against

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18 Ashton, op cit, p.6.

19 Lee-Warner, Sir William; entered Indian Political Service 1867, served in India 1869-95, secretary of Political and Secret Department, India Office, 1895-1903.

20 Butler, Sir Spencer Harcourt; served in India 1890-1901, secretary of the Foreign Department 1907-10, lieutenant-governor Burma 1915-18, lieutenant-governor United Provinces 1918-21, chairman Indian States Committee 1927-9.

21 "Sanads" were unilateral documents issued after the Mutiny by Governor-General Canning to all major rulers, guaranteeing the right of succession by adoption according to Muslim and Hindu law where there was a failure of a direct heir. See A P Nicholson, Scraps of Paper: India's Broken Treaties, Her Princes and the Problem, pp.330-31 for the meaning and effects of sanads.

22 cited in Ashton, op cit, p.7.

23 L/PJ/13/552 :f4. The Indian States Committee, under Butler's chairmanship, was set up in 1927 to determine to what extent, usage, sufferance, and other causes had, in addition to treaties and engagements, affected the relationship between the British government and the states. Leading states had expressly called for an enquiry into their position vis-a-vis the paramount power.

unwarranted and unwanted interference in their affairs by the Political Department.<sup>24</sup> Butler's report became to a large extent the most widely quoted explanation of paramountcy, just concrete enough to sound authoritative but sufficiently abstract to meet any occasion:

The relationship of the Paramount Power with the States is not merely a contractual relationship, resting on treaties made more than a century ago. It is a living, growing relationship shaped by circumstances and policy, resting ... on a mixture of history, theory and modern fact. 25

The crowning statement allowed Britain to model her policy to her needs:

Paramountcy must remain paramount; it must fulfill its obligations; defining or adapting itself according to the shifting necessities of the time and the progressive development of the States... Through paramountcy and paramountcy alone have grown up and flourished these strong benign relations between the Crown and the Princes on which at all times the states rely. On paramountcy and paramountcy alone can the states rely for their preservation through the generations that are to come. Through paramountcy is pushed aside the danger of destruction or annexation. 26

Butler's 'definition' served as the point of reference for all concerned - the Indian states, Britain and the Political Department. Each would in the future alternately respect or reject this definition according to their positions in the circumstances of the Raj. Yet as late as 1943 the term was still creating difficulty precisely because it had not been satisfactorily defined. A note to the India Office enquired whether "the expression '... subject to the general control of the Crown representative'" was an adequate definition of the

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24 See Ashton, op cit, for an analysis of the various policies towards the Indian states.

See pp.12-18 for a discussion of the Political Department per se.

25 Ashton, op cit, p.121.

26 L/PJ/13/552 :f18. Paragraph 57 of the Butler Committee Report, 1929.

functions of paramountcy. The reply was:

the term 'Paramountcy' has not yet been defined; as a matter of fact it is not susceptible to definition. It would seem preferable to substitute the following: '... subject to the exercise of Paramountcy functions by the Crown Representative.' 27

Paramountcy as it was practised in India "stood as the conscious model for later imperial administrators and politicians who wished to extend the Empire without the economic and political costs of direct annexation."<sup>28</sup> India's paramountcy served as the model for Sir Frederick Lugard's<sup>29</sup> policy of indirect rule as implemented in Northern Nigeria.<sup>30</sup>

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27 R/1/1/4036. Note by Wylie to India Office, 29 September 1943.

28 M Fisher, 'Indirect Rule in the British Empire: The Foundations of the Residency System in India 1763-1858'. Modern Asian Studies, 18, 3, (1984), p. 394.

29 Lugard, Frederick John Dealtry, Baron; served in Indian Army 1878, High Commissioner Northern Nigeria 1900, 1906, Governor of Northern and Southern Nigeria 1912-14, Governor-General of Nigeria 1914-19.  
The Concise Dictionary of National Biography 1901-1970, p.423 cites Lugard as having "conspicuously developed system of indirect rule".  
See M Perham, LUGARD. The Years of Adventure, 1858-1898, and LUGARD. The Years of Authority, 1898-1945; R Hyam, Britain's Imperial Century 1815 - 1914, A Study of Empire and Expansion, pp.289-90 for Lugard and indirect rule. Also M Crowder, West Africa Under Colonial Rule, chapter 4; W Baumgart, Imperialism - The Idea and Reality of British and French Colonial Expansion, 1880 -1914.

30 M Crowder, op cit, p.217  
Indirect rule was a system of ... administration which not only relied on the indigenous authorities for local government but was constantly goading them to improvement. The agent for its improvement was the British political officer ... The policy of the Government was that these Chiefs should govern their people, not as independent, but as dependent rulers. The orders of the Government are not conveyed to the people through them, but emanate from them in accordance, where necessary, with instructions received through the Resident.

In India the paramount power controlled all external matters: foreign policy, defence, communication, railways, customs and especially in India, salt production and taxation. All that was left to the ruler was to govern his state in a manner consistent with the well-being of his subjects. In cases of misgovernment he risked deposition by the Crown Representative, and the surrender of his state to the administration of a political officer.

An even closer parallel than Lugard's Nigeria was Malaya<sup>31</sup> which from 1819 to 1867 was administered by the Government of India.<sup>32</sup> It was there that in 1876 the British government defined the functions of a resident as

the giving of influential and responsible advice to the ruler. the Residents are not to interfere more frequently or to a greater extent than is necessary with the minor details of government, but their special objects should be the maintenance of peace and law, the initiation of a sound system of taxation, with the consequent development of the resources of the country and the supervision of the collection of the revenue as to ensure the receipts of funds necessary to carry out the principal engagements of the government and to pay for the cost of the British officers, and whatever establishments may be necessary to support them. 33

As with paramountcy itself, the origins of the residency system that underpinned paramountcy are not easily found. The historian M

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31 See D A Low, 'Lion Rampant', Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, II, 3, (1963-4), pp.235-52 for his comparison of administrations in the British Empire. Also see Baumgart, op cit, for a comparative study of French and British colonisation and their theories of imperialism. See Copland, The British Raj and the Indian Princes, pp. 297-98 for an interesting criticism of Low, and a discussion of Malaya.

32 See W McIntyre, The Imperial Factor in the Tropics and H Miller, The Story of Malaysia for details on Malaya.

33 Miller, op cit, p.126.

Fisher<sup>34</sup> has traced its development from 1764 to 1858 but does not pinpoint its early beginnings with clarity. Useful as his introduction is it does not establish firmly enough the EIC's role in the creation of the IPS. Warren Hastings<sup>35</sup> has been credited with being its author<sup>36</sup> but it seems more likely that it was Robert Clive<sup>37</sup> after the battle of Plassey in 1757 who initiated the practice of maintaining close relations with a prince by posting a resident at his court.<sup>38</sup> Hastings developed the system and traded on princely fears of French incursion to increase the number of residencies.<sup>39</sup> Wellesley added a few more.<sup>40</sup> Fisher identifies the broad trends in the development of the system whose expansion into a diplomatic service seems to have occurred parallel to the consolidation of the company's influence.<sup>41</sup> Company agents were at this early stage only diplomats and had no official status in a state's government. As company control over India advanced its agents gained greater authority, and the

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34 Fisher, op cit.

35 Hastings, Warren; Governor-General of India 1773-85.

36 Misra, op cit, p.90.

37 Clive, Robert, Baron; served in India in various capacities 1774-53, 1775-60, 1765-66, won the famous victory at Plassey against the Nawab of Bengal 1757; Governor of the company's Bengal possessions 1757-60, Governor of Bengal 1765-66.

38 Keith, op cit, p.27.

39 Misra, op cit, p.91. By the time of his departure Hastings had established residencies at Delhi, Gwalior, Hyderabad, Nagpur, Goa, Benares, Lucknow and Poona.

40 Wellesley added Mysore, Travancore, Nepal (abolished then re-established 1816), Indore.

41 Misra, op cit, p.90.

experiments with indirect rather than direct rule<sup>42</sup> culminated in the system of paramountcy which the British Raj used so successfully.

From the residency system the evolution of the bureaucracy which was only formally entitled the Political Department in 1937, is a complex one. The service began as a piecemeal amalgamation to further the Company's trading interests. So the first 'residents' were in practice "commercial agents stationed 'up-country' at courts such as Murshidabad<sup>43</sup> [who] took on diplomatic functions on a more regular basis."<sup>44</sup>

The EIC department which controlled the activities of these agents went through constant changes as the company's fortunes waxed and waned. By 1764 the General Department was unable to deal with the increased administration of affairs in India and business was divided into 'public' and 'secret' matters.<sup>45</sup> Clive amalgamated the two in 1765 but after his departure from India in 1768 the Secret Department was reconstituted.<sup>46</sup> The Regulating Act of 1773 further altered the company's organisation in India.<sup>47</sup> Despite these changes the Secret Department secretary complained of the increase of work and the lack of trained assistants, a recurring feature of this Department. He

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42 See Fisher, op cit, for details.

Also see p.5 for discussion of indirect rule.

43 Murshidabad was made the capital of Bengal in 1705, and was a few miles from the historic battlefield of Plassey.

44 Fisher, op cit, p.399.

45 See Appendix A, diagram (a).

46 Not to be confused with the Secret Select Committee established for the first time in 1756 which functioned separately and for different reasons.

47 See p.4.

recommended the complete separation of the Secret and Public Departments but still under a single secretary. His advice was taken in 1783<sup>48</sup> but with the addition of another secretary and the Secret Department's duties were defined to include:

all subjects of a political nature, all the correspondence with the Presidents and Select Committees at other Presidencies, and also the Councils there on political affairs, all the correspondence with the residents at foreign courts ... all transactions with foreign nations and powers. 49

By then the EIC had become more than a trading concern and as it "gradually took over administration and collection of revenue in the conquered territories, the British government became more interested in Company activities ..."<sup>50</sup> Pitt's<sup>51</sup> India Act of 1784 continued the process begun by Lord North both in liquidating the EIC and re-organising its structure.<sup>52</sup> There is confusion concerning the effects of the clauses of the Act regarding the Secret Department. Coen states that it was divided into three distinct branches: secret, political and foreign, until it became the Foreign Department in 1843.<sup>53</sup> Misra, however, has 1786<sup>54</sup> as the year in which, due to a

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48 Misra, op cit, p.70 states that this was done by an order of the the Governor-General and Council. T C Coen, The Indian Political Service: A Study in Indirect Rule, p.47 says it was done by Government Resolution in the Supreme Court.

49 Misra, op cit, p.70.

50 C C Eldridge, Victorian Imperialism, p.59.

51 Pitt, William; British Prime Minister 1783-1801, 1804-1806.

52 Marshall, op cit, pp.167-70. Also see Eldridge, op cit, pp.59-60 for details of the Act. Most important in this context was the conversion of the post of Governor-General of Bengal to a Crown appointment, making the Governor-General-in-Council the supreme authority in the Company's possessions.

53 Coen, op cit, p.47.

54 The Act of 1784 was amended in 1786.

further increase in work, the secretary of the Secret Department recommended its division into Secret and Political, Secret and Military and Secret and Foreign branches, until 1789 when 'Secret' was dropped.<sup>55</sup> Either way the duties of the political branch were retained.

In 1798 the Secretariat was again remodelled, this time by Lord Wellesley who moulded it into the structure in which it essentially remained. He established four groups of departments of which one was the Secret, Political and Foreign.<sup>56</sup> Further minor changes occurred until in 1834 the Government of India Act terminated the company's trading offices altogether and it became a purely administrative body. The Political, Secret and Judicial Departments were grouped together under two secretaries and then merged with the Foreign branch in 1841 to become part of the newly established Foreign Department in 1843.<sup>57</sup> The duties of this department varied

but essentially (they were) to deal with politics generally, to control relations with foreign states, the princely states in India and frontier and hill tribes, and to control the frontier districts and administration of various territories which came under its jurisdiction. 58

In effect the political branch was doing the same job, merely under a different name. This was to remain so even after the changes of

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55 Misra, op cit, p.70. At this point the Secret and Foreign Department transacted all business with foreign European nations and powers except that dealt with by the Secret and Political Department. In 1783 a separate Foreign Department was established which subsequently transacted all foreign business, under the charge of the Secretary of the Secret Department.

56 Misra, op cit, p.81.

57 D A Low, J C Iltis & M D Wainwright, Government Archives in South Asia - A Guide to National and State Archives in Ceylon, India and Pakistan, p.131. Hereafter Low, Government Archives.

58 Ibid.



government brought about by the Indian Mutiny of 1857. A story of horror and glory which has been told many times,<sup>59</sup> the Mutiny resulted in two important changes for the Indian states.<sup>60</sup> The EIC was finally abolished and India came under the authority of the British government and Crown, administered by a newly created Department of British government, the India Office.

The growth and development of the 'Political Department' in the new dispensation was a complicated process which needs careful unravelling. Although remaining under the guidance of the Foreign Department, the princes were assured by Queen Victoria in words which would echo through the centuries that the Crown respected and would observe "all Treaties and Engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honourable East India Company."<sup>61</sup> Lord Canning,<sup>62</sup> the new Governor-General, confirmed this in his famous statement of 1862 giving the princes a permanent place as part of the British Empire by granting 'sanads' in 1862 which allowed for the perpetual rule of the princes. He also ended the policy of non-intervention by stating "that flagrant mis-government must be prevented or arrested by timely intervention".<sup>63</sup> The new relationship between Crown and princes,

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59 For the Mutiny see C Hibbert, The Great Mutiny; R Hyam, op cit; pp.224-229; Smith, op cit, Book VIII, chapter 9; and for Marx's interpretation see Marx and Engels, The First Indian War of Independence 1857 -1859. Also see E Stokes, The Peasant Armed.

60 Nicholson, op cit, pp.189-202 discusses the role of the Indian states in the Mutiny.

61 L/PJ/13/552 :f3.

62 Canning, Charles John, first Earl; Governor-General of India 1856-62.

63 L/PJ/13/552 :f2, op cit.

although a vital part of the paramountcy process,<sup>64</sup> did little to affect the bureaucracy itself. In practical terms it increased the work load of the political officers.<sup>65</sup>

From 1861 all matters relating to the states were dealt with by the Foreign Department's 'political' branch, until 1882.<sup>66</sup> The reason for this separation of duties would logically seem to be that the administration of India had grown to such proportions that a division of responsibility was necessary. The new Department consisted of four branches, Internal, External, Frontier and General, with the Indian states being supervised by the Internal branch.<sup>67</sup> In 1900 the branches themselves were divided into two sections, A and B, basically a division of work on geographical lines.<sup>68</sup> By 1906 the work of the states was apportioned between Internal A<sup>69</sup> and B.<sup>70</sup> Conditions were still unsatisfactory, despite the constant shifting of work from one branch to another, and in 1910 the Foreign secretary, Harcourt Butler,

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64 See pp.2-8.

65 See p.18 n.94.

66 Low, Government Archives, p.132.

67 See Appendix A, diagram (2)

68 R/1/6/196.

69 'Internal' refers to records which were kept on the 'political' or 'native' states issues as opposed to 'external' (i.e. Persia, Aden, Afghanistan etc.) or foreign affairs which were dealt with by the foreign branch after 1914.

70 R/1/6/196.

Internal A: Ajmer, arms and armament returns, Baroda, Bombay, census, confidential, famine, foreign settlements, Madras, miscellaneous, Mysore, petitions, plague, Punjab, Rajputana, **thagi** and **dakaiti**, titles and salutes.

Internal B: Bengal, Central India, Central provinces, confidential, exhibitions, Hyderabad, Imperial Cadet Corps, Imperial Service Troops, Kashmir (internal), local corps, miscellaneous, petitions, railways, state pensions and United Provinces.

advised another bifurcation of the Department. The problem was alleviated to some extent in 1912 by rationalising the allocation of work by subject rather than by geography.<sup>72</sup>

The outbreak of the first world war in 1914 necessitated closer co-operation between the states and the provinces of British India for administrative purposes, and to this end the Department was bisected into a Foreign and a Political side, each with its own secretary.<sup>73</sup>

The Internal branch gained another subsection, otherwise the number and designation of each division remained the same.<sup>74</sup> The political section retained all matters concerning the Indian states and administered the areas handled by the Foreign and Political Department.<sup>75</sup>

The war had awakened Indian political consciousness to such an extent that in 1917 the British government was forced to assure the Indian people<sup>76</sup> that it intended bringing Indians into a closer association with the government and administration of India. It also declared its commitment to "the eventual self-government of British India."<sup>77</sup>

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72 R/1/6/196.

73 Low, Government Archives, p.134 This accords basically with Coen, op cit, p.47, but his detail is somewhat inaccurate.

74 See Appendix A, diagram (2)

75 Low, Government Archives, p.134. The political branch dealt with these matters through its own General (political), Internal 'C' (honours etc.), Establishment 'A' and 'B' (political), Internal 'A' and 'B', Cypher, Registrar and Library branches.

76 This is the famous Montagu Declaration of 20 August 1917. See Ashton, op cit, pp. 52-53 for discussion on effect of the states.

77 See P G Robb, The Government of India and Reform - Policies towards politics and the constitution 1916-1921, pp.53-116; Moore, Liberalism and Indian Politics 1872-1922, pp.115-121; Smith, op cit, pp.746-47.

But what is important for this thesis are the assurances given to the states as accompanying these pronouncements.

They were promised non-intervention and consultation.<sup>78</sup> The former limited the right of the paramount power to intervene in internal affairs to a minimum, and then only in cases of gross misgovernment. Ashton<sup>79</sup> and to some extent Manor<sup>80</sup> see the former as the cause of all the later problems encountered in dealing with the states because the effect of non-intervention was to isolate the princes even more from the main stream of Indian politics; it "enabled the Princes to live a sheltered existence, fostered within them a false sense of security and encouraged the belief that the paramount power was bound to preserve them under all circumstances."<sup>81</sup> The other promise that of consultation was implemented by the establishment of the Chamber of Princes in 1921<sup>82</sup> which functioned both as an advisory body to the Crown Representative, and a forum for the airing of grievances by the princes.<sup>83</sup>

One reaction to these changes was yet another reorganization of the Foreign and Political Department. Although no radical changes

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78 See L/PJ/13/552 :ff3-4, and Ashton, op cit, pp54-88 for details of the Montford reforms regarding the states.

79 Ashton, op cit.

80 J Manor, The Demise of the Princely Order - a Reassessment, in R Jeffrey, (ed) People, Princes and Paramount Power, pp.306-28.

81 See E G Haines, British Policy and the State of Hyderabad, 1946. Unpublished M A, London University, 1979, p.4.

82 See W L Richter and B Ramusack, The Chamber and the Consultation: Changing Forms of Princely Association in India, Journal of Asian Studies, 3 (1975), pp.755-76.

83 Ibid. The Chamber was never an effective body because the bigger states refused to join.

resulted, Internal 'A', Internal and Establishment merged to become the sole department in charge of states' affairs.<sup>84</sup> Clearly the work being done in the states had begun to take on a new importance, and in 1928 the officiating Political secretary, Bertrand Glancy<sup>85</sup> advised another separation between Political and Foreign matters. Nothing substantial was done<sup>86</sup> although both the Foreign Secretary Sir Denis Bray<sup>87</sup> and the Viceroy Lord Halifax,<sup>88</sup> agreed with Glancy.

It was to be the burden of the Political Department until its dissolution that however pressing the problems of the states and even

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84 Low, Government Archives, p.134. Political: political matters, not specifically classified, relating to the Indian States; Internal: matters in Indian States and administered areas relating to jurisdiction, railways, customs, excise, opium, salt, petitions for mercy, cantonments, military employment, police, extradition, rights of British subjects in Indian States; Establishment: all matters concerning Political and Medical Departments, miscellaneous establishments, appointments and pensions.

85 Glancy, Sir Bertrand; ICS Punjab, Political secretary 1933-37, Political Adviser to the Crown Representative 1938-40, Governor of Punjab 1941-46.

86 Low, Government Archives, p.135. What was done was to set up special committees to deal with specific matters regarding the states. These were; 1) Reforms branch, established 1928, which took over work from both the Political and Internal branches, most importantly in areas relating to reforms and the Chamber of Princes and its Standing committee. 2) In 1929 the Butler Report was published and in 1930 a special branch was created whose brief was to consider the economic and financial relations between the states and British India in the future circumstances of India, to be discussed at the Round Table Conferences of the 1930's. 3) Earthquake branch, established to deal with the Quetta earthquake of 1935. 4) Federation Branch to consider the federal proposals of 1935.

87 Bray, Sir Denis; ICS Punjab 1898, Foreign secretary 1920-30, Member of Council of India 1930-37.

88 Wood, Edward Frederick Lindley, first Earl of Halifax and Baron Irwin; Viceroy of India 1925-31, Secretary of State for war 1935, Lord Privy Seal and leader of House of Lords 1935-37, Foreign secretary 1938-41.

the Department itself, an all-encompassing solution was always a long time in coming. A partial solution was found in 1937 as a result of the Government of India Act of 1935 which had as one of its goals the establishment of a federation between the states and British India.<sup>89</sup> The princes had to be enticed into federation, and with a potentially new constitutional dispensation for the states came a new Political Department to manage it.

In this way the existing Foreign and Political Department went through its final metamorphosis. The Foreign 'side' became the Department of External Affairs of the Government of India. The Political branch became the Political Department, a Crown Department in its own right. It was given an increased secretariat consisting of a Political Secretary, a Deputy Secretary and a Political Adviser<sup>90</sup> to His Excellency the Crown Representative<sup>91</sup> who was the Department's

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89 See Chapter 2, pp.42-52 for discussion on federation.

90 See p.34-35.

91 L/PJ/13/562 file 16.

Crown Representative, defined in the Act as "His Majesty's Representative for the exercise of the functions of the Crown in its relations with the Indian States." The Letters Patent 5 March 1937 for the post of Crown Representative specified that he would hold all powers previously exercised by the Governor-General and Governor-General in Council, with relation to the Indian states, with or without the sanction of the Secretary of State in Council of India, "except powers retained by the Crown". In addition, to the extent that the Crown Representative exercised unlimited powers they would be governed by a further clause (7) and would therefore not need to exceed those powers held by the Governor-General or Governor-General in Council as of 31 March 1937. Clause 7 stated "Our Representative shall in the exercise of the powers and authorities conferred upon him ... comply with any instruction which we may from time to time issue to him ... and shall further be under the general control of, and comply with such particular directions, if any, as may with time to time be given to him by the Secretary of State."

This is important information regarding the limits of the Crown Representative's powers. See chapter 6.

executive head. The Act also specified that the Political Department would have its own corps of civil servants, designated the Indian Political Service,<sup>92</sup> with political agents, political officers and residents and no longer just agents to the Governor-General.<sup>93</sup> Relations with the Indian states were now firmly in the hands of the Political Department.<sup>94</sup>

The development of the IPS from 1858 to 1935 can be studied

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92 So called because it came under the authority of the Crown Representative and not the Government of India.

93 L/P & S/13/562 file 16. This applied in Central India, Rajputana, Western India, Punjab states, Gujerat states, Madras states, Deccan and Eastern States.

94 The basic changes made by the Act were really to incorporate states which had previously been monitored by provincial authorities. In 1925 the Bombay Political Department merged with the Foreign and Political Department. The governments of Orissa and the Central Provinces gave up their authority to the Eastern States Agency. The Madras States Agency replaced the Madras government in relations with Travancore, Cochin and the smaller Madras states in 1921. The larger states in Northern India had since 1921 already been grouped in the Punjab State Agency. States in Western India were grouped under the political charge of three Agents to the Governor-General (now Political Agents) in the Western States, Deccan and Gujerat Agencies. The Simla Hill states and a few minor plain states remained under the control of the Punjab government. In all the remaining states the policy was to substitute a political officer for the provincial officers.

Sir E Blunt, The Indian Civil Service, p.173.

There were seven states with immediate political relations with the Government of India: Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Kashmir Gwalior Bhutan and Sikkim, the last two shared a political officer while the other each had a resident. The other states were grouped into ten agencies: Central India (three political agents), Deccan, Eastern Gujerat (political agents were the residents of Kolhapur and Baroda), Madras, Punjab, Rajputana and Western India (three residents at Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur, two political agents), Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province (five political agents, but linked to the British administration of these areas).

elsewhere.<sup>95</sup> Some explanation of the early period is needed, however, in order to understand the problems encountered after 1935, in particular the recruitment and training of officers in the Political Service.

Since the inception of the Service recruitment of manpower to the political branch had been a problem and despite some sweeping changes 1937 did not usher in a separate recruitment programme. In the days of the EIC there had been no real civil administration and officers serving in a bureaucratic capacity were drawn from the Army. The establishment of a proper bureaucracy in 1784 gave Lord Cornwallis<sup>96</sup> the opportunity to change the administrative staff, and he created the Indian Civil Service:<sup>97</sup> "Men who were running the military and civil side of government - 'military servants' and 'civil servants' of the company - were put on salary."<sup>98</sup>

The political department drew its manpower from both these sources on

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95 See Copland, The British Raj and the Indian Princes, and Copland, 'The Other Guardians: Ideology and Performance in the Indian Political Service' in Jeffrey, op cit (hereafter 'The other Guardians'; Coen, op cit; Ashton, op cit; Blunt, op cit, L S S O'Malley, The Indian Civil Service 1601 - 1930.

96 Cornwallis, Charles, first Marquis and second Earl; Governor-General of India, 1786-93.

97 See Coen, op cit; Blunt, op cit; O'Malley, op cit; Copland, op cit; T H Beaglehole, 'From Rulers to Servants: the I.C.S. and the British Demission of Power in India', Modern Asian Studies, II, 2, (1977), pp. 237-255; A Ewing, 'The Indian Civil Service 1919-1924: Service Discontent and the Responses in London and Delhi', Modern Asian Studies, 18, 1, (1984), pp.33-53; Fisher, op cit; D Potter, 'Manpower Shortage and the End of Colonialism: the Case of the Indian Civil Service', Modern Asian Studies, VII, (1973), pp.47-73 - for details on the ICS itself.

98 T O Lloyd, The British Empire 1558 -1983, p.110.



a 70:30 Army:ICS basis. In 1900 Lord Curzon<sup>99</sup> as Viceroy had attempted to increase the number of civilians to two-thirds, keeping military officers for the frontiers, but had been blocked by the Treasury in London on the grounds that ICS officers were too costly.<sup>100</sup> In any event the service was not attracting enough men from either source<sup>101</sup> as the resident at Jaipur complained as late as 1929: "the traditional sources of political recruitment had of recent years, owing to the internal changes largely dried up."<sup>102</sup> He was referring to the effects of the Montford reforms of 1919 which had resulted in many resignations from men unsure of their future in the new India. The Indian Army was also reluctant to allow its best men to go to a Department it regarded as a "superfluous sideline."<sup>103</sup> In 1925 the Lee Commission Report<sup>104</sup> reconsidered salaries in the Civil Services and recommended the secondment to the IPS from the Indian Police. Its most important recommendation was the indianization of the ICS.<sup>105</sup>

Since the IPS was staffed from the ICS it was consequently badly placed in the race for recruits. In May 1940 the Secretary of State,

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99 Curzon, George Nathaniel, Marquess; Viceroy of India 1899-1905.

100 Coen, op cit, p.36. Military officers were paid lower salaries than ICS officers. See pp. 25-26 for salary details.

101 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.287.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 M L Gwyer & A Appadorai, Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution 1921 -1947, vol. 2, pp.111-113. The Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, chaired by Lord Lee. The report was published in 1924. At that time the ICS had 1 350 officers.

105 See H Murray Hogben, 'An Imperial Dilemma: The Reluctant Indianization of the Indian Political Service', Modern Asian Studies, 15, 4 (1981), pp.751 - 769, for details on indianization.

Lord Zetland<sup>106</sup> approved the proposal that the Crown Representative make fuller use of his power to appoint for selection, and in special cases directly into service, specially qualified ICS officers from the provinces. This decision as stated by Arthur Lothian<sup>107</sup>, a much experienced British official in India, ignored the fact that even had there been any such men in the provinces their superiors were unlikely to release them:<sup>108</sup>

The I.C.S. is recruited on a basis of 50% European and 50% Indian for the whole cadre, although there are provincial variations and it is not practical politics in these days to hope that the percentage of Europeans will be increased. It is therefore quite certain that if the Political Service weighs in with a heavy demand for European I.C.S. officers, which may completely upset the provincial distribution, as it will not be evenly distributed between the provinces, this will raise immediately and acutely the question of Indianising the Political Service to the same extent... Can you drive this point home in the proper quarters? 109

Glancy did as he was asked and the scheme was opposed for just these reasons, in addition to the total ban on recruitment because of the war. The matter was dropped and the IPS continued its European bias.

The princes concurred when consulted on the issue in 1919. They maintained that because their relations were with the British Crown and not the Government of India therefore British officers were more appropriate agents.<sup>110</sup> The British government seized on this attitude of the princes to make it the reason for its strong stance on the

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106 Dundas, Lawrence John Lumley, Marquess of Zetland; Secretary of State for India and Burma, 1935-40.

107 Lothian, Sir Arthur, served in India in various capacities 1911 - 35; special representative of Viceroy in federal discussion 1935 - 37; Resident in Rajputana 1937-42; Resident in Hyderabad 1942-46.

108 Coen, op cit, pp.40-41.

109 Mss. Eur. F144/1 :f32. Lothian to Glancy, 8 March 1938.

matter. Hence by 1933 only twenty-four Indians had been appointed to the service since 1921.<sup>110</sup> The irony is that although the IPS was an extremely exclusive club with restricted membership while at the same time it was also being denied the quality of European men it needed because it was regarded as a second rate service. Lord Linlithgow<sup>111</sup> the Viceroy stated the difference between the IPS and the ICS in 1939:

I am much concerned to ensure that these State issues shall in the changed conditions which face us, no longer be dealt with in isolation in the Political Department and that the British Indian side shall be more closely associated ... it is the contrast of approach of the Civil Servant of ability who has for the last twenty years been in British Indian politics, dealing with various ups and downs of our relations with Congress, and with the development of institutions of a representative character in the provinces, with the civil servant of equal ability who has lived in an entirely different atmosphere and who inherited a different tradition, and who now for the first time hears the sound of the mob outside his own house. <sup>112</sup>

The accusation of being blind to the changes taking place in India and failing to take suitable action stuck. Implied criticism of IPS officers was to plague the Political Department until its disbandment in 1947.

Therefore suggestions for changes in recruitment continued to reach the India Office and in 1941 the Secretary of State, Leo Amery<sup>113</sup> picked up an idea of Zetland's on outside recruitment and suggested it to the Viceroy. Zetland had planned to import senior officials from

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<sup>110</sup> Murray Hogben, op cit, p.755.

<sup>111</sup> Hope, Victor Alexander John, second Marquess of Linlithgow; Viceroy of India 1939-43.

<sup>112</sup> L/P0/20 :ff71-72. Linlithgow to Zetland 28 February 1939.

<sup>113</sup> Amery, Leopold Charles Maurice Stennett; Secretary of State for India and Burma 1940-45.

the British Indian Services<sup>114</sup> to hold selection posts when circumstances appeared to warrant going outside the ranks of the IPS for such promotions.<sup>115</sup> Amery hoped such a scheme would also allow for not only senior officers but those in the middle ranks too. These men would be chosen either for outstanding personal qualification or because the IPS needed temporary strengthening in a high post or at headquarters of a residency. He also reintroduced the issue of Indian personnel, and wanted to fill posts in the IPS from the outside with Indians who had the correct qualifications i.e. who had been with the ICS and had been successful in the provinces. He was quite adamant that Indianisation could only do good: "I also attach importance to there being a continuous flow of recruitment of Indians to the Political Service and I trust that every effort will be made to secure this result."<sup>116</sup> The question is whether this comment to the Viceroy was made on the grounds of abolishing discrimination against Indians in the IPS or because once again the IPS was viewed as being filled with second rate officers. Linlithgow replied that he was fully conversant with Zetland's plan and had already taken care to reserve himself and his successors freedom of action in filling higher posts from whatever source offered the best men. However he was not as certain as Amery that the ICS could still supply them:

I know the I.C.S. cadre in British India pretty well and I have had it constantly under my scrutiny in connection with

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114 These were primarily: Indian Civil Service, Indian Police Service, Indian Forest Service (including Forest Engineers Service), Indian Service of Engineers (comprising an Irrigation Branch and a Roads and Building Branch); Indian Educational Service, Indian Agricultural Service, Indian Veterinary Service and Indian Medical Service (Civil).

115 e.g. men like Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Sir John Thompson.

116 Mss. Eur F125/14 :f94. Amery to Linlithgow 17 April 1941.

appointments to higher post up here, or to acting vacancies in governorships, and given the percentage of Indianisation I do not in the first place judge it to contain anything like the quality of high grade material that it contained 30 years ago. 117

He added that apart from, or perhaps because of this, the provinces were less willing to part with what they had in terms of senior officers and the IPS was finding it difficult to get even junior officers detached for recruitment. He promised to keep the idea in mind until such time as matters improved and until such time as he was certain there was no one suitable for the post in the IPS.

The Viceroy's defence of the IPS continued:

The fact is that we are no longer in the same happy position as we were in the days when one could borrow from the Provinces men like O'Dwyer...Indianisation has gone very far, the demands of a highly specialised cadre are heavier than they were, we have never really made up the lag in recruitment for the I.C.S. during the war of 1914/18, and ... I fear very much that it is not only the Political Service that feels the shortage of really first class men in the senior reaches at present but that it is far more generally true than one cares to contemplate. 118

This is a change from his views of 1939 and a very neat summary of the IPS problem. On Amery's second point indianization, Linlithgow fully agreed with the Secretary of State and explained that he was already making efforts in that direction, the question was under consideration by Wylie.<sup>119</sup> Despite this exchange of views, nothing was done to indianise the IPS to any extent, and the ICS recruitment programme fell away within the next two years until it ended completely in 1945. The Political Department was left to cope as best it could with the

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117 Mss. Eur F125.14 :f94. Linlithgow to Amery 8 July 1941.

118 Ibid.

119 Wylie, Sir Francis Verner, joined IPS 1919; Governor of Central Provinces and Berar 1938-40; Political Adviser 1940-41 and 1943-45; Governor of United Provinces 1945-47.

changing circumstances in India with those men it could find and with little help from the Government of India.

The issues raised by the recruitment debate had their roots in the fact that service in the states had always been regarded by the British government as secondary to British Indian service, and possible recruits were unsure about the "dubious illusory attraction of diplomatic life."<sup>120</sup> The only lure, says Copland, was the romance of palaces and princes, affording the officer a "position of greater dignity",<sup>121</sup> and for military recruits the prospect of higher salary. This is somewhat exaggerated and on the whole political officers were expected to do a great deal of hard work<sup>122</sup> for a relatively small salary.

The salary scale<sup>123</sup> had long been a reason for poor recruitment. In 1873 most political officers could not expect to earn more than Rs1,200 per annum (£109).<sup>124</sup> Prior to the first world war the Bombay agency was notorious for its poor salaries. In 1901 a Bombay official of twenty-five years service could expect the same pay as an assistant political agent, and in 1907 the eight most senior Army officers in the Punjab were getting Rs2,150 - Rs2,700 (£143.6.8 - £180) a month

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120 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p. 289.

121 Ibid.

122 See subsequent chapters.

123 In 1873 Rs11 = ₹1, in 1907 Rs15 = ₹1, in 1939-1947 Rs13 1/3 = ₹1. The exchange rate was statutory, based on the world price of silver against the bullion value of the rupee. For details see B R Tomlinson, The Political Economy of the Raj 1914-1947, pp.65-72; C H Philips, The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858-1947, select documents, pp.567-621 for the development of fiscal policy.

124 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p. 278.

compared to a Bombay political officer's Rs1,800 (£120) for an equivalent rank and years of service.<sup>125</sup> The problem was exacerbated by the fact that salaries were attached to certain posts, not seniority of service and no satisfactory time-scale system was introduced until the 1920's. Nothing effective was done even then and by 1945 political officers were not only not being paid well, neither were they considered for special treatment regarding retirement and pensions. Since they were officially on loan from the ICS and Army theirs did not constitute a Secretary of State's Service and therefore only had a basic pension scale which differentiated between Army and ICS usually to the disadvantage of the Army, causing resentment. An Army officer was required to retire at the age of fifty-five; an ICS officer retired at the end of thirty-five years service which could be at the age of fifty-eight or fifty-nine depending on his age when he passed the entrance examination. Therefore if an ICS political officer remained for the full thirty-five years it often cut out the military officer who had to leave when he was fifty-five however long his service.<sup>126</sup>

Apart from these grievances the incentives were not very good anyway and according to Copland the IPS got just the men it deserved.<sup>127</sup> Behind this comment lies the opprobrium suffered by political officers due to the recruitment procedures and requirements. Copland contends

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<sup>125</sup> Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.288.

<sup>126</sup> Coen, op cit, p. 54. This partly accounts for the fact that of twenty permanent Foreign Secretaries from 1867 to 1947 only two were military officers while all of the ten permanent Political Secretaries since the creation of the post in 1910 were from the ICS. Also see Cmd 7116 April 1947 and Cmd August 1947 for retirement and compensation scales.

<sup>127</sup> Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.289.

that the service was dominated by "upright but slow-thinking and extremely unimaginative officers"<sup>128</sup> which is unfair but not unfounded. Given the training and requirements of the political officers Copland's accusation can be explained.

Qualifications for the IPS did not differ significantly from the ICS, since the IPS officers were largely drawn from the ICS.<sup>129</sup> Their initial training was therefore the same as that of the district officers and their transfer to the Political Service was only allowed after the completion of two years of service.

In fact the training of an ICS candidate often began at school. A study of the school influence is vital to an understanding of the ICS and IPS training and attitudes, but the word limitation on this thesis precludes a thorough examination of it in this work.<sup>130</sup> Suffice it to say that ICS recruits came from the second-rate public schools whose emphasis was on preparing boys for the 'open professions' often allied to their fathers' professions.

It appears then that the ICS at the turn of the century was already less attractive to the elites of British society. In the 1920's, when the men who became the 'old guard' in 1947 were entering the service,

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> See p.20.

<sup>130</sup> C J Dewey, 'The education of a ruling caste: the Indian civil service in the era of competitive examination, English Historical Review, 1973, appendix II, pp.284-285. Dewey has not attempted to list all the schools attended by ICS recruits serving in 1900. Those schools which figured prominently were largely "public or endowed grammar schools" but the majority of recruits came from a small group of schools which "evidently specialized in preparation for the ICS examination". There were other schools who contributed recruits but who espoused a broader academic curriculum.



the recruitment procedure was undergoing a revision.

The Butler Report<sup>131</sup> had agreed that the traditional sources of recruitment were limited and commended the idea of a separate recruitment directly from the English universities.<sup>132</sup> Lord Halifax had supported this suggestion and in 1930 informed the India Office that he and his Council opposed the old system of recruitment by nomination and advised the introduction of the competitive examination for the IPS.<sup>133</sup> The difficulty in this lay in the fact that the ICS competitive examination had no category for the IPS and would have to be amended.<sup>134</sup> Recruits to the ICS<sup>135</sup> came from the

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131 See p.4, n.23.

132 Coen, op cit, p.39, n.4.

133 Coen, op cit, p.40.

134 The examination was set for the Junior Grade of the Administrative Class in the Home Civil Service, the Indian Civil Service and for Eastern Cadetships ( exactly like the ICS but in the colonies of Singapore, Malaya etc.)

135 See Potter, op cit, Ewing, op cit, and Beaglehole, op cit. Also see R K Kelsall, 'Recruitment to the higher civil service: how has the pattern changed' in P Stanworth and A Giddens, Elites and power in British Society, pp.170-74. This is an interesting analysis of the background of recruits to the Civil Service from the 1920's to the 1970's.

universities<sup>136</sup> and were admitted to the service on the results of an annual entrance examination and interview held in London. The examination subjects were not "closely related to the type of work the candidate (would) afterwards have to do",<sup>137</sup> and recruits were expected to learn their work when in India.

Prior to the first world war candidates could take a vast number of subjects<sup>138</sup> but a limit was set in the 1920's. The examination was then framed on the five 'greats' of the Universities, classics, mathematics, history, natural science and modern languages.

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136 These were mainly: Oxford, Cambridge, London, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Dublin. L/S & G/7/287. From 1931 to 1940 the Government of India actually paid a subsidy to certain Universities for the training of ICS probationers.

1931		£.s.d.
<u>Dept.</u>		
<u>Political</u>	- Central Chancery of order of knighthoods	325 - -
<u>Services</u>	- Schools of Oriental Studies	2250 - -
<u>General</u>	- Oxford University (I.C.S. studies)	1800 - -
	Cambridge "	1800 - -
	Trinity College Dublin	300 - -
	Oxford University Indian Institute	250 - -

1932 - the Secretary of State for India decided to reduce the subvention at the School of Oriental Studies due to a financial emergency.

1935 - The Secretary of State for India restored to subvention in full, with a 10% reduction on the 1932 figures.

1937 - The Government of India agreed to pay the subvention to Universities during the academic year 1937-38 at the fully restored rates. The subvention to Trinity was only paid when candidates were undergoing training there.

1939 - The subventions to Oxford, Cambridge and London's SOAS were continued at the existing rate of £1,800 for the academic year 1939-40.

1940 - It was proposed that recruitment to the ICS continue, up to 27 men, and the Treasury agreed to keep the 1939 rate of subvention.

137 Royal Commission on the Civil Service, Examination of Witnesses, 14 November 1929, p.64, question 1114.

138 See Appendix B

Military officers who had received their commission through a university, or showed an ability with languages were favoured candidates. Above all, according to Coen, if a candidate could claim a relationship to a member or retired member of the service he was appointed.<sup>139</sup> Although the system of nomination was only used in the ICS in emergencies, in the IPS it survived. All candidates had to pass the ICS competitive examination, but military candidates could take theirs at Sandhurst after initial training there. They were then required to pass a language examination in the Indian Army.

Training began when the young civilian started his year's probationary service. The question of the age and probationary period of candidates had been hotly debated since 1858, with the age limit varying from a minimum of seventeen to one of twenty-two years; and a maximum of nineteen to twenty-four years. The Lee Report<sup>140</sup> recommended that the age limits be kept at twenty-one to twenty-four with a year of probation, as opposed to the traditional two years because the Commission considered it undesirable that candidates should begin service above the age of twenty-five. The arguments against such an age limit were that at twenty-five the civilian was considered to be less easily trained because his mind had been set into a certain pattern of thinking which did not coincide with actual circumstances in India when he encountered them. His efficiency was impaired by not having responsible duties until a fairly late age and then his retirement was deferred until all his strength had gone. In the end the Commission prevailed.

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139 Coen, op cit, p.36.

140 See p.20, n.104.

During the probationary year the civilian had to study special subjects some of which he would require in his daily routine and some of a more general nature.<sup>122</sup> At the end of this year he had to sit another examination. On arrival in India he usually had to unlearn a great deal for although he had studied a language he found in the locality that he was far from fluent. There were further departmental examinations every six months for two years at the end of which he could transfer to another branch of Service e.g. the Political Department where there was still another examination on the Political Department Manual<sup>123</sup> and one or two history books.

ICS candidates, who having passed their departmental examinations, were unmarried and had fewer than five years service, could apply for posting in the Political Service<sup>124</sup> through their provincial governments, but that did not mean automatic transfer for both provincial Governors and Commanding Officers were unwilling to let the best go. By this time the probationer would have been trained in the provincial service, in "Revenue and Settlement Law and the machinery of Land Records and the Collection of Revenue ... (and) in the administration of the Civil and Criminal Law."<sup>125</sup> He would emerge as

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122 The subjects included various codes and Acts; Indian history; the vernacular of the Province in which he would serve; horseriding and hygiene. There was also a choice between two optional subjects: a classical oriental language or Hindu and Muslim Law (or its Burmese equivalent).

123 See Appendix C - Introduction to the Manual.

124 See Appendix D - Regulations for admission to the Political Department.

125 Sir Francis Pearson, Reminiscences of an Indian Political Officer 1931 - 1947, p.13.

an assistant Magistrate and Collector in a sub-division of a province.<sup>126</sup>

His real training began once he was posted to a state. Sometimes the new political officer was lucky enough to be attached to a residency as the personal assistant to a first class resident for his first six months. He then lived in the residency; enciphered and deciphered telegrams; organized the social side of the ruler's visits and toured extensively to other residencies.<sup>127</sup> From there he would continue his training in other states and other residencies taking on new responsibilities and writing more examinations.

Candidates had to fulfill certain requirements in order to be accepted into the Political Service and reports on their progress were sent at regular intervals. Questions were asked about his popularity with "his brother British officers and in society generally and with the those Natives of India with whom his duties or relations bring him into contact"; did he "show tact in dealing with Natives of India; is he of active habits and proficient in field sports; is he a good, bad, or indifferent horseman", and any other qualities which made him suitable were also stated.<sup>128</sup>

By the twentieth century there was distinct dissatisfaction with procedures of recruitment and training. Much of a political officer's knowledge came from manuals and legal texts. Reforms were difficult

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126 See R Hunt and J Harrison, The District Officer in India 1930 - 1947 for details on provincial service and duties.

127 Coen, op cit, p.46.

128 L/SG/11/115 :f3. Report by Major M L Ferrar, Deputy Commissioner, Lahore 1919-23, on C L Corfield, 16 February 1921.

to implement either because of official complacency or a lack of alternatives.<sup>129</sup> This almost amounted to double dealing with the Political Department for it was under attack for its poor standards yet pleas to raise them were ignored. When Sir Harcourt Butler tried to remove the prejudice against "book learning and intellectual ability"<sup>130</sup> by emphasising the importance of clear and coherent reports, he did so in vain. In the 1930's Sir Francis Wylie headed another reform initiative to reorganise the Political Service because most of its members could not cope with the economic and constitutional problems facing the states. This resulted in a two-pronged proposal:

Firstly, that no officer would be promoted to a first class residency until he had secured at least two years as a secretary to a first class resident. Secondly that junior military officers would be sent to Simla, summer Headquarters of the Government of India, to be trained in secretariat matters.<sup>131</sup>

For officers who were often called on to take over the administration of a state in cases of misgovernment by the ruler this was essential training directly concerned with the job at hand. The 1930's were a time of great potential change in India as the British government tried desperately both to heed the call for Indian independence without actually conceding it. The result was the Act of 1935 but until that was passed political officers were vital to the British

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129 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.286.

130 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.287.

131 Coen, op cit, p.45.

government and consequently warranted some attention.<sup>132</sup> Yet even this attempt to reform the Political Department was criticised by those who regarded secretariat officials as having too narrow an outlook on India and especially matters outside the states. They were accused of being too ready to defend the princes against any attack, verbal or otherwise. A very belated proposal regarding the experience and training required by an IPS officer came from Amery in 1941 when he suggested that such officers go into the provinces now and then to gain experience of provincial administration and developments in order to be able to give the rulers effective advice regarding constitutional change. If provision were to be made for 'post-graduate' study by officers who would in future have this grounding, either a period of deputation to the province or the leave reserve of the service would have to be increased enough to enable some officers to be selected annually for the scheme.<sup>133</sup> The matter seems to have been dropped as there was no further correspondence on it. These attempts to improve the political officer's knowledge and ability were allowed to pass without comment while their critics continued to point the finger of "narrow-mindedness" and "lack of contact with reality" as it existed outside the states.

When Sir Conrad Corfield was promoted to the post of Political Secretary in 1945<sup>134</sup> Linlithgow wrote to Zetland:

I think that his training and attitude - one like Glancy's of very marked sympathy with the States and their point of view - might well be the right one during a period when it

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132 See chapter 2 for details on the 1935 federation discussions.

133 Mss. Eur. F125/14 :f94. Amery to Linlithgow, 17 April 1941.

134 See chapter 4, p.157.

(is) ... important from our point of view to keep the Princely order together, and reasonably happy. 135

Linlithgow was inclined to view Corfield and Lothian as " somewhat conservative"<sup>136</sup> whilst admitting that when it suited the governments of Britain and India this was quite in order and kept the princes from making too many demands since they were unaware of factors which might upset them. In 1931 Glancy noted in this respect that sometimes the intervention in states' affairs by political officers, which was after all largely what the Political Department was for, had to be defended:

It is seldom that discussions of this nature pass without an attack on the political department and a demand for its abolition. There are black sheep in every service and there is no doubt that the Princes have good reason to resent the conduct of some of our officers, though there has been a great improvement in this respect during recent years. The fact is that the officers of the Political Department are the eyes and ears of government; and it is upon their reports and through their agency that government intervenes in cases of gross misrule. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the service should not be popular,... As a matter of fact, good rulers have nothing to fear from the political department and are often indebted to its officers for their valuable assistance. 137

The structure under which the political officer worked was hierarchical, with the India Office and the Secretary of State alternately in command in London. In India the Crown Representative was in charge.<sup>138</sup>

The latter also consulted with his Political Adviser<sup>139</sup> after 1935. The Political Adviser had broadly taken over the functions of the

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135 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.294.

136 Ibid.

137 L/P & S/13/789.

138 See p.17 for definition of Crown Representative.

139 See p.17.



Political secretary with whom Nicholson says, the Viceroy conferred for an hour once a week.<sup>140</sup> The Political Adviser's was a position of some status and during Lord Wavell's<sup>141</sup> Viceroyalty the practice of including the Political Adviser in Executive Council meetings was established. It was at last recognised that when all-India matters affecting the states were under discussion the point of view of the states should also be considered. Not only was this evidence of the growing importance of the states but also of a changed attitude towards the Political Service which had not always been so closely involved with major policy making. Coen has suggested that had this been done earlier the complaint by the states "that their interests were not consulted until a decision, often unwelcome, had been reached..."<sup>142</sup> might have been avoided. Similarly the unease of Lothian in 1943 about the omission of political officers when "grave questions of policy affecting all-India..."<sup>143</sup> such as those on food supply or defence were being discussed might have been obviated. These are examples of the extent to which the advice of the political officers who were responsible, albeit indirectly, for the administration of almost half of India was usually ignored. It was the Political Adviser to whom it fell to rectify this lack of

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140 Nicholson, op cit, p.55.

141 Wavell, Archibald Percival, Viscount of Cyrenaica and of Winchester, raised to an Earldom in 1947; appointed to The Black Watch 1901; served in Anglo-Boer War; Indian Frontier 1908; served in France 1914-16; military attaché with the Russian Army in the Caucasus Oct 1916-June 1917; Egyptian Expeditionary Force 1917-20; Commander-in-Chief, Middle East 1939-41; Commander-in-Chief, India 1941-43; Supreme Commander, South West Pacific Jan-March 1942; A.D.G. to the King 1941-43; Viceroy and Governor-General of India 1943-47.

142 Coen, op cit, p.47f.

143 Mss. Eur F144/5. Lothian to Wylie, 14 October 1943.

communication.

He was also the man to whom all political officers were directly responsible.<sup>144</sup> The primary task of the political officer or resident had evolved into one of advising the ruler but not interfering with the internal government of the state. These duties had changed with time. Clive had required his residents to gain a thorough knowledge of events at court and defeat the influence of French or other hostile interests.<sup>145</sup> In this way the Governor-General could rely on the states as allies in any future disputes with European powers, (an important point after 1782 when Britain lost her American colonies). Wellesley had imparted a far more imperial tone to his residencies by appointing only military officers to vacant posts and Hastings brought the states to heel by giving the residents greater authority in the state government.<sup>146</sup>

As the agencies differed so did the duties of the political agent. Often merely called on to observe and not to interfere, his authority

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144 Coen, op cit, p.20.

Posts in the service were broadly divided into three classes of officers:

a. First-class residents, who received a salary of Rs.4 000 per month, and were entitled the Honourable;

b. Second-class residents, who received a salary of Rs.3 000 per month;

c. Time-scale officers, whose pay rose by annual increments from Rs.500 to Rs.2 250 per month, and who, if European, also drew a small sum known as 'overseas pay'.

These are the salaries in 1947 when Rs.13 1/3 = £1. The approximate equivalent salaries in sterling were respectively: £300, £225, and £37.10 - £168.15.

145 Misra, op cit, p.91.

146 Ibid. He made the resident "all-powerful".

was frequently used to control events.<sup>147</sup> The larger residencies such as Hyderabad or Gwalior conformed most closely to the model of indirect rule<sup>148</sup> but the smaller more backward areas like Kathiawar were similar to the 'non-regulating' provinces of British India. In these cases the Raj acted as an intermediary.<sup>149</sup> For the most part the resident conveyed the wishes of the Political Department to the ruler but his advice was often interpreted by the prince as an order.

In a single state his job was usually easier as he had more frequent access to the ruler;<sup>150</sup> in a larger agency, (Rajputana) personal visits were infrequent, sometimes only annual depending on the distances involved and the difficulty of travelling over rough terrain, like that of Central India. Yet the winter tour was as much a part of the political officer's life as it was the district officer's. It enabled him to keep in contact with events throughout his agency or state unless the prince prevented him.<sup>151</sup>

The resident was also responsible for a great deal of paperwork; much of his time was taken up with correspondence and reports to the

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147 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.283.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.282. In 1922 the resident at Hyderabad was consistently refused an interview with the Nizam. His plea to the Political Department was in vain, they could do nothing. "If a Prince chooses to bury himself in his palace, the Political Agent cannot dig him out, and however hard and untiring he may be in his efforts to cultivate friendly relations, his efforts will not always be crowned with success."

151 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.281. The agent for the Deccan states complained in 1939 that "... the Resident is not asked to visit (public) institutions, and sees little of the town as he is housed in the guest House some distance away; nor is he ever invited to the palace."

Political Department, both weekly and bi-annually.

Outside the actual IPS were numerous officials who were all involved in the states in one way or another and were responsible not to the resident but rather to the central government. One of the more controversial of such outside groups was the Crown Representative's Police. It consisted of one battalion commanded by officers borrowed from the Indian Police or Army, and was stationed in Neemuch in Central India. The force was raised in the early 1940 as a result of unrest which the Congress controlled provinces refused to restrain from spilling over into the states.<sup>152</sup> During the uneasy years of 1945 to 1947 the issue of this force was raised by Congress as being a political weapon used by the central government to preserve the states.<sup>153</sup> However, V P Menon maintains that when the Crown Representative's Police was enlarged and incorporated into the Central Reserve Police it was upon them that law and order depended during the programme of integration.<sup>154</sup>

The issue of the Crown Representative's Police is just one example of how the Political Department and its officers fell between the conflicting interests of the princes and the imperial government. This is what led it to develop a somewhat schizophrenic view of itself; constantly being called upon to defend its actions while being

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152 Coen, op cit, p.58.

153 Apart from this para-military force there were ordinary police in all the Administered areas and nearly every agency had its own. In Hyderabad a large force was amalgamated with the Indian Army early in the twentieth century and stationed at a number of cantonments in the states and under the control of the resident at Hyderabad.

154 V P Menon, The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p.79, n.1.

unable to make the necessary changes which would silence its critics. Ramusack finds fault with the Political Department for not pushing through reforms in the states with greater energy. Their reluctance to do so is attributed to Lord Minto's promise at Udaipur<sup>155</sup> that the princes would not be harrassed. To Ramusack this "response indicates a lack of initiative and interest among political officers. If they had been more receptive to the new lead provided by Irwin, they could have used it as justification for a shift in activity and policy".<sup>156</sup> This comment does not take into account the impact which statements such as Minto's had on the minds of the British government. The Political Department could not, and did not work in isolation but was liable to be called into question by Parliament at any time, especially when it seemed that promises to the princes were not being kept. Throughout the whole structure of the Political Department there is no evidence that it constituted a separate branch of the administration other than in name. Political officers where not able to take matters into their own hands even had they wished to. Equally it has been shown that the IPS was not inferior to the ICS. How could it be if the former resulted from the latter? What inferiority there was existed in the minds of those who ruled them, both in London and in Delhi where the states themselves were of secondary importance. Any failing in the IPS was due to the badly planned programme of training which did not meet the requirements of the Indian states. Criticism of the service should be levelled at

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155 L/PJ/13/552 :f17. Extract from Lord Minto's Speech at Udaipur, 1909. "Our policy is, with rare exception, one of non-interference in the internal affairs of Native States..." (Lord Minto was Viceroy of India from 1905-1910).

156 B Ramusack, The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire: Dissolution of a Patron-Client System 1914-39, p.153, n.29.

individual officers who made mistakes, not at the service as a whole unless the critic cannot find fault with those who designed it and failed to improve it after 1935.

## CHAPTER 2 - FEDERATION AND CO-OPERATION

The Government of India Act of 1935 which formally instituted the Political Department marked a turning point in Britain's relations with India and the states. The motives behind the Act have been called into question by historians<sup>1</sup> and defended by participants.<sup>2</sup> There is little doubt on either side, however, that the failure of one of the principal features of the Act, the establishment of a federation between British India and the Indian states, is its most significant aspect.

For the Political Department the crucial point of the federation scheme was that it depended on the princes for its implementation.<sup>3</sup> Their initial acceptance of federation Wylie has suggested was not because they understood federal government but because they believed federation would free them "from the odious supervision of the Viceroy's political department."<sup>4</sup> By 1939 the princes had rejected federation and with the outbreak of the war negotiations were suspended. The Political Department's views of federation, and its actions between 1935 and 1939 have been cited as one of the reasons

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1 See C Bridge, The Conservative Party and All-India Federation 1927-40, unpublished Ph.D thesis, Flinders University, 1977; Ashton, *op cit*; H V Hodson, The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan; R J Moore, The Crisis of Indian Unity; C H Philips & M D Wainwright (eds), The Partition of India, Policies and Perspectives 1935-47.

2 See L J L Dundas (2nd Marquis of Zetland), Essayez; Halifax, (Earl of), Fulness of Days.

3 The princes were allotted 104 of the 125 seats in the upper house of the federal chamber. For federation to come into operation at least 52 states had to accede and take up their seats. See Ashton, *op cit*, Moore, *op cit*, Hodson, *op cit* and U Phadnis, Towards the Integration of the Indian States 1919-47, for details.

4 Sir Francis Wylie, 'Federal Negotiations in India 1935-9, and After' in Philips & Wainwright, *op cit*, p.520.

for the princes' rejection of federation and therefore its ultimate failure. Later studies of the period<sup>5</sup> have since shown that this is an inadequate explanation of the problem and that the India Office and the British government have a great deal to answer for.

According to Copland the Political Department was distinctly hostile to federation and by 1932<sup>6</sup> this attitude "had hardened into open revolt." He goes on to say that senior officials "from the Viceroy downwards issued private warnings to the chiefs against coming into the scheme, while in public reassuring Whitehall of their efforts to promote it."<sup>7</sup> In conclusion he places the Political Department squarely on the carpet: "... it was the Political Department's permissive policy of *laissez-faire* towards the states after 1909 which enabled the princes to shut their eyes to what was happening in British India."<sup>8</sup> Manor agrees with Copland's version in his discussion of events after the breakdown of federal negotiations, saying simply that it was not only the "inability of the Political Service to serve as an effective force for change" which was the problem, but also, "the unwillingness of many political officers to do so rendered the situation impossible."<sup>9</sup> He uses Copland's arguments to substantiate his statement. Ashton also finds hostility towards

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5 See especially Bridge, *op cit*; Ashton, *op cit*; Moore, The Crisis of Indian Unity; Philips & Wainwright, *op cit*.

6 See Bridge, *op cit*, for the beginnings of federation. The federal initiative dated back to 1930, and federation was discussed at the Round Table Conferences of the 1930's.

7 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.291.

8 Copland, 'The Other Guardians', p.292.

9 Manor, 'The Demise of the Princely Order; A Reassessment', in R Jeffrey (ed), People, Princes and Paramount Power, p.312.



federation within the Political Department, mainly because federation would reduce the role of political officers. The Department was committed to the principle that political officers "should not be made completely redundant".<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately he goes no further and the reconstitution of the Department in 1937<sup>11</sup> alters the matter unless one accepts that the new structure was created solely to help implement federation and nothing more. If that was the case the Political Department survived even if federation did not and there must then be other reasons for its alleged dislike of the scheme.

In all these arguments there lies an element of truth. Understandably the Political Department was concerned about its future and the addition of a Crown Representative to its secretariat in 1937<sup>12</sup> was proof that there were no plans for its immediate dissolution. Federation was not such a threat after all, but the Government of India's method of using political officers in federal negotiations was cause for concern.

In 1935 Arthur Lothian, on secondment as additional Political Secretary in the federation branch of the Political Department, devised a process of negotiating with the princes. It entailed individual political officers approaching the princes with the draft Instrument of Accession, and getting some form of acquiescence to it from them. The India Office, however, preferred lengthy consultations over a draft Instrument of Accession by all concerned before

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10 Ashton, op cit, p.148.

11 See Chapter 1, pp.17-18.

12 See Chapter 1, p.17.

political officers took it back to the princes for their reply.<sup>13</sup> Lothian disliked the latter plan, and emphasised the time factor, but he only differed on the method, not on the personnel.

The new Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, arrived in India in 1936 confident that negotiations were well under way towards persuading the princes to federate. After discussion with the Political Department he found himself presented with the India Office **fait accompli** and was horrified by the programme "which envisaged six-month intervals between each stage of the negotiations".<sup>14</sup> Much to the dismay of Zetland,<sup>15</sup> Linlithgow wanted "to quicken the pace".<sup>16</sup> The India Office did not want there to be any suggestion that they were pressing the princes<sup>17</sup> and Zetland warned Linlithgow not to do too much too fast. The Viceroy however, informed the Political Department that the princes would have only six months to consider the final offer, while all other negotiations would have to be completed in three. When he was told by the Political Department that this was impossible due to the delay caused by endless correspondence between London and India Linlithgow, in agreement with this argument, commented to Zetland in June 1936 that "the energy and experience of even the highest

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13 Ashton, op cit, p.161f.

14 Ibid.

15 Bridge, op cit, p.290. Bridge states that Zetland's caution was due to his feeling that delay would bring down the princes' prices for federating.

16 Bridge, op cit, p.288.

17 The reason for this fear was that the India Office was not happy with the idea of forcing the princes into federation because it had been stated in Parliament that they were to accede voluntarily. Forcing them to come into federation would have caused controversy within the Conservative Party.

officials is absorbed to the detriment of the handling and control of major issues of policy in the disposal or the pursuit of relatively minor side-issues."<sup>18</sup> His plan then was to get negotiations moving faster and he told Zetland that he was sending three emissaries around the states to advise the princes about federation and report back. In this way he discarded the individual approach suggested by Lothian, a move for which he was criticised both then and later. The three men appointed in 1936 were Sir Arthur Lothian, Sir Francis Wylie and Courtenay Latimer,<sup>19</sup> all senior officials of the Political Department.<sup>20</sup> There were two faults in this idea: the emissaries had no power to coerce the states into federation, nor were they to find out whether the princes intended to federate or not. As Zetland explained to Linlithgow once he had approved the idea, they were to be "guide, philosopher and friend" and not "minister plenipotentiaries".<sup>21</sup> Sir Conrad Corfield<sup>21a</sup> has said in his reflections on the situation that it would have been better to have made the approach through the residents and political agents. They were close

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18 Ashton, op cit, p.163, Linlithgow to Zetland, 4 July 1936,

19 Latimer, Sir Courtenay, entered Political Service 1908; Assistant to AGG Central India 1908; Assistant Secretary to the Govt. of India Foreign and Political Department 1909; Census Superintendent NWFP 1910; Assistant Secretary to Chief Commissioner NWFP 193-17; Deputy Commissioner, Dera Ismail Khan 1918-21; Secretary to Chief Commissioner NWFP 1921; Deputy-Secretary to Govt. of India, Foreign and Political Dept. 1923-24; political agent Malakand 1927; Revenue Commissioner NWFP 1929; Resident Kashmir 1931; Agent General Western Indian states 1932; Additional Secretary Political Dept. 1937; Secretary to Crown Representative 1938-40.

20 Ashton, op cit, p.164.  
 Latimer was to tour Baroda, the Gujerat and Deccan states; Wylie was to tour Kashmir, Rajputana and the Punjab states; Lothian was to tour Hyderabad, Mysore, Cochin, Travancore and the Central Indian states.

21 Bridge, op cit, p.289, Zetland to Linlithgow, 25 September 1936.

21a See opposite page.

to the rulers and therefore knew their likely reactions.

Moreover, they were known to be in favour of personal rule in principle, and would not be open to the suspicion of trying to extract more concessions from the rulers than were essential to establish federation. They were also on the spot to deal with particular problems as they arose. 22

As it happened political officers were forced to deal with queries on federation anyway. It has also been said that the number of states to be visited by such a small contingent only added to the delay. Ashton says both these claims are unjustified. According to him Linlithgow's reasons for sending the emissaries was that despite the briefing given to political officers in 1935, they were still woefully ignorant about federation.<sup>23</sup>

But the mission, although keeping federal negotiations under the Viceroy's control, had its disadvantages:

The Rulers and their Dewans, faced with what appeared to them concentrated high level pressure, enlisted constitutional experts from England and even the United States to advise them, with the result that broad policy tended to become lost in detailed legal controversy. 24

This view is confirmed by Corfield. When the rulers had to decide whether to sign or not they asked his advice. They did not want explanation of detail for "the instruments were so legalistic as to be almost incomprehensible. What each wanted to know was whether he was being faithless to the long history, tradition and integrity of his state if he signed."<sup>25</sup> Corfield agreed that federation was the best choice for the states, but "each ruler had to be persuaded of this in

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22 Corfield, op cit, p.92.

23 Ashton, op cit, p.164.

24 Hodson, op cit, p.54.

25 Corfield, op cit, p.93.

the light of his particular circumstances, not in the light of legal constitutional formulae."<sup>26</sup> He considered that if the rulers had been dealt with individually by their political officers, the negotiations would have taken less time and produced better results.<sup>27</sup> It is impossible to prove this, but as it was the mission did what it was told, albeit unsuccessfully.

Linlithgow has been praised for his scheme by his biographers.<sup>28</sup> Wylie's report in particular proved to be useful. His discussions with eleven states showed that "not one had understood the practical effects of Federation"<sup>29</sup> but Wylie had been able to clear up many misconceptions. It was precisely because they had foreseen this that the political agents had wanted to have individual contact with their own rulers. He did admit that there were still genuine grievances and suggested " that they (the Princes) should be reassured by a Government promise to give all States equal terms as far as possible."<sup>30</sup> This was not done.

At the end of February 1937 when the reports were collated they showed detailed and varied grievances of the princes, through which emerged the incontrovertible reluctance to federate.<sup>31</sup> The demands they required to be met before considering federation boiled down to the

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26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 J Glendevon, The Viceroy at Bay, p.44, and G Rizvi, Linlithgow and India, p.61.

29 Glendevon, op cit, p.44.

30 Ibid.

31 See Ashton, op cit, pp.165-168 for details of these demands and the subsequent negotiations over them.

issues of financial rewards for them from the Government of India, and sovereignty. Zetland disliked the idea of giving in to individual demands, which he saw as an attempt at extortion by the larger states which if successful would be copied by all. Linlithgow refused to let the matter lie, considering communication with the princes to be more useful than a refusal to negotiate over details. His attitude says Hodson, was largely influenced by the Political Department which had always been more in touch with the princes;

and in pursuing the accepted imperial policy of upholding the treaty system were experts on the States' special interests and the interests of the Princely order generally, often different from those of British India and especially of its advancing political democracy...As Agents for the Viceroy in negotiations with the States they could not be expected to become hard and unyielding bargainers on behalf of all-India, against the Rulers whom they had advised and protected. The negotiations, in retrospect, seem thus to have had a certain unreality. 32

As it was, once the emissaries had returned to Delhi the political officers were left to deal with uncertain and worried princes. Yet nothing could be achieved until the princes' claims had been settled, and Lothian offered a way of doing just that. His solution was influenced by the results of the 1937 provincial elections in which Congress had the lead.

Congress had lost its patience with what it regarded as anachronistic, autocratic governments in the states. At the Round Table Conferences it had stated that the Congress Party represented the states' peoples as much as it did those in British India. This alarmed the princes who saw their sovereignty disappearing in a Congress ruled India. At the beginning of 1937 Congress incited popular protests in the states

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32 Hodson, op cit, p.55.

calling for "self-determination".<sup>33</sup> The princes had complained to the Political Department and stated vehemently that such activity was a violation of the principles of federation and that they would brook no interference in the internal affairs of their states. Furthermore if Congress thought that administrative reform was a prelude to their joining federation then the federal cause was lost.<sup>34</sup> Moore makes it plain that to see why federation failed it is only necessary to look at Congress activities.<sup>35</sup>

Lothian's plan took all this into account as well as the India Office statement after receiving the emissaries' reports, "that delay was still the best strategy."<sup>36</sup> The India Office view was that Congress actions would frighten the princes into federation. Lothian disagreed. He could see little reason to suppose that the states would revise their opinion of federation. He suggested a piecemeal co-operation with the princes in order to bypass the effects of the Congress victories. Once a large state had been won over in this way he was sure the rest would follow and further delay would only make it more difficult. The plan was put forward by Linlithgow but turned down by Zetland.<sup>37</sup> Despite other attempts by Linlithgow to allow concessions to be made to the princes it was clear by 1938 that federation was a dead letter.

Hodson puts the matter succinctly:

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33 Moore, Crisis of Unity, p.308.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Bridge, op cit, p.293.

37 Ibid.

When I went out to India in 1941, and talked with the Viceroy, we talked about federation and I said ... 'there was a general idea about that the Political Department had badly advised the States and rather frustrated federation; they didn't like it.' He said 'I'm going to let you go to the Political Department and I'll get Wylie to show you all the papers', which he did. I came out thinking that I was completely disillusioned. My previous feeling which was just one I'd gathered from the newspapers and so on was quite disrupted. I didn't see it at all in the general run of things. I saw it much more as excessive haggling and bargaining by the Princes... 38

But Political Department sabotage or princely intransigence are not to blame. The longer the delay the happier the British government:

Hoare was not greatly concerned when it became evident in early 1932 that the princes might not easily enter federation. As the plan itself was negative in intent, he was happy to recall his December 1930 logic: if federation took a long time, nothing would need to be done in the interim... the federal act itself, once on the statute book, was an excuse to leave the problem of the centre alone until the princes agreed in sufficient number for the plan to go ahead... only in 1939, after they had refused, did Hoare panic and wish to expedite federation...(but) the war rendered the federation policy obsolete. 39

The Viceroy made a last ditch attempt.<sup>40</sup> The replies from the states were due in on 1 September 1939, but the advent of the second World War forced Linlithgow to suspend federal negotiations before they had been completed. In defence of this action Hodson explains:

Linlithgow came out hoping to establish federation. He was very disappointed with the behaviour of the Princes. He wanted federation, this was going to be his achievement. He could have knocked them on the head harder. If he'd been a Mountbatten he might have done that between 1937 and 1939. But he wasn't. His main task was to govern. From the outbreak of war, his policies were dominated by the need to keep India sweet and keep India as a great supply base for

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38 Interview with H V Hodson, London, 23 March 1985.

39 Bridge, op cit, pp.305-306.

40 L/PJ/13/552, p.8. Secret Note by the Political Department, 'Relations with the States'.



the war. He did look forward in a speculative kind of way, but he didn't engross himself in the future constitutional problems further than he had to. And he got no guidance really that I know of in this matter from the British Government. 41

From now on Indian affairs were to be dominated by the exigencies of the war.

There was a shift in the British government's policy towards the states once federation failed. The doctrine of 'non-intervention' in the states had now to be rethought. As early as 1936 the Viceroy was writing to Zetland that the princes could not continue to rule arbitrarily without reference to the rights of their subjects and without being reprimanded in some fashion by the political officers whom he felt " have not always taken as firm a line with them as was desirable."<sup>42</sup>

Manor quotes Glancy in this respect, when the latter noted in 1939 that unless forced to by the Viceroy the residents would do nothing to bring about reform in the states, in addition to which they were " .. too ready to find difficulties too insurmountable (sic)..."<sup>43</sup> He has linked this with the policy after 1938 " when the British effort to seek change in princely India developed."<sup>44</sup>

Up until 1938 the states were left to govern themselves with occasional interference by the resident, but only in cases of gross misrule. The gradual sharing of power being introduced in British

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41 Interview with H V Hodson, London, 23 March 1985.

42 Ashton, op cit, p. 175, Linlithgow to Zetland 22 June 1936.

43 Manor, op cit, p.313.

44 Manor, op cit, p.312.

India had had little echo in the states as a whole which remained for the most part, autocratic, although some states such as Mysore were more progressive. In 1938 Zetland underlined British policy towards the states in Parliament, declaring that the rulers would decide what form of government they would adopt. The British government true to its promises of the last eighty years "would neither obstruct constitutional advance which a Ruler proposed to initiate in his State, nor force any Ruler to introduce such reform in his State."<sup>45</sup> British obligations would remain to protect the states against external or internal aggression and to advise the princes on remedying the legitimate grievances of their subjects.

What the Political Department had encouraged was the co-operation between smaller states whose resources and revenues were far too small to support individual administrations. Phadnis explains that between 1933-38 the Government of India had realised that as they stood these small states could not possibly form viable federal units.<sup>46</sup> Although total amalgamation of the Kathiawar and Central Indian states would take time, certain matters were grouped together to be administered jointly.<sup>47</sup> Such 'Unions of states' were therefore already under way before the Viceroy took the bit between his teeth. In January 1939 the resident in Gwalior wrote to Glancy, about them as he felt they

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45 Phadnis, op cit p.124.

46 Phadnis, op cit, p.129.

47 One particular service was the police. If under attack the small states could not defend themselves, nor would the Congress ruled provinces necessarily render assistance, and a joint Police Force maintained by all the states in a group was established.

would "assume a new importance in the near future".<sup>48</sup> Although little had been achieved despite a great deal of talk, the member states were liable to "be obstructive about the advice of Political Officers, which they might not be if they acted individually".<sup>49</sup> Having had experience of group schemes the resident in Gwalior felt "sure that on the whole on all major issues organisations of this kind can be more helpful to the Political Department than obstructive" but in his view few states knew the difference between good and bad constitutional advance.<sup>50</sup> The matter should be referred to the states' organisations or to the political officers. The latter however

might find it difficult for them to give their opinion in the form of a definite and detailed scheme...without assuming responsibilities that may be embarrassing for the Paramount Power, especially when their recommendations are imperfectly understood or only partially enforced. Such schemes also invite criticisms and it is better that they should not be directed exclusively against the Political Department. 51

However the joint administrative schemes did have their advantages and would "at least pave the way for this inevitable reform, and in the meantime afford genuine political support and guidance to individual States at a time when this is so much wanted." <sup>52</sup>

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48 R/1/1/3417.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

It is difficult to reconcile this with Phadnis' example of reform<sup>53</sup> being held back by the Political Department by its strict adherence to the policy that "no State can be relieved of its obligations to the Paramount Power by the fact that the Ruler had taken action calculated to deprive him of the means of ensuring that these obligations are discharged".<sup>54</sup> Phadnis states that this was an effective brake on the introduction of reform because it left the Ruler free not to take action and safe in the knowledge that any popular protest would be quashed by the Paramount Power, thereby curbing such activity in the state however legitimate.<sup>55</sup>

The cause of confusion may have been a memorandum sent out by the Political Department in early 1939 to all the first class residents. They were requested "to ensure that States in your charge do not introduce constitutional changes of any importance without first informing you and giving you an opportunity of tendering any advice which may seem desirable after consultation with ... the Crown Representative."<sup>56</sup> Neighbouring rulers were to be informed of proposed changes in case they had any useful comments or objections. The Chamber of Princes also offered rulers the opportunity to seek expert advice available from the Chamber when considering major

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53 See Phadnis, op cit, p.124.

The incident referred to is the attempt by the Ruler of Aundh to introduce a constitution in his state in 1938 which allowed a Legislative Assembly to dismiss ministers chosen from its members by the ruler and which could also pass any measure which had been rejected by the ruler three times.

54 Ibid.

55 Ashton, op cit, p.176. Ashton uses the same incident to accuse the Political Department of neglecting to advise the ruler when he did wish to introduce reform.

56 L/P & S/13/971. Circular letter from C G Herbert, 24 January 1939.

constitutional changes. Residents were instructed that in such cases they were to encourage the princes to take up this offer.<sup>57</sup> There was no order to the residents to prevent constitutional change, just to ensure that it was wise reform. Manor sees these instructions as making "the reform process hopelessly cumbersome",<sup>58</sup> which it was, but in any dealings with the states caution was the better part of reform.

In March 1939 in his inaugural address to the Chamber of Princes Linlithgow made it plain that reform must be undertaken. He emphasised the importance of smaller states forming joint administrative services with their neighbours,<sup>59</sup> as was already being implemented by the Political Department. Glancy and Zetland approached the issue warily. Constitutional progress and administrative reform were not one and the same; the danger lay in a ruler granting full responsible government and therefore absolving himself of paramountcy obligations.<sup>60</sup> Now the objection was coming from both the Secretary of State and the Political Adviser and the political officer's reluctance to allow too much reform in any state cannot be criticised as being a reluctance to allow any reform at all.

The best guide to Political Department thinking at this time was provided by the Crown Representative. In a lengthy letter to Zetland in July 1939 he takes up the matter of arrangements for advising rulers regarding constitutional change. He and Zetland disagreed on this point while Glancy took Zetland's view. Linlithgow wanted "an

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57 Ibid.

58 Manor, op cit, p.311.

59 Phadnis, op cit, p.130.

60 Ashton, op cit, p.178.

analysis on a comparative basis of various sorts and degrees of constitutional reform, so that if a State should seek our advice, we might be in a position to supply the information asked for."<sup>61</sup> This was only in the case of rulers who asked, no advice would be volunteered to states generally. Advice that was given would not be binding. Glancy and Zetland thought that such a grading process would become known to the states and rulers would feel obliged to take advantage of the facilities "with the result that the responsibility for determining the extent of constitutional advances, a sphere on which... very recent Parliamentary pronouncements have precluded us from embarking, may be shifted to the Paramount Power." A political officer could not decline from giving advice but Glancy felt that they should be extremely cautious and remind rulers that in accordance with the parliamentary statement of 1938<sup>62</sup> it was up to them to decide on reforms.<sup>63</sup>

The Political Department in London was not satisfied with the progress being made in arranging grouping and cooperation, and in some cases felt that political officers were at fault. In a strongly worded internal memorandum Paul Patrick<sup>64</sup> suggested that the Political Department in India be told of London's dissatisfaction. Unwillingness

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61 L/P & S/13/971. Linlithgow to Zetland, 28 July 1939, p.2.

62 See p.52.

63 L/P & S/13/971. Linlithgow to Zetland, 28 June 1939, pp.2-3.

64 Patrick, Sir Paul Joseph; entered service in India Office 1913; Lieut, Indian Army, Reserve of Officers 1916-19; Secretary of the Political Department 1930; Joint Secretary to the British Delegation at the Round Table Conferences 1931 and 1932; Joint Secretary to the Indian States Enquiry Committee 1932; assistant Secretary Political Department 1933; Head of Political Internal Department 1940; Assistant Under-Secretary of State India Office 1941-44;

from rulers in this matter was to be overcome by political officers promoting concrete schemes and saying "that these have been approved by the Crown Representative for adoption".<sup>65</sup> Glancy remarked that "we get no further and can get no further till Political Department draw up detailed schemes and bring strong pressure to bear on individual princes. It may be inadvisable to do this so long as the federation offer is pending - but it may be even more difficult to use paramountcy if federation comes into being."<sup>66</sup>

One thing apparent from this exchange was that Whitehall and Delhi did not always agree, and Patrick's particular concern that no critics of his department came from Parliament is shown by his statement that although "no single scheme may fit all Agencies ... it will be desirable in due course to be in a position to state in Parliament if necessary that specific arrangements for co-operation are in operation in various groups of States."<sup>67</sup> In addition there was no clear distinction between whether political officers or rulers were delaying reform and probably both were at fault. Glancy certainly considered the matter to be less discouraging than Patrick and was seemingly more wary of the Parliamentary ruling on 'no interference'. Grouping schemes needed to be encouraged and the Political Department was certainly open to suggestion.

In October 1939 once federation seemed to have been cancelled, Patrick continued to press for reforms. He was worried that Congress activities in the states might have the effect of causing popular

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65 L/P & S/13/971, Internal Memorandum by Patrick, 31 July 1939, p.5.

66 L/P & S/13/971, note by Glancy, 1 August 1939, p.6.

67 L/P & S/13/971, Internal Memorandum by Patrick, 31 July 1939, p.5.

uprisings. There also appeared to be confusion among political officers as to what they should be doing, since no explicit policy had been given them. Patrick hoped that a "detailed and comprehensive instruction will be given to Political Officers for their guidance as to what they should aim at achieving and what must be left to Darbars."<sup>68</sup> Glancy again disputed this understanding of affairs in India: "The suggestion that Darbars must be kept up to the mark because congress may return to the attack is to put our policy on the lowest footing. Our first motive should be to secure decent administration for State subjects."<sup>69</sup> This is a somewhat ideal view of British policy, and would be refuted by Wylie in later years.<sup>70</sup>

The concluding note on the whole matter was drawn up by the Political Department in London, probably in late 1939 or early 1940. The crucial problem was that of the

increasing difficulty, if not impossibility, of fulfilling the Crown's obligations to maintain individual Rulers' dynasties and protect their States against internal rebellion and external aggression (at any rate in the form of subversive propaganda) when these are economically and otherwise too small to support a form of administration adequate to the subjects' needs under modern conditions, and too feeble to maintain law and order without our constant assistance. <sup>71</sup>

The statistics showed the extent of the difficulty, with the total population of the states being about 80,000,000 and their area covering a third of India. In addition to the major states there were

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68 L/P & S/13/971. Internal Memorandum by Patrick, 4 October 1939, p.2. 'Darbars' were the princes' courts; the officials of the state.

69 L/P & S/13/971. Note by Glancy, 6 October 1939, p.2.

70 See Chapter 4, p.123.

71 L/P & S/13/971. Anonymous memorandum, undated, filed P.Y.1397/40.



some 400 others which could claim to be viable federal units.<sup>72</sup> The general conclusion was that few states were able to support the type of administration common in the British Indian provinces, but this did not preclude co-operation and grouping from benefitting the states' subjects. The Viceroy's opinion that it was only possible to pressure the states when they were being threatened by Congress or other hostile groups seemed valid. All that could be done was to wait for circumstances which favoured further all-India constitutional discussions to concert a plan for effective administration of the smaller states. It was also hoped that a more constructive solution would be presented in the near future.<sup>73</sup>

The main obstacle to reform therefore was not just the individual political officer but the instructions under which he acted, a point which Phadnis makes although somewhat obscurely. It was these that Linlithgow took to task in 1939, "... the policy of abstention from interference pursued for so many years can no longer be defended and must be abandoned."<sup>74</sup> He was unsure of the ability of the Political Department to deal with the new policy, convinced that the men who had princely interests at heart had to be reawakened to the political realities of the time: "We are faced with a radical change in a situation of the first importance, and we may be driven to consider... radical changes in our machinery for dealing with it."<sup>75</sup> Be that as it may, the lack of manpower, for reasons outlined in the previous

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72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 Ashton, op cit, p.176.

75 Glendevon, op cit, p.116.

chapter,<sup>76</sup> soon to be worsened by the demands of war made it a major task to find political officers of sufficient calibre.

The central problem after the failure of federal negotiations was: how to get the states into a central government which would ultimately demand their abdication of sovereignty. The Butler Commission<sup>77</sup> had outlined the situation precisely in saying that in any attempt to remove a prince by popular protest and demand "the Paramount Power would be bound to maintain the rights, privileges and dignity of the Prince; but it would also be bound to suggest such measures as would satisfy this demand **without eliminating the Prince.**"<sup>78</sup>(my italics)

From this emerged a two-sided difficulty, one of which is pinpointed by E R Lumby:

...if these measures went so far as to deprive the prince of some part of his sovereign powers, he might be unable to fulfil his obligations to the Crown and the whole basis of the treaty relationship would be undermined. 79

The second complication arose from the fact that despite this, the Crown Representative was still obliged by virtue of his office, not to allow the princes to be left behind in the political melee. At the time of writing the letter Linlithgow was due to address the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes on 25 January 1940 and had told Glancy to tell them that although federation had been suspended "it is something that is likely to jump up at them at the shortest notice

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76 See Chapter 1, pp.19-26.

77 See Chapter 1, p.4, n.23.

78 E R Lumby, 'British Policy Towards The Indian States, 1940-7', in Philips & Wainwright, op cit, p.97.

79 Lumby, op cit, p.97f.

with increased urgency and insistence."<sup>80</sup>

The Viceroy could not reopen negotiation formally without general consent, but the princes were warned to take another look at the terms offered to them by the federation plan and be prepared to move at a time when decisive action by them was necessary. Linlithgow then raised the crucial issue:

If it comes to that it may be necessary for us to bring much more direct pressure to bear on the States than has in the past been thought wise, if only in their own interests. They are short-sighted, and badly advised, to a degree that may place on us a heavy moral burden if we leave them, in face of circumstances such as those which now confront us, to make up their minds with as marked and as formal an abstention from pressure or advice on our part as has hithertoe (sic) been our policy. <sup>81</sup>

He had raised this point in 1939 but by now was becoming more insistent. By the end of 1940 he had changed his mind. Linlithgow was perspicacious enough to see that British policy had brought federation to a grinding halt and left him in the position in which he found himself in 1940. Therein lay the crux of the matter. The Crown Representative's problems were the Political Department's problems. It depended on which perspective the issue was viewed from, as illustrated by the Viceroy's next point:

So far as any quidpro quo is concerned, Glancy continues to urge upon me the extreme importance of the issue of States' rights. I am not myself able to judge whether or not he overestimates the importance of the matter, but I cannot but pay attention to any proposal backed by his great experience and familiarity with this whole subject, (and although I will not say this to him), I think that you and I, between ourselves, would be well advised so far as we felt practicable to make up our minds whether, in the different conditions of today, we might not do well to go further than

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80 Mss. Eur. F125/9 :ff62-63. Linlithgow to Zetland, 24 January 1940.

81 Ibid.

we have been willing to in the past in the way of guarantee. 82

If the Political Adviser was not to be told of such a decision how then was he to get his officers to stand by it? Linlithgow's plans still focussed on federation which had not yet been discarded as a viable path to Indian independence. All the same merely the hint that Glancy might have been overreacting illuminates clearly the attitude of the Government of India and the India Office to the Political Department 'old-guard'. The states had to be hurried along so that the Government of India and the British government would not find themselves, as far as British India was concerned

confronted by a combination of circumstances which would make an early reversion to Federation as the brief interim stage between the present constitution and Dominion status practicable, but being held up because of these innumerable Princes and the impossibility of getting them, without great delay and a process of bargaining, which will certainly be criticised by British India and may react on the whole settlement, to make up their minds to accept a solution which will undoubtedly clip their wings in certain respects but (will give them) a longer life and a better prospect for the future than they could hope for otherwise. 83

Before Linlithgow received Zetland's reply his address to the Standing Committee was given on January 25. Despite his unease about previous British policy he repeated that any undertakings given to the princes with regard to treaties would be fully honoured and that there was no question on that point. With regards to the immediate future, representatives of British India and the Viceroy were to resume talks. Having successfully eliminated the princes from the conference table he asked them to remember that the decisive factor affecting the

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82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Mss. Eur. D609/19.

constitution and India's future was public opinion at Home. There was no question in the Viceroy's mind of the trend and development of that opinion which undoubtedly fell more and more onto the side of constitutional advance and the increase of democratic institutions.<sup>84</sup> His stand was supported by Zetland in his reply of 26 January. The aim of the British government was federation as soon as possible, but the smaller states could not join as separate members. A permanent solution had to be found before the reopening of federal negotiations after the war. Two methods were possible: either a merger with a British Indian province, or with other states; or a grouping of states under one ruler in a confederation where sovereignty was exercised jointly. Neither of these, he wrote, were approved by political advisers in India. He therefore suggested taking over from rulers completely and administering the areas as one unit under British control.<sup>85</sup> Not only was this scheme impractical it also showed the complete ignorance of the India Office of the impoverished manpower of the Political Department. To ask this of the Department at a time when it was struggling to find enough men to continue ordinary duties in the states was to ask it to spread itself very thin indeed. By this suggestion Zetland showed himself to be completely lacking in an understanding of the circumstances in the Indian states.

At this point it is interesting to compare this view of the states with that of Lieutenant-Colonel G T Fisher, resident for Gwalior who wrote to Glancy in January 1940 that:

there has been a good deal of talk lately about the necessity of States endeavouring to reach the standard of British India; while very little, if anything, has been heard about the advantages of the State system of administration, when

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<sup>85</sup> L/P & S/13/889 :ff149-151, Zetland to Linlithgow, 26 January 1940.

properly applied, as compared to the machinery of Government at work in the British Indian provinces. 86

Fisher spoke from his experience as a political officer and from his conversations with "prominent men of every class"<sup>87</sup> and was altogether convinced that the system of personal rule, at its best, had "advantages and accessibility and flexibility of Government which are not possible to the same extent in larger administrations necessarily more based on rigid principles".<sup>88</sup> The Indian state system he said, was based on "immemorial antiquity, and is a natural and not unhealthy growth in India".<sup>89</sup> At its most efficient it should be supported by the Crown, but if it were to keep up this standard

it must, like all other living things, constantly adapt itself to its surrounding, and (the Crown Representative should say) he looks to his friends the Princes to modernise their institutions by necessary reforms and overhauls, and by cooperative measures when their individual resources are too small. By so doing they will make it possible for the Crown to feel justified in supporting their claims not only to personal honours and privileges which may be held necessary to maintain the dignity of their order, but to the claim that they are the best custodians of the interests of their subjects and the welfare of their States. 90

Fisher was replying to an invitation sent to the residents in early 1940 to submit material for the Viceroy's forthcoming speech to the Chamber of Princes in March. Lothian responded, taking as strong a line as the Viceroy could have wished on the issue of the smaller states.

A major question on which the time seems ripe for a clear

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86 R/1/1/4737. Fisher to Glancy, 21 January 1940.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

declaration of policy is the attitude of the paramount power towards States which are too small to be run properly as self-contained administrative units, and I would suggest that the opportunity of His Excellency's speech might be taken to make it clear that existing arrangements which are incompatible with economic stability and the establishment of modern standards of administration, will have to be modified, by mutual consent where this is necessary, but if this consent is not forthcoming, that the support of the paramount power cannot be expected by those who oppose such revision. 91

Glancy's proposed speech drafted for the Viceroy took a gentler line than Lothian, but nevertheless showed quite clearly on which side of the fence the Political Department stood both on internal reform and federation:

it is His Excellency's hope that the Princes will continue to apply their minds to this vitally important problem, that they will not forget the clear advantages of a United India and the dangers to the country as a whole and to the States in particular should the Princes elect to stand aloof. 92

On the subject of internal reform it was obvious that the Political Department had not neglected their duties:

He (the Viceroy) gratefully acknowledges that many Rulers have of late made earnest endeavours to improve their administrative standards, that various admirable reforms have been introduced and that measures have in many cases been taken to ensure that all legitimate complaints on the part of the State subjects receive due consideration ... That the Crown is not unmindful of its obligations has been shown by the assistance rendered to various States ... by the establishment of the Crown Police Force which is designed to come to the help of the States' Governments... 93

On the last point it seems Glancy was not going to let the efforts of his department go unnoticed. He was more partisan towards the states than the Government of India:

While it is easy enough to understand and to sympathise with

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91 R/1/1/4737, Lothian to Glancy, 5 February 1940.

92 R/1/1/4737, Glancy - Draft Speech, 2 March 1940.

93 Ibid.

the reluctance of individual Rulers to depart in such matters from the strict path of tradition, the spirit of the times makes it essential for them in their own interests to take a longer view. A beginning has been made in the organisation of joint services ... 94

This was both a gentle warning to the princes as well as a hint to the Viceroy that the Political Department had carried out his orders and deserved some praise. The actual speech given by Linlithgow differed only slightly from this draft.

In May 1940 Zetland resigned as Secretary of State when the Government in Britain changed. Winston Churchill<sup>95</sup> succeeded Neville Chamberlain<sup>96</sup> as Prime Minister. Zetland considered Churchill's approach to India vastly different from his own and was doubtful of his inclusion in the new government anyway.<sup>97</sup> Leo Amery became the new Secretary of State for India and in July Linlithgow wrote to him about Zetland's suggestions concerning the smaller states and their place in the wider scheme of Indian independence:

Though the smaller States undoubtedly present many serious difficulties, the problem, as compared with certain other issues, can scarcely be described as vital. It seems wiser to avoid thrusting this problem now into the forefront of the battle... While thoughts are turned to these larger events,

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94 Ibid.

95 Churchill, Winston Leonard Spencer; First Lord of the Admiralty 1911-15; Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster 1915; Minister of Munitions 1917-19; Secretary for War (and Air) 1919-21; Secretary for Colonies 1921-22; Conservative MP 1924-64; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1924-29; left Conservative Shadow Cabinet and opposed concessions to India 1931; First Lord of the Admiralty and member of War Cabinet 1939-40; Prime Minister and Minister of Defense in National government 1940-45; Conservative Prime Minister 1945, 1951-55; Leader of the Opposition 1945-51.

96 Chamberlain, Neville; Director of National Service 1917; Post-Master General 1922-23; Paymaster General 1923; Minister of Health 1923, 1924-29, 1931; Chancellor of the Exchequer 1923-24' 1931-37; Prime Minister 1937-40; Lord President of Council 1940.

97 Glendevon, op cit, p.170.



the minor States have ceased for the time being to attract the political attention which for a period at any rate was turned on them and which may in part have been responsible for Zetland's letter.(98) ... I would still hesitate in war conditions and at a time when the larger constitutional questions are postponed by common consent till after the conclusion of hostilities to embark upon far reaching changes in the present relations with the Crown and the Rulers of the minor States ... on the plan we now follow, we are not inactive in our preliminary measures which if successful ... should make the problem less difficult to handle when at a later stage the question of fitting these States into the pattern of a unified and federated India comes up for reconsideration ... we would be well advised for the present to carry on as we are doing and avoid large changes for which there is no immediate occasion. 99

Gone is the insistence on radical reform in the states and the desire to take the princes to task for inaction. Gone too is the emphasis on the importance of the states as an element of Indian unity, now they were relegated to the backstage while British India took precedence. Linlithgow wanted to continue the policy of absorption of small states into larger ones, or the combination of states into one administrative group, and so it was. His Political Secretary, Sir Courtenay Latimer, noted in August that he fully agreed with the Viceroy, and would personally "deprecate any attempt to force the pace in the treatment of the States, whether large or small."<sup>100</sup> He recognised that some changes were necessary, taking into account the present attitude in British India, but

the Crown's undertakings to maintain States' territorial integrity and the continuance of their dynasties cannot be brushed aside merely because their popularity and revenue are, judged by the standards of a British Indian Province, insignificant. 101

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98 See, p.64, n.85.

99 L/P&S/13/889 :ff 144; 146, Linlithgow to Amery 28 July 1940.

100 L/P & S/13/889 :f140, note by Latimer, 30 August 1940.

101 Ibid.

The Political Department remained true to form as illustrated by Latimer's remarks. Even Amery, replying to Linlithgow on 1 September, felt that the Viceroy was taking too firm a stand. Although in agreement with the general principle of Linlithgow's plan, Amery reminded him to keep in mind the question of how the states would be fitted into an independent India.<sup>102</sup> This was the recurring question, as unanswerable in 1940 as it would be in 1947 and behind which the Political Department argued for fair and just treatment of the states above and beyond the complexities of British India.

The war, however, cast a new light on the position of the states, and consequently the reform work taking place in them. Linlithgow's realisation of this change was expressed in December,

any action taken in regard to the smaller States should command the greatest measure of assent that it is possible for us to secure of (sic) the more important Rulers, and that is of course, particularly true at a time such as the present when the support of the States is of such value as has been readily given for the prosecution of the war ... 103

All the same the princes were not to be allowed to avoid administrative difficulties and their resolution. Linlithgow thought this very important and had been assured by the Political Department that political officers were constantly reminded to urge the rulers to take action.<sup>104</sup> They

set themselves to impress on smaller States the special need for providing organised means to enable their people to bring their grievances against the administration to notice, to assist in obtaining experts, and to foster co-operative schemes. 105

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102 L/P & S/13/889. Amery to Linlithgow, 1 September 1940.

103 L/P & S/13/889 :ff 98-100. Linlithgow to Amery, 11 December 1940.

104 Ibid.

105 L/P & J/13/552. p.11.

In addition the Political Department designated an officer to investigate the feasibility of bringing the very small states, more like estates, in the Kathiawar and Gujerat agencies under the direct administration of the large neighbouring states of Western India. The Shattock Report, which was a report on the future of the smaller states and estates of Gujerat and Kathiawar,<sup>106</sup> was published in November 1940 and provided "an elaborate scheme for the attachment of some 450 non-jurisdictional or semi-jurisdictional units, with a revenue of less than 1 lakh, to a few larger States".<sup>107</sup> The Report was scrutinised by the Political Department and only brought into effect in 1943.

With regard to the grouping taking place anyway, those princes who co-operated concerning the police and judiciary did so with the motive more of protecting themselves against any renewal of Congress attack than anything else.<sup>108</sup> Although co-operative grouping was largely hampered by the war, it continued throughout, causing a great deal of controversy and bitterness on both sides. Political officers found themselves in the middle between a reluctant princely order and an equally determined Whitehall.

Linlithgow in his address to the Chamber of Princes in March 1941 praised the princes very highly for their war efforts. The residents'

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106 A Report on the future of the Smaller States and Estates of Gujerat and Kathiawar 1 November 1940, by J S H Shattock, ICS Bengal 1931, Political Service 1939-1947. Kathiawar was composed of over 200 states, comprising the Western states agency, only 14 of which were large enough to be salute states and many of which were nothing more than estates. Gujerat was much the same, and was situated south of Kathiawar.

107 L/P & J/13/552, p.11

108 Ashton, op cit, p.181.

letters of the time nearly all included references to this and it is clear that the Viceroy was under no illusions that the princes were important allies and must be appreciated as such. He did not allow the opportunity to slip past to encourage greater efforts in administrative reform however:

The mighty conflict in which we are now engaged must inevitably have reactions of profound importance on all countries and not least on India herself. We are fighting for the cause of human freedom ...In India your Highnesses, representative of innumerable famous Ruling Houses, the inheritors of a great tradition of service, of an authority that has come down to you through long ages, need no reminder from me of the importance of taking all possible measures to safeguard that priceless heritage, to continue to deserve the reverence of your subjects, and to strengthen and buttress the foundations upon which it rests. For this is a time of changing ideas and of new political conceptions, and the importance of taking such measures, and taking them in time, needs no emphasis from me. 109

The previous suggestions made by the Political Department in this respect also needed to be remembered:

These suggestions have been welcomed by many Princes, and steps are being taken to adopt them in many parts of India, with visible, although not as yet spectacular, results. I do not propose to repeat these suggestions ... save to say once more that union and co-operation are the foundation and the source of strength. But to your Highnesses and to the Princely order I would make one earnest appeal, an appeal to which I know I can look with confidence for ready response. That appeal is that you should not allow yourselves or your advisers to be diverted by any considerations of a personal character for ensuring that where co-operation is necessary it shall take a form which no reasonable critic can assail on the ground that it is half-hearted. Such co-operation must ... involve sacrifices - it must involve some surrender or ... some pooling of cherished sovereignty... 110

The Viceroy was much less confident in May:

I shall be agreeably surprised if on the really important business of joint services, etc. we get the response for which I would like to hope! They are first class at

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109 R/1/1/4749; ff 18-21. Address to the Chamber of Princes 17 March 1941.

110 Ibid.

obstructing when confronted with something which they do not want to have to do! 111

Strangely enough the Political Department had been saying this from the beginning. It reported on the progress and effectiveness of grouping in the same month, confirming Linlithgow's fears:

The present Viceroy ... has done his utmost to impress upon the Rulers the importance of 'collective security' through combining the appropriate administrative services of separate states. So far, however, this doctrine has yielded as little result in the states as it did in the field of defence in the Europe of recent years. No ruler will willingly sink a portion of his separate sovereignty in a joint stock concern. Rulers who are neighbours seem particularly prone to mutual jealousy and suspicion, often increased by communal divergence. Vested interests in the official class are banded against reduction of posts. Court flatterers warn petty monarchs of the risk of parting with one jot of their autonomy. 112

The most telling evidence both of the Political Department's activity and its attitudes is revealed by Wylie's<sup>113</sup> report on his tour of the Eastern states agency in 1941. The resident of the Orissa states, Lieutenant-Colonel L E Barton, was responsible for forty-two states: nine under direct management and eight in which financial restrictions had been imposed on the rulers. The area covered 66,000 square miles with a total population of eight million people. Many of the states near Calcutta were experiencing problems with their mines and factories, problems outside the experience of the ordinary political officer. To this end experts had to be borrowed from the provinces. Wylie was concerned about how much the political officers intervened

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111 R/1/1/4749. Linlithgow to Amery, 27 May 1941.

112 Cited in Ashton, *op cit*, p.182, 'The Future of the Indian States in relation to Constitutional Developments'.

113 Sir Francis Wylie became the Political Adviser in 1940 when Sir Bertrand Glancy was transferred to the Governorship of Bengal.

in the states if they lacked the adequate experience:

There is much more interference in these two Agencies than elsewhere in the Political Department - due to the policy pursued prior to 1933 by the Provincial Governments concerned - and where we interfere so drastically we should try to be right and not make mistakes. 114

The value of this report is that it indicates what sort of reforms the Political Department regarded as vital, and the curbing of the ruler's expenses was definitely one,

I impressed upon the Resident and his officers ... the urgent need for advising Rulers in season and out of season to cut their personal expenditure by the earliest date possible to the minimum figure on which they can maintain their position and dignity ... this business of the privy purse is a matter in which, in the case of the smaller States at any rate, we simply cannot afford to let up as regards the constant tendering of advice. It is useless to preach to these small Rulers about improving their administrations when it is transparently clear that unless the Rulers cut themselves to the bone there is no spare money available for the purpose ... 115

Wylie had pinpointed the exact issue on which the rulers were most sensitive and with which the political officers would have the most difficulty. Yet his argument was valid; it was all very well demanding change and then expecting the ruler to deprive himself of luxury in order to achieve it. He was not averse to criticising his own Department's responsibility for this state of affairs:

We shall in my private view have to look to our own conduct as well. Throughout my tour I stayed in States' Guest Houses, used State cars etc. etc. All these things cost a good deal of money and a Ruler with an income of a couple of lakhs of rupees a year has none to spare. 116

Co-operation had extended as far as the establishment of a joint police force, but Wylie was not altogether happy with the reasons for such a force, and in this he was probably airing the view of many of

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114 R/1/1/3684. Note on tour of Eastern states agency 1941.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

the political officers, a view which would find its staunchest supporter in Sir Conrad Corfield when he became the Political Adviser in 1945.<sup>117</sup> At issue was the question of who exactly was responsible for the safety of the states? The Political Department's answer was the paramount power. Wylie reported that the joint police force in the Eastern states agency consisted of seventeen platoons which in his judgement was quite enough if the force was only supposed to be a substitute for the Armed Police Reserve maintained by the individual states. The resident and his officers apparently thought the force was there, to some extent, to do the job of the paramount power in intervening when disturbances erupted in individual states. Wylie thought otherwise:

If we had any thought of this at all in our minds when we set up the force then I think that we were wrong to charge the whole cost of it to the States. The Paramount Power is responsible for implementing its promises of protection ... 118

All that these states had to give was the extra cost of sending in troops when they were needed. He was adamant that the matter should be clarified, whether the states were paying for something which the Paramount Power should provide and pay for.

Wylie's argument in this instance is a smaller version of the whole charade of British policy towards the states in which both the Political Department and the princes played supporting roles. Internal reform or external protection both hinged on the basic relationship between the British Crown and the states: the treaties and engagements which bound the British government to guarantee the princes' internal autonomy. This in turn caused the conflict between

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<sup>117</sup> See Chapter 6, pp.244-47.

<sup>118</sup> R/1/1/3684. Note on tour of Eastern states agency 1941.

how far Britain could go in demanding reform without affecting such autonomy while still ensuring the safety of both prince and people.

Long after the states had disappeared into the amalgam of the new India Sir Conrad Corfield answered the questions being asked by the Political Department's critics concerning the early war years. The British government's attitude to the states he said, was,

unfortunately also supported by the attractions of 'old world' India to Viceroys and Governors, weary of administration and often ignorant of the East. ... the policy which should have been encouraged by action was relegated to the influence of advice... What Viceroy could bear to refuse an invitation to shoot tigers in Alwar, within such easy reach of Delhi? Especially when the invitation came from a Ruler who was known to be a personal friend of the Secretary of State, a brilliant speaker and a leader amongst the Princes. What political officer in these circumstances would be inclined to point out the villages which had been expropriated, the roads which had been closed and the fields which remained uncultivated in order to provide the playground of this sport? 119

He gave a few more vivid examples of the same, ending with perhaps the most alarming,

... the State of Datia in Central India where so many foundation stones had been laid by visiting potentates, without the addition of any school, hospital or dispensary to obscure their lonely grandeur, that His Highness accepted the sarcastic suggestion of his local political officer to use them for paving a palace courtyard. In the circumstances it was not perhaps surprising that a political officer who let sleeping dogs lie was often credited with great tact! 120

Perhaps the most pertinent summary was made in 1951 by Stewart Fraser<sup>121</sup> that,

there was inconsistency in the views held, or at least

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119 Mss. Eur. D850/3, p.2f.

120 Ibid.

121 Fraser, Sir Denholme De Montalte Stuart; varied career in Indian states 1901-35; political agent Malwa 1935, 1937; officiating resident Central India 1938; resident Kashmir 1938; resident Mysore 1941; political A.D.C. to Secretary of State 1945.



practised, by the highest authorities about the relative rights and obligations of the Paramount Power and the Indian Princes. In consequence the Political Department .... and its officers were often handicapped by the lack of continuity in their policy in dealing with the Princes - a price we paid for the honour of having the Viceroy instead of a Member of Council as the head of the Department. 122

The Government of India Act had almost run its course, but it was neither the Political Department nor the princes who had prevented its implementation, but the British government. The fact that the Act created the Political Department, and enhanced its status meant that Britain had no intention of destroying the Political Service in the short term and therefore had no plans for a federation in the near future either. The link between the federation and the Political Department, both written into the same Act, is hard to ignore. At the same time Britain declared, in a Parliamentary statement in 1938, that she would not force reform onto the princes. It is not true to say that this relieved the Political Department of its responsibility towards urging some reform in the states. Between 1933 and 1939 it was already involved in grouping and co-operation schemes. Clearly the Political Department was on the side of reform and the feeling that perhaps wise princely rule was better than confused democracy was not a rejection of reform. In many ways the larger progressive states were in a better position to adapt to change than the communally divided British Indian provinces precisely because a constitutional monarchy could absorb and effect change more easily. There is no doubt that Congress agitation in the states prevented the princes from federating. It also hampered the reform process taking place by scaring the princes into obduracy.

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122 Mss. Eur. F125/16. Fraser to Lothian 14 October 1951.

Within the British government and the Government of India reform in the states would seem to have been linked to political activity in Britain. Pressure there meant pressure on the Political Department but when it eased off at home, as happened in 1940, the Viceroy decided to do the same in India. Again the link here is obvious. In the meanwhile the Political Department was continuing to press for reform in the states as the Shattock Report shows, for why else would it have been commissioned?

Blaming the Political Department is too easy. There are many strands in the threads of federation and reform and political officers could not weave the tapestry alone. Perhaps they might have done so but the arrival in India in 1942 of Sir Stafford Cripps<sup>123</sup> effectively proved that inconsistency was to be the order of the day.

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123 Cripps, Sir Stafford; Solicitor-General 1930-1; Lord Privy Seal, Leader of the House of Commons 1942; at Churchill's insistence he resigned from the War Cabinet 22 November 1942 and accepted a minor Cabinet post; Minister of Aircraft Production 1943; President of the Board of Trade 1946; Minister of Economic Affairs, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

### CHAPTER 3 - CRIPPS AND CONFUSION

At the beginning of 1942 Britain's main concern was the progress of the war. Japan had entered the arena in December 1941 and this brought the United States in on the side of the Allies. In January India's eastern borders were under threat by the Japanese invasions of Singapore and Burma,<sup>1</sup> which made India's part in the war effort a vital necessity.<sup>2</sup> The Congress Party was the main obstacle to India's war effort, partly due to Gandhi's<sup>3</sup> pacifist philosophy but more importantly because it was considered to be a war "for imperialist ends"<sup>4</sup> to which India had been committed without the consent of her people. There was little to choose between German and British imperialism, and Congress would not take part in the fight unless

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1 P Turnbull, Battle of the Box, pp.124, 126, 130; G Evans & A Brett-James, Imphal, p.347.

Indian states' forces were instrumental in the defeat of the Japanese and the reconquest of Burma. They were the 3rd Gwalior Lancers, the Horsed Wing of the 3rd Gwalior Lancers ISF, the 1st Bihar Regiment (infantry), the 2nd Baroda Regiment ISF, the 1st Tripura Rifles ISF and the 1st Patiala Regiment. (I owe this reference to Professor L Lanham of Rhodes University, Grahamstown).

2 377 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 29 January 1942 cols. 967 - 68.

During the debate on the Motion of Confidence in the House of Commons in January 1942 Sir P. Harris stated that India had not played "her rightful part in this war". It was up to the Prime Minister "to hold out the hand of friendship and offer political equality to the Indian people at this critical stage in the war, when their help in the Pacific and elsewhere would make such a profound difference to the success of the war."

3 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand, known as Mahatma (Great Soul): (1869-1948), studied law in England 1888-91; matriculated at London University 1891; practising barrister in India 1891-93; practised law in South Africa, where he conceived and applied the strategy of passive resistance or 'satyagraha' 1891-1914; stretcher bearer in the Indian Ambulance Corps during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902; returned to India 1915; active member, sometime leader and inspiration of the Indian National Congress, popular prophet of the non-co-operation movement in India to 1947; assassinated in Delhi 1948.

4 Hodson, op cit, p.78.

India was given immediate self-government and a freely elected National government.<sup>5</sup> This implied the control of India's defences. At the same time the Muslim League demanded that any constitutional changes should recognise the right of the Muslim as an independent entity within India, and that nothing should be done without their consent.<sup>6</sup> Britain's response was the August Offer of 1940 which promised some form of responsible government to Indians during the war, the right to frame their own constitution after the war, and Dominion status.<sup>7</sup> Congress refused the offer and directed Gandhi to begin a civil disobedience campaign in protest.

Finally in March 1942 Prime Minister Churchill took the decisive step. He announced that the Cabinet had agreed upon Indian policy, and that he was sending to India Sir Stafford Cripps, who had recently returned from Moscow where he had been a popular and successful ambassador for Britain. The purpose of the Cripps Mission, as it came to be known, was to explain

to the 'leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people' the British Government's proposals for India's attainment of full self-government after the war, and to express in person that Government's desire that, on the basis of the proposals, those leaders should at once and effectively participate 'in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations' for the defence of India and the prosecution of the world war efforts as a whole. 8

Coupland has pointed out that the mission was not solely for the purpose of bringing India into the war. India was already involved in

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5 Cmd. 6196, pp.5-6.

6 Cmd. 6169, pp.7-8.

7 Statement of United Kingdom Government policy, 8 August 1940. Known as the 'August Offer'.

8 R Coupland, The Cripps Mission, p.11.

recruitment, fighting and industrial war production. But India was not "at war" in the same way that the Allies were.<sup>9</sup>

The draft plan which Cripps took with him to India had largely been of his own making, with the approval of the War Cabinet. It offered to India Dominion status after the end of the war, with a constitution framed by representatives of all the peoples of India. In the interim the British government invited the participation of the Indian leaders in the organisation of the country for the war; but the British Government retained full control over defence and the military. It was upon this last item that the Cripps Mission faltered and finally failed, for Congress rejected any sort of interim government which excluded the direction by Indians of the defence of India.

Although the Mission did not succeed in either its short or long term objectives, it has been seen as the turning point of British policy in India. The British government had offered independence after the war and whatever else happened it could not rescind that offer. The many subsequent analyses of the Cripps Mission have focussed closely on the repercussion on British Indian constitutional progress, but there is little on the states, save the bald facts of the Draft

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9 Coupland, op cit, pp.12-13.

Declaration.<sup>10</sup> This is perhaps because very little changed for the states constitutionally. They were willing to co-operate with Cripps as long as he could assure them that the granting of independence would not threaten their sovereignty and the integrity of their borders. The importance of the Cripps Mission was not the effect it had on the states at the time, for it almost ignored them, but the welter of questions it raised about general British policy towards them. In calming the princes' fears over independence Cripps sometimes exceeded the limits of his authority. What he personally thought he had already expounded in 1939, after a purely private visit to India, in an interview with the Nizam of Hyderabad which he made plain was his unbiased and independent view. It is revealing all the same for he expressed much the same ideas during and after his Mission. If there were to be Dominion status for British India, he stated, the states would have to be considered; at which time Britain could grant more powers to the leading princes regarding their internal affairs. These men and their ancestors had always assisted the British government in times of need and could therefore be called "the bulwark of the Indian Empire."<sup>11</sup> In this way the British government could show its appreciation for their loyal services and

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10 Draft Declaration for discussion with Indian Leaders, 30 March 1942, Cmd. 6350.

(b) Provision shall be made as set out below, for the participation of the Indian States in the constitution-making body...

c (ii) Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements, so far as this may be required in the situation.

(d) Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of the representatives of British India as a whole, and in the same powers as the British Indian members.

11 Mss. Eur. D609/19, pp24 -28.

reward them; a purely verbal thank you was not solid enough. The princes would be dissatisfied and even "outsiders" would think that Britain had used the princes when she had to and when the crisis was over had recompensed them with "empty phrases or the conferment of orders or raising the salute of Guns."<sup>12</sup> Ironically Mountbatten did precisely this in 1947 as a version of the stick and carrot method of persuasion. Yet the princes should be warned, Cripps told the Nizam, that they could not live as they had half a century previously, leading a life of luxury and allowing the administration of their states to deteriorate, leaving their subjects to suffer from misrule and neglect.<sup>13</sup>

In 1942 Cripps declared these sentiments publicly. During his stay in India the Lord Privy Seal met with individual princes as well as a Delegation from the Chamber of Princes.<sup>14</sup> He did not have any discussions with the Political Department at all. His assurances to the princes concerned the British government's adherence to its treaty obligations and the unalterable status of paramountcy. These seemingly satisfactory replies were thrown back at him in an interview with Gandhi;<sup>15</sup> Congress would not tolerate autocratic regimes continuing under British protection with the right to call in British troops to enforce their rule.<sup>16</sup> Cripps' reply was that he was sure

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12 Ibid.

13 Mss. Eur. D609/19, pp.24-28.

14 TP Vol.I, p.487. Interview with the Jam Saheb and the Maharajah of Bikaner, 26 March 1942.

15 TP, Vol.I, pp.510-11. Interview with the delegation of the Chamber of Princes, 28 March 1942.

16 TP, Vol.1, pp.498-99. Interview with Mahatma Gandhi, 27 March 1942.

that it would be the object of the British administration to encourage the States in the direction of a greater amount of democratic government in order that they might more easily associate themselves with British India. 17

This assertion would be directly contradicted by the Secretary of State in later months. 18

On his return to England Cripps followed up this remark in a speech to the House of Commons on 28 April, obviously with this and the recent Congress objections<sup>19</sup> in mind:

Since Congress has for many years now interested itself in the Indian States and has declared that in any new constitution these people, as distinct from their autocratic rulers, must have a say. They therefore protested, not against the Indian States coming into the constitution-making authority, but against their representatives being nominated by the rulers and not elected by the people. Unfortunately, in my view, representative institutions have not yet developed in the great majority of the Indian States, which must be dealt with as they are if they are to be brought into the constitution-making authority. That participation, I believe, almost everyone desires, including indeed most of the States' rulers themselves. 20

Having covered himself adequately concerning Congress' dislike of the states as undemocratic units, Cripps went on to make the faux-pas of

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17 Ibid.

18 See pp.88-89.

19 Cmd. 6350. Resolution of the Congress Working Committee, issued 11 April 1942.

The complete ignoring of ninety millions of people in the Indian States, and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their Ruler, is a negation both of democracy and self-determination. While the representation of an Indian States in the constitution making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the States have no voice in choosing those representatives, nor are they to be consulted at any stage while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken. Such States may in many ways become barriers to the growth of Indian freedom, enclaves where foreign authority still prevails, and where the possibility of maintaining foreign-armed forces has been stated to be a likely contingency and a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the States as well as the rest of India...

20 379 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 28 April 1942, cols.834-5.



his career, embarrassing the British government both in India and at home:

His Majesty's Government would be only too glad to see as rapid a development of suitable representative institutions as is possible in all the Indian States, and if by the time a constitution-making body came to be chosen there was machinery in the States by which popular representatives could be chosen, His Majesty's Government would be only too pleased. Already, ... a small beginning has been made in some States by more enlightened rulers and their Diwans, (sic) and I am certain this House would wish the British Administration in India to do all it can to encourage and expedite that development. 21

Although the significant point may have slipped by the House and the speaker, the India Office, the Political Department and the princes grasped it: paramountcy powers precluded just the sort of encouragement Cripps was promoting. In the defence of the states the Paramount Power was entitled to intervene in internal affairs when a princely ruler threatened to become oppressive rather than benevolent. It did not have the right "to call upon the Rulers to keep pace with constitutional changes in British India."<sup>22</sup> The Political Department's objections to Cripps' statement followed the traditional interpretation of the treaties with the princes, however inaccurate that interpretation may have been.

What the Lord Privy Seal had said was considered to be a violation of the neutrality afforded the states regarding constitutional changes as frequently expressed by the British government.<sup>23</sup> The Paramount Power was still obliged to prevent pressure being exerted on the Durbars from outside the state, to change the form of government

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21 Ibid.

22 L/P&J/13/552, p.12.

23 Ibid.

within the states.

The princes took up the issue forcibly in June 1942 when the Jam Saheb,<sup>24</sup> Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, wrote to Sir Henry Craik,<sup>25</sup> the Political Adviser, requesting specific answers to some very pointed questions. The letter did not come as a surprise to the India Office, nor the Crown Representative who was quite conversant with princely unease over the Cripps declaration as a whole.<sup>26</sup> In spite of this the official mind continued to trouble itself with past policy.<sup>27</sup> Even in May Amery was reiterating<sup>28</sup> the suggestion that British policy should be directed towards strengthening the weaker

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24 Maharaja Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes 1937 - 1944; Representative of India - War Cabinet and Pacific War Cabinet, London 1942 - 43; Pro-Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes 1945 - 47.

25 Craik, Sir Henry Duffield, Settlement Officer, Sessions Judge and Secretary to Government, in Home Department of Government of India 1919-22; Chief Secretary, Punjab 1922-27; Commissioner 1927; Member Punjab Executive Council 1930-34; Home Member of Governor-General's Executive Council 1934-38; Governor of Punjab 1938-41; Political Adviser 1941-43.

26 TP, Vol. II, p.123. Linlithgow to Amery 25 May 1942 with reference to a previous letter dated 14 April 1942. "His Highness of Bikaner ... was full of indignation against the treatment of the States during the course of the Cripps' negotiations here... He took particular exception to Cripps' general attitude that the Congress and the League are the only elements in India that really matter: to the absence in his published "document" of any references to the States treaty rights and his apparent readiness to scrap such rights..."

27 379 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 28 April 1942, col.852. The debate on the Cripps' Mission in April 1942 revealed Parliamentary views on this matter. Mr MacDonal, suggesting that the India Office should merge with the Dominions Office to show British sincerity towards India, stated that: "The India Office mind has been a retrogressive one, to most of us for a long time... It has almost been a fossilised one for a long while, and it is not the kind of mind to judge in matters of this kind." He was referring to recent events in India.

28 Amery had previously written a memorandum on the subject on 16 May 1941.

states in order to put them in a better position to withstand the pressures following from the political developments in British India.

He was still uncertain of the rate of progress being made in the administrative grouping in states and urged the Viceroy to accelerate it. With a casual disregard for the implications of Cripps' Commons' speech, the Secretary of State assured Linlithgow,

that the present time offers a particularly favourable opportunity for pressing on with the improvement of State administrations. The States have had full warning that we mean business and ... it is surely the case that reforms can be pressed the more conveniently when they are not an obvious response to Congress agitation and when the States must be increasingly conscious of their reliance on the protection of the Paramount Power? I should hope too that the more intelligent Rulers are more than ever conscious, particularly since the Cripps Mission, that the interests of the States are bound up with putting their houses in order against the growing weight of public criticism of personal rule.

But that pressure, and sustained pressure, will be needed with the great majority of Rulers I have no doubt... we must bear in mind the risk of antagonising the one undeniable loyal element in India, ... 29

He restated this opinion the same day but in another letter, this time more strongly:

We may well be approaching a period in Indian affairs when we shall have to go all out in support of those who are with us as well as in suppression of those who are against us. 30

This was an odd comment coming from one of the protagonists of democracy in India. Unfortunately for Amery the reaction of the princes to the Cripps Mission was not as he had foreseen. On the contrary the Cripps Mission made them suspicious of British motives, aware that in the final analysis there lay the distinct possibility that they would be abandoned by the British government in the interest of British India.

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29 TP, Vol.II, pp.136-8. Amery to Linlithgow, 27 May 1942.

30 TP, Vol.II, p.139. Amery to Linlithgow, 27 May 1942.

The Jam Saheb's letter was an attempt to get clarification on four major issues including Cripps' Commons Statement. The Chancellor firmly declared that not only had Cripps been "misinformed" on this matter, but also that it was "in conflict with the unequivocal declaration ... made ... by his Excellency the Viceroy "<sup>31</sup> to the Chamber of Princes in 1939.<sup>32</sup> He supported his argument with statistics of reforms which had been brought about in various states, concluding with the fact that states which represented "more than half of our total population have recently reviewed and enlarged the scope of association of their subjects with their administration."<sup>33</sup> Consequently, he explained, the princes were perturbed both by Cripps' statement and the "omission of any reference to the Crown's Treaty obligations to states in the Draft Declaration ... "<sup>34</sup> He felt confident, however, that the British government would lose no time in reassuring the princes that these errors would by no means alter the relationship between the Crown and the states as expressed on numerous occasions by its monarchs and representatives.<sup>35</sup>

This letter was forwarded to Amery,<sup>36</sup> yet he wrote to Linlithgow in

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31 See Chapter 2 p.53. The Parliamentary statement of 1938 is a better reflection of British policy. See Chapter 2, p.52.

32 TP, Vol.II, pp.164-73. Jam Saheb to Sir Henry Craik, 1 June 1942.

33 Ibid.

34 TP, Vol.II, p.171, op cit.

35 TP, Vol.II, p.167, op cit.

36 TP Vol.II, p.258. On 23 June Linlithgow wrote to Amery: "You will by now have had ... the memorandum submitted by the Jam Saheb... (which was) (sent to you by the bag of 26th May) ..." But the memorandum is dated 1 June. Dr Stephen Ashton at the India Office Library and Records confirms the date of the memorandum as 1 June 1942 and can offer no solution to the mysterious discrepancy.

early June that to his way of thinking most of what Cripps had said over and beyond the actual Draft Declaration would have to be ignored and may even have to be reversed by a definite statement by either himself or Linlithgow, in order to assure the princes that the British government would not go back on its treaty obligations.<sup>37</sup> It seemed that the ferment created by Cripps could easily be settled; then Amery went on to presume that all these concessions to princely anxiety

mean that we are entitled both to insist on the Princes putting their houses in order, and on getting the major Princes to agree with us that the tidying up and if necessary liquidation of the impossible small units is in their interest. 38

The lengthy correspondence which follows, right up until January 1943 when the reply to the Jam Saheb was finally sent, is an example of the indecision over policy towards the states evident at the highest levels. Not only does Amery eventually come around in a complete circle, but it is also apparent that he and the Viceroy did not always agree on how the matter should be handled. The Viceroy's views on the situation are expressed by Sir Kenneth Fitze,<sup>39</sup> his Private Secretary, in a letter to the India Office in late June. Linlithgow had written to Amery two days previously, agreeing with the notion that the princes must not be antagonised as they were valuable allies.<sup>40</sup> Fitze, commenting on Cripps' Commons speech, declared

It is impossible to reconcile this statement with the earlier declaration of policy by His Majesty's Government... There

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37 TP, Vol.II, pp.197-200. Amery to Linlithgow, 10 June 1942.

38 Ibid.

39 Fitze, Sir Kenneth Samuel, ICS, Indian Political Service Central provinces 1911; Secretary to the Crown Representative 1940 - 44; Advisor to the Secretary of State for India 1944 - 47.

40 TP, Vol.II, pp.258-60. Linlithgow to Amery, 23 June 1942.

thus exists a direct discrepancy in a matter of cardinal importance, which, in His Excellency's opinion, requires elucidation at the earliest possible opportunity, since, if the view expressed by the Lord Privy Seal is to be interpreted as the considered view of His Majesty's Government as now constituted, our existing policy in regard to constitutional reforms in States stands in need of radical revision. 41

This firm opinion did not reach the India Office until a month later by which time the Viceroy had written again to Amery. It is here that he states exactly the difficulty over the whole issue:

I particularly regret this (Cripps upsetting the Princes) at a time when I am anxious to press on with reforms in the States as rapidly as possible consistent with not hurting the Princes so hard as to disturb their war effort ... 42

At this stage of the proceedings the attitude that Cripps had been in the wrong and the princes in the right held good. Not for long. In a surprising turn-around Amery solved the whole problem so concisely explained by Linlithgow by changing the meaning of Cripps' statement. If Cripps' words could be interpreted in another way there would be no need to placate the princes. As it was Amery was against making any kind of public announcement in this regard in case it was seen as an attempt by the British government to change its policy.<sup>43</sup>

I think Chancellor reads too much into Lord Privy Seal's remarks. He takes "representative institutions" as necessarily synonymous with "democratic system of government". Sir S. Cripps did not disguise his own personal view that ideally representatives of States in constitutional body should be "popular representatives". But he also made it clear that H.M.G. recognise that they must deal with matters as they are, and that what is hoped for is the development of a system of representative constitutions that is suitable. Sir S. Cripps remarks are therefore not

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41 TP, Vol.II, p.269. Fitze to Patrick, 25 June 1942.  
Received 27 July 1942.

42 TP, Vol.II, p.295. Linlithgow to Amery, 30 June 1942.

43 TP, Vol.II, p.896, Indian States: Request by Chamber of Princes for Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India, 4 September 1942.

inconsistent with what we have consistently urged upon Princes in their own interest in regard to internal reforms. For instance in your speech to an informal meeting of Princes on 13th March, 1939, when referring to the establishment of methods and institutions by which the subject may express his wants you added "and the more closely these arrangements approximate to **representative institutions**, the more effective". The phrase need not therefore alarm the Chancellor... Whatever the ultimate outcome may be there is nothing in Lord Privy Seal's word to indicate a change of policy by H.M.G. in regard to abstention from the imposition on States of **constitutional** reform...

...I feel it is essential in interests of States themselves that introduction of administrative reforms generally ... should be pressed forward and that impetus created by yourself and Wylie should be maintained... 44

Once this reinterpretation was established the British government was well within its rights to push on with internal reform. Although Amery could have been merely thinking aloud in this letter it cannot be so lightly dismissed. That this was to be his line of decision is substantiated by his letter to Cripps in September, in which he encloses a copy of the War Cabinet Paper reiterating just what had been in the letter to Linlithgow, now official. To Cripps he commented with obvious self-satisfaction:

I think you will find that it gives nothing away that matters, while preserving an air of sweet reasonableness; and I hope that you will agree that there is no need for a discussion of it in Cabinet. I feel myself that, considering the trouble you took to see the Princes and talk things over with them - and considering the assurances you gave them - they have shown themselves unnecessarily touchy. 45

The rather "sophisticated"<sup>46</sup> argument which Amery put forward explained that 'suitable representative institutions did not "necessarily mean the imposition of democracy" but rather

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44 TP, Vol.II, p.714, Amery to Linlithgow, 15/16 August 1942.

45 TP, Vol.II, p.891. Amery to Cripps, 3 September 1942.

46 TP, Vol.II, pp.895-6. War Cabinet Paper, Statement of Policy, 4 September 1942.

"administrative reforms" which would give the states' subjects a means of expressing grievances or needs which could then be remedied.<sup>47</sup> The rulers were therefore still free to decide on their own **constitutional** changes without pressure from the British government. Amery's proposed course of action was

the continuance of intensification, so far as this can be done without alienating the more important Rulers, of our present policy of bringing the States into line with modern administrative standards. 48

There was general agreement over this, both from the Cabinet and the Viceroy, although Amery was not altogether happy with the Cabinet's decisions. He wrote to Linlithgow in November that

... the long delayed business of the reply to be given to the Jam Saheb's letter. The matter has rather swung backward and forward as it seems to me, for the Cabinet's proposed short text so over-emphasised the position of the Princes - except in the one particular of the reference to Cripps and internal reforms... 49

The official reply, amended slightly by the Cabinet, was based very largely on the memorandum Amery had prepared for them and the gist of which he had sent to Linlithgow.<sup>50</sup> It was sent to the Chancellor in early January 1943. In fact Amery had proved himself to be a wily politician, for although his explanation of Cripps' statement was plausible, Cripps had actually used the words 'democratic government' when talking to Gandhi.<sup>51</sup> No amount of reinterpretation can alter that. It had taken a good six months for the Jam Saheb's questions to

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47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 TP, Vol.II, pp.311-12. Amery to Linlithgow, 27 November 1942.

50 See p.90, n.44.

51 See p.82, n.16.



be resolved, a long time indeed considering the end result merely echoed all previous policy. That one letter could generate such a lengthy thought process illuminates the fact that the British Government had to ponder long and hard over its policies towards the states before deciding in the end to make no change at all.

The importance of Cripps' speech is the repercussions it had on the Political Department, both in 1942 and later in 1947. The Jam Saheb's letter had raised an important problem with which the Political Department would have to deal at a later stage, that of the defence of the states, given British withdrawal from India, but this had no immediate effect on the work of Political officers in 1942.<sup>52</sup>

In September 1942 Cripps himself wrote a memorandum for the Cabinet regarding the proposed reply to the Jam Saheb. In it he effectively refutes the argument Amery was finally to send, and restates his original views on interference within the States:

I should very much regret any phrasing which might be construed into a modification of the policy as regards the development of representative institutions in the Indian States which I explained on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the House of Commons on the 28th April...The words I then used were agreed to beforehand by the Secretary of State for India. It is true that we cannot, consistently with our treaty obligations, **impose** democratic constitutions on the Indian States, but for their sakes as well as our own we ought to do all we can to encourage them towards democratic institutions. We are constantly saying that we are fighting for democracy which means a great deal more than administrative improvements...At the same time we should, in my opinion, pursue an active policy of persuasion towards the democratisation of the Indian States under constitutional Princes. 53

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52 See Chapter 6, pp.244-247.

53 TP, Vol.III, pp.4-5. Indian States: Request by Chamber of Princes for Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government: Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal, 21 September 1942.

It is clear that there was some disagreement over the terms 'democracy' and 'representative institutions' as evidenced by Amery's eventual solution to the problem. The India Office was not quite so sure that he was correct. In an undated note commenting on Cripps' memorandum, this is made more than clear.<sup>54</sup> The significance of the India Office note is that it has direct implications for the Political Department's later contention that Cripps' attitude was incorrect, as was Amery's. To begin with Cripps' speech had not been approved by the Secretary of State,<sup>55</sup> rather he had let it pass "subject to substitution of the word 'representative' for 'democratic'. It was thus precisely on the basis of **not** saying more than we had said before that Secretary of State agreed."<sup>56</sup> All the same what was finally said was **not** what Cripps had actually intended. Furthermore, as the India Office pointed out, it was not correct to differentiate between encouragement and force, for merely a public statement in which the princes were 'advised' or 'encouraged' was usually construed by them as meaning 'ordered'.<sup>57</sup> The circuitous reasoning used by Amery to see another interpretation reflects the inescapable logic of the Jam Saheb's letter which the British government had somehow to deny. With regard to the Paramount Power's right to intervene in the

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54 L/P & S/998 :f359-360a.

55 TP, Vol.1, p.866, Amery to Linlithgow, 26 April 1942. This was also noted in a letter from Amery to Linlithgow: "The India Debate is happily over ... Cripps' original speech contained several matters which worried me, e.g. his obsession with the idea that all relations with the Crown would cease in the case of Princes adhering to the Union, ... But after some discussion he took them out ..."

56 L/P&S/998/f:359.

57 Ibid. This was not the case in many instances. See Chapter 2, pp.55-56.

internal government of the states by virtue of its treaty obligations, it only extended as far as insisting strongly on the minimum of administrative reform consistent with resolving discontent among the state subjects, or misrule. Further than that, although larger reforms might follow, the Paramount Power could not impose any form of government.<sup>58</sup> The Political Department were quite well aware of this point. A Political Department report on the latest constitutional and administrative reforms, dated 1 January 1936 to 15 July 1941 stated

In regard to Constitutional developments, the policy of the Paramount Power has been clearly laid down and repeated in recent declarations in Parliament. It is for the Ruler himself to decide what form of constitution is best suited to the needs of his subjects and the Crown Representative and his officers refrain from offering advice in this respect unless they are invited to do so. Several Indian States already possess highly developed Constitutions, and the general tendency is to advance in a genuine attempt to associate the subjects of the State with the administration. 59

Any change of this policy now would have to be decided by the Cabinet, and given both the war situation and the negative attitude of the Secretary of State this was hardly likely, as the India Office tactfully mentioned.<sup>60</sup>

None of the decisions made over the Jam Saheb's letter actually seem to have penetrated too deeply into the minds of the policy makers. The Secretary of State received and "read with great interest the Political Department circular of 20th May to residents calling for their early proposals for effecting mergers or co-operative grouping of smaller States...."<sup>61</sup> He wrote to Linlithgow, "I am glad that you

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58 Ibid.

59 Quoted in TP Vol. 11, pp.170f.

60 L/P & S/998.

61 TP, Vol.1V, p.65. Amery to Linlithgow, 21 June 1943.

have decided to insist on the formulation of a general policy in this matter on uniform lines ..."<sup>62</sup>

So despite the fact that he himself had not come to anything but a general conclusion over the smaller states, Amery was now able to rejoice over the Viceroy's insistence on action, or rather, the Political Department's continuing concentration on the grouping policy. While on the subject, the Secretary of State mentioned that he had noticed the Political Department's reluctance to endorse a scheme for a federation of the Deccan states which had been initiated by the "non-official elements"<sup>63</sup> of the agency together with the All-India States' Peoples' Conference. The Department argued that the scheme should be promoted by the rulers themselves. Amery agreed to some extent although he felt the scheme in itself was worthy of examination.<sup>64</sup>

Linlithgow's reply, both on the scheme and on Amery's enthusiasm was somewhat offputting. This letter is one of many examples of the feeling of the Government of India officials that the Government in Britain had no real knowledge of circumstances in India.<sup>65</sup>

In the end the scheme was halted by the rulers who decided that no need for change existed in the Deccan states. The resident's letter

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62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 TP, Vol.1V, p.65. Linlithgow to Amery, 12 July 1943.  
"I doubt if you can have any idea of the poverty and paucity of material for running institutions or arrangements such as those suggested in the scheme in this country. But I will see what my people have to say about it ..."

which reported this arrived in late May and the reply to the Princes' decision would

be considered when Wylie takes over but in the meanwhile it is perhaps sufficient to say that as the Rulers have refused to make any advance even towards such modest objectives as the maintenance of a joint High Court or a joint Police Expert, there is little hope of their accepting any advice regarding the more ambitious schemes .... 66

The Deccan states issue, although unimportant in itself since it came to nothing, has some noteworthy facets. The first is the indication that despite the Political Department's wishes and wants, in the end if the princes disliked an idea it had no chance of being implemented. Less obvious is the fact that the Political Department, in its decision was supported by the Viceroy; a relatively unusual event considering the upset over the Cripps Mission and Linlithgow's well-known and well documented disillusionment with the Department. His oblique reference to the recall of Sir Francis Wylie as Political Adviser may have been prompted by this.<sup>67</sup> Craik had replaced Wylie in 1941 when the latter had become Ambassador to Afghanistan. In June 1942 however, Amery had put forward Sir Walter Monckton<sup>68</sup> as a possible candidate for the post.<sup>69</sup> He spoke to Monckton and pointed out

what a big field for constructive policy is open there, even if things go well from the point of view of peaceful constitutional evolution, and how much bigger and more difficult the field may be if we have to carry out our obligations to the Princes in face of an independent or at

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66 TP, Vol.IV, p.66. Linlithgow to Amery, 27 July 1943.

67 See Appendix E.

68 Monckton, Sir Walter, Viscount Brenchley; Director-General, Ministry of Information 1940-1; Director-General, Ministry of British Information Service, Cairo 1941-2; Solicitor-General 1945; Constitutional Adviser to the Nizam of Hyderabad 1945-7.

69 TP, Vol.II, p.226. Amery to Linlithgow, 17 June 1942.

any rate unfriendly Hindu dominion. 70

As an incentive to a man of such high standing he also suggested an increase of the salary attached to the position. This would be in accordance with the Viceroy's desire to "enhance the importance of the post."<sup>71</sup> The reason for Linlithgow's desire could have been merely his attempt to upgrade the Political Service as a whole. He himself was puzzled by Monckton's apparent liking for the job, considering that someone of his reputation would not even contemplate the offer. In the event he did not.<sup>72</sup> Linlithgow's response to Amery was a little disheartened, for Monckton would have given the post just the kind of status he would have liked for it. As it was, Craik remained until he was succeeded by Wylie, in his second term, in 1943.

The residents had not been idle in the meanwhile, but had continued to carry out policy as previously deliberated; co-operative grouping wherever this was possible.<sup>73</sup>

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70 TP, Vol.II, p.250. Amery to Linlithgow, 22 June 1942.

71 Ibid.

72 He was also offered the post of Chief Justice, which he refused.

73 L/P & S/13/971. Note on Cooperative Measures, 26 August 1942. An example of grouping illustrates the details which had to be managed before anything constructive could be achieved; The Bhopal-Kurwai-Muhammadgarh Scheme provided for a Joint High Court for Bhopal and Kurwai, the Bhopal High Court being also the High Court for Kurwai, and a Police co-operation arrangement whereby the Inspector General of Police, Bhopal, would be Police Adviser for Kurwai. Bhopal had exercised full criminal jurisdiction and was attempting to ensure, as part of the scheme, that these powers should be made dynastic. Muhammadgarh was even more complicated. The latter was a minute state which had been part of Kurwai until the 18th century. The state was managed by the Political agent. Under the co-operation scheme, the administration would be for practical purposes transferred to Kurwai.

In 1943 a residents' report explained exactly what progress had been made in co-operative measures. It revealed

a striking consensus of opinion in favour of co-operative grouping. It was generally agreed that in a solution of this kind lay the best hope of survival for smaller States: that it would be necessary to work upwards from the existing joint enterprises in the judicial, police and other fields; and that a strong lead from the Political Department was essential .... 74

In pursuance of this policy the Political Department sent a 'Statement of Constitutional Reforms Introduced in Indian States'<sup>75</sup> up to and including 1943<sup>76</sup> to the Secretary of State. Many of those mentioned were examples of very small states i.e. the Western India states where the newly established Councils were presided over not by a Maharajah or Nawab, but minor rulers or landowners with limited powers.<sup>77</sup> The Political Department distinguished between administrative and constitutional reforms, making the same distinction the Secretary of state had done. More than half the Report deals with administrative reforms, while the constitutional changes seem to be rather insignificant. The difference was that of the two the former was far easier to introduce since the latter tended to excite the opposition of rulers.

In spite of the high level debate that continued about the states, the residents and Political Department were immersed in the various grievances and needs of the states as they cropped up normally. In

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74 L/P & S/13/981, p.2.

75 See Appendix F.

76 The last report had been correct up to mid 1941.

77 L/P&S/13/993. p.1.

October 1942 the Maharajah of Patiala<sup>78</sup> had complained to the Crown representative that the states were ill informed as to the situation in British India, particularly with regard to the disturbances there.<sup>79</sup> Linlithgow commented that this observation "reflected to some extent on our organisation here, and I will take steps to remedy it to such extent as I can".<sup>80</sup> The Maharaja's complaint was understandable, for he feared the trouble brewing in British India would spill over his borders and he wanted to be prepared for such an occurrence.

In the past princes had not been regarded as responsible enough to deal with possible incursions of this nature. The Paramount Power was obliged to protect the states in the event of external threats and therefore did not consider it necessary to keep the princes fully informed of the situation. By 1943 however, the nature of the relationship between the prince and his political officer had changed; rulers were more firmly in control of the affairs of their states than they had ever been. Linlithgow agreed that Patiala had made an important point, considering the immense help Britain had received from the princes for the war effort. He considered the problem could be solved in some way, but not as easily as might seem the case. The difficulty, with this as with everything else, was that the Government of India "had to cater for such political changes as might emerge in

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78 Maharajah of Patiala, Pro-Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, after the death of the Maharajah of Bikaner in Feb 1943, to March 1944.

79 The 'Quit India' movement initiated by Gandhi which led to the arrest of the Congress leaders by the Government of India in August 1942 and the banning of Congress. This resulted in widespread unrest throughout India. See Chapter 5.

80 TP, Vol.II, p.84. Linlithgow to Amery, 5 October 1942.



a short while".<sup>81</sup> Any decision made would be with the future of British India in mind and therefore there was no guarantee that arrangements made with the states would be upheld given constitutional changes in British India. As usual any matters affecting the states, however minor, were only considered after British Indian affairs had been decided. Patiala pointed out that even so, since "the intentions of His Majesty's Government and their policy was far from clear or reassuring, it was all the more important that we (the princes) should have some warning in advance."<sup>82</sup> This was a sentiment which many political officers would have shared, since their futures were as vulnerable as the future of the states.

Linlithgow could do little more than agree to do something; after all as he himself observed, the British government had all but "emasculated" the states in terms of self defence, which would prove to be the most difficult of all the problems to solve if policy remained unchanged.<sup>83</sup>

As it turned out the Political Department coped quite adequately with the task of keeping the larger states authoritatively informed of outside events. In 1947 the benefit of such a policy was reaped, when the states were put in direct contact with the provinces and the central government while the Political Department was being contracted.<sup>84</sup> It meant in effect that the states did not go to the bargaining table ignorant of matters outside their own borders. It is

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81 Ibid.

82 TP, Vol. 11, p.85, op cit.

83 Ibid. This proved to be a most prophetic statement, see Chapter 6.

84 See Chapter 6, pp.244-247.

also evidence of the Political Department's concern to ensure that the princes were not the uninformed puppets their critics perceived them to be, eternally sheltered from the harshness of political change by the Political Department. Even in 1940 it had emphasised to all residents the need for keeping up close contact between the Governor's Secretaries in neighbouring provinces so that both sides would be up to date. In 1942 the Political Department reported to the Crown Representative that the best way of improving this situation " was for Political Department to prepare suitable extracts from Provincial Government's fortnightly reports and send them to selected States".<sup>85</sup> The system proved itself highly workable and the residents themselves "welcomed this innovation".<sup>86</sup>

The old idea that the princes must be kept in isolation from each other and the outside world had fallen away. If they needed to be prepared for a future Indian Union they could no longer be expected to rely solely on what the political officer chose to tell them. Although the reports they received had been censored in some fashion, at least the princes would not be plunged into troublesome situations of which they had not been previously aware. An example of this kind not only shows the Political Department's efforts towards accommodating the wishes of the princes when it could; not keeping them behind a rigid system of control; it also demonstrated that although the Secretary of State had only just sent his calculated reply to the Jam Saheb,<sup>87</sup> what was accomplished without formal policy

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85 Mss. Eur. F125/12. Linlithgow to Amery, 13 January 1943.

86 Ibid.

87 It was sent on 4 January 1943.

decisions was often as important , and more practical, than with them.

Linlithgow's term as Viceroy had been extended in December 1942 and in early 1943 he was weary but determined to see out his last term with as much energy as he had the last two. Although the war situation at least had improved,<sup>88</sup> the constitutional circumstances of both British India and the Indian states were still very undefined.

The reverberations from the Chancellor's letter had not yet died down and the India Office was very much concerned with the vagueness of policy towards the states. All that could be said with any decisiveness was that grouping and/or co-operation was to be continued. This now proved to be less simple than before because the princes, alerted by the Cripps statement to the possible dangers to themselves, were less susceptible to 'advice' on internal reform. Their main interest lay in " how the British Government could be forced, irrespective of what might happen in British India, to stand by the spirit and letter of its obligations";<sup>89</sup> an attitude the Political Department saw as "understandable and legitimate" <sup>90</sup> although short-sighted. Clearly, some rationalisation of the very small states was needed to ensure the continued existence of the states as a whole, both for the good of their subjects as well as for the protection of the states against a possibly hostile Indian Union whenever that emerged.

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88 Japan had evacuated Guadalcanal; British forces were in possession of Tripoli, Tunisia and parts of Burma, and the last German forces at Stalingrad had surrendered.

89 L/P&J/13/552, p.12.

90 Ibid.

The India Office was not unaware of these factors, but was unsure of how to deal with them. Patrick in an attempt to find a solution put the dilemma to Lothian in March 1943. The vital questions were who was going to begin "that game" and how "is the screw going to be put on?"<sup>91</sup> It was almost a year later and Cripps was still a major point of discussion. The effect of his treatment of the states had to be minimised if anything was to be done. Patrick agreed that

Cripps was entirely off the mark in his treatment of the States (but) we cannot defend them as they are and it is unfair to let them think we will. Their case in U.S.A. and elsewhere goes by default as long as creatures like Holkar and Rewa disgrace them and any Congressman can with impunity stigmatise them as sinks of iniquity. 91a

If the old guard like yourself, Fitze, Corfield and Wylie were to put in a joint memorandum to the next Viceroy saying what ought to be done and pledging the Department to back it tooth and nail, the Order, robbed of its revered leader ... would no longer be able to resist reform? But I don't think, as the Viceroy does, that you can promise to support States which are well-behaved. You have first to ensure that they have the resources and means to go on without our interference and then undertake to give them as good a position as any Province in the Indian make-up... 92

He then had the grace to admit that he was "writing at a great distance from the scene of events".<sup>93</sup> All the same Patrick's is a clearly practical view of the issue, leaving aside the abstractions of policy. He saw the situation in terms of what the senior residents, rather than the Secretary of State or Viceroy, thought. During the negotiations over federation the former had been ignored<sup>94</sup> but now the time had come for the men who carried out policy to give the benefit of their experience. In July 1943 they had done just this in

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91 Mss. Eur. F144/16. Patrick to Lothian, 25 March 1943.

91a Rewa - Rewa was one of the Bundelkand States. The Maharajah had been deposed by the Political Department. He was a heavy drinker and was ruining his state.

Holkar - Sir Yeshwant Rao, Maharajah of Indore, one of the Central Indian states. He had been reprimanded by the Political Department for irresponsible behaviour.

92 Mss. Eur. F144/16. Patrick to Lothian, 25 March 1943.

93 Ibid.

94 See Chapter 2, p.46

a survey of policy towards the states, prepared for the incoming Viceroy ,<sup>95</sup> which concluded

The place of the States in any future constitution has still to be worked out: and the problem can hardly be tackled in advance of what is proposed with some respect of general acceptance for the future government of India as a whole. 96

The residents responded to Patrick's call, not in the way he had suggested but rather when they were asked to contribute to the Linlithgow's last speech to the Chamber of Princes. Hancock,<sup>97</sup> resident for the Eastern states, suggested that some mention be made of the work being done towards co-operation between the states

as well as a fresh warning that unless more is achieved in this direction by the end of the war the small States may find themselves unable to represent their case effectively and unable to attract much sympathy either from their own subjects, Indian opinion or world opinion. 98

Concern over the smaller states was not confined to the Viceroy and Secretary of State alone, but the residents could only do their work effectively if the princes co-operated.

The Crown Representative's speech was seen as an opportunity for the

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95 Wavell's appointment as Viceroy was announced on 19 July 1943, but he was only installed in October.

96 L/P&J/13/552 p.13.

97 Hancock, Lt-Col Sir Cyril (Percy), career in Indian Army 1914-19; transferred to Bombay Political Department 1920; Assistant Private Secretary to Governor of Bombay 1921; Assistant Private Secretary to Viceroy 1923; Secretary Rajkot agency 1925; Secretary to resident Rajputana 1929; Prime Minister Bharatpur 1932; Deputy Secretary Political Department, India 1939; resident Eastern states 1941; resident Western states 1943.

98 Hancock to Fitze, 18 August 1943, R/1/1/4764.

Viceroy to publicise policy towards the states. Gibson,<sup>99</sup> the resident for the Western states, sent in some points to be used in this connection. He was obviously defending the position of the states, an attitude which arose from the aftermath of the Cripps Mission. Yet the validity of his statement is indisputable. To begin with he reiterated what the princes and the Political Department had been trying to say all along and which Amery and Linlithgow had attempted to sidestep: "There can be no settlement of the Indian problem in terms of British India alone."<sup>100</sup> He does note that Linlithgow had worked untiringly "to convince the Princes - most of whom need no conviction - that they can no longer rest merely on the assertion of ancestral claims but must be judged by the fitness of their States for survival in the modern world."<sup>101</sup>

This is an interesting counterpoint to Cripps' assertion that only those states which could claim ancestral and historical rights deserved to be called states.<sup>102</sup>

Gibson explained that certain states had indeed made some progress, which was all very well from his side, but, and here came the gentle rap over the Cripps-Amery knuckles,

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99 Gibson, Sir Edmund Currey, Government of India, Foreign and Political Department 1921; Commissioner, Ajmer-Merwara 1924 and 1927; political agent, Eastern Rajputana 1925; Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern states 1933-34; resident at Gwalior 1934-37; resident, Western India states 1937-43; China Relations Officer, Calcutta 1944-46.

100 R/1/1/4760 Gibson to Fitze, 31 August 1943.

101 Ibid.

102 Mss. Eur. D609/19, pp.24-28. Enclosure to letter from Linlithgow to Zetland. Note of interview between Cripps and Nizam of Hyderabad, 18 December 1939.

But we must remember that the Indian States have their rights and that we are in no position, either legally or morally, to force Princes into courses of action which they may consider - who can say rightly or wrongly? - unwise for their States and unwelcome to their subjects. 103

He was saying, quite rightly, that it was not up to the British to assume omniscience in the field of states' government. Who indeed could say that what Britain saw as democratic and just was what the states needed, or wanted? Herein lies the crux of the later debates over the incorrect actions of the Political Department.<sup>104</sup> In a disagreement over what was best for the states was the British government, by right of being the Paramount Power, necessarily correct in pressing for reforms? Likewise was the Political Department wrong in defending personal rule in the states?

Linlithgow took all his residents' advice to heart. His speech to the Chamber of Princes in September 1943 incorporated most of the points they made, particularly in connection with warnings for the future of the states. The Crown Representative's speech, because it was a public event, gave the princes and their subjects a good idea of how the Paramount Power was thinking. Although not an official policy statement it was a preview of policy decisions in that what the Crown Representative urged on them would usually find its way into the suggestions of the political officers. In this case Linlithgow was quite vehement that despite the failure of federation which he had always regretted, unity among the states was all-important. The juxtaposition of 'survival' and 'development' in the states was vital to their future. There had been great developments and changes, new

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103 R/1/1/4760. Gibson to Fitze, 31 August 1943.

104 See Chapter 5, p.199.

ideas, forces and attitudes which must all be taken into account by the rulers whom, in the face of them would have to act realistically, he said.<sup>105</sup> At last Linlithgow got his chance to express what Amery had suppressed. He was sure, he said, that there was no doubt in the princes' minds that the Crown's obligations to protect them also gave the Paramount Power the responsibility to ensure "that what is protected continues to be worthy of protection ... I can claim during the period of my Viceroyalty to have spared no effort to assist Your Highnesses to give effect to the principles that underlie (this proposition)."<sup>106</sup>

Gibson's remonstrance had been ignored as others in a similar vein would be. Linlithgow felt that had he not done his best to make the princes change, he would have failed in his duty to them.<sup>107</sup> Such a devotion to duty has fascinating implications for the way in which the British viewed their role in India. In respect of the states the question must again be asked: to whose concept of duty, and therefore the failure of it, was Linlithgow referring? Obviously his own; the 'white man's burden' to which Rudyard Kipling devoted his novels about India, and the purely British notion that the Indian peoples could only benefit from such duty bravely borne and unceasingly carried out.

The other side of the story belongs to the Political Department. Not that its officers had less devotion to their duties, they merely saw

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105 R/1/1/4760. Crown Representative's Speech to the Chamber of Princes, September 1943.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.



them as different. Worried as they were about issues such as the problem of the smaller states, they did not regard the British system of democratic government as the one and only saving grace for the states. This clash of ideals would find its climax in 1947, in the individual personalities of the Crown Representative and his Political Adviser.<sup>108</sup>

For the moment Linlithgow enjoyed his opportunity to tell the princes precisely what it was they should know in order to be a credit to India:

I know from my own extensive journeyings among the States to what extent certain Indian States have become an example and an inspiration to other parts of India ... And, indeed it is essential in the interests of the States and in the interests of their survival that they should not fall below modern standards of administration in any way. I need not assure Your Highnesses ... that the extent that I, or my representatives, have had to take a particular line in regard to co-operative measures and the like, I have been concerned solely - and it is the true and legitimate function in this sphere of the Crown Representative, to awaken the indifferent to consciousness of the dangers that threaten them; to point out deficiencies; to suggest remedies, to co-ordinate individual initiatives for the benefit of all (so that) the Indian States shall fit themselves to play that great and positive part in the development of India as a whole which their importance and their history justifies, and this is the interest of the Princely order that such weakness as may today exist, whether in administration or organisation, shall be eliminated with the minimum of delay? <sup>109</sup>

Before Linlithgow abdicated his responsibilities towards the princes altogether, he answered, in length, the letter from Amery of March 1941 which had lain "pigeon-holed for two years".<sup>110</sup> The basis of his reply was the Cripps Mission and the events consequent on it. From this he drew his conclusions as to future treatment of the states.

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<sup>108</sup> Lord Mountbatten and Sir Conrad Corfield, See Chapter 6.

<sup>109</sup> R/1/1/4760. Crown Representative's speech to the Chamber of Princes, September 1943.

<sup>110</sup> Mss. Eur. F144/6. Patrick to Lothian, 25 March 1943.

Significantly Linlithgow's attitude towards grouping shifted slightly. He does agree that the scheme has merit but warned Amery not to expect too much or to see it as a final solution for the smaller states, for "the task of maintaining pressure on small States to group themselves for the improvement of their administration is, as experience has shown, a very heavy one..."<sup>111</sup> and any progress made is made slowly. The rulers of the larger states, though not directly affected were aware of the moves being made and had often been less than helpful. To ensure that measures were taken to improve the administration of the states in order for them to be welcome in an Indian Dominion "may be regarded as essentially an extension of an intensification of the measures which have in recent years been pressed increasingly upon States throughout this country."<sup>112</sup>

But he added one reservation in respect to curbing arbitrary rule by princes. Given the situation in British India, constitutional reforms there were likely to take longer than originally anticipated, in which case the states must not be pushed at a faster pace "than is appropriate to the rate of development in British India."<sup>113</sup> This is an odd comment considering the vehemence with which the states had recently been told to come up to British Indian standards. It seems a little hypocritical but then is wholly consistent with the British Government's attitude that British India should always come first, politically or otherwise.

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111 TP Vol.IV, pp.239-40. Linlithgow to Amery, 13 September 1943.

112 TP Vol. IV, p.241, op cit.

113 TP Vol. IV, p.242, op cit.

In his conclusion Linlithgow emphasised his strong feeling that coercion of the princes was neither a wise nor an easy course to follow. Lack of pressure during the passing of the India Act of 1935 had been precipitated by strong public opinion against such action. Federation might have been achieved if it had been otherwise. Linlithgow's attitude here must be seen in the light of his initial determination to bring about Federation, and his deep disappointment at its failure. Furthermore, he said, public opinion regarding coercion of the princes was likely to be strengthened by the awareness of the states' great contributions to the war effort, and by the "contrast between their attitude and that of the major parties in British India".<sup>114</sup> He warned that this latter aspect could not be overlooked in making future policy, when the states had indeed been "a conservative and reliable element in the Indian polity; the British government ought not to desert its allies especially since there was doubt about the "goodwill or the capacity to govern"<sup>115</sup> of those elements on whom it intended to devolve power.

Future events, unpredictable at this stage, needed to be carefully considered in the light of the states' possible contribution. Britain should not commit herself to anything in this regard, was the Viceroy's cautious approach:

I remain of opinion that so far as the major constitutional scheme is concerned, it would be unwise in the highest degree to do anything in present conditions likely seriously to antagonise the more important Rulers and that it should be our endeavour, by strong and authoritative advice, to try to carry them with us. 116

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114 TP Vol. IV, p.244, op cit.

115 Ibid

116 TP Vol. IV, p.245, op cit.

Sir Conrad Corfield remembered, on Linlithgow's departure,

we all felt sorry for Lord Linlithgow when he left in the Spring of 1943. He had ... before he left made the first attempt to deal with the problem of the smaller States ... If only the pressure had been continued in order to create more viable units, what a difference it would have made to their position when independence came! 117

And so it was left to the new Viceroy, Lord Wavell, to deal as best he could with the problems and policies bequeathed by his predecessor. The Political Department could but wait and hope that between itself, the princes and the Crown Representative they would envisage and implement an innovative and conclusive policy for the states which would ensure their best chance of survival over and beyond, perhaps even before, that of the all-dominant, ever-present bugbear of British India. The new era belonged to Wavell and India held its breath in expectation.

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117 Corfield, op cit, p.124.

#### CHAPTER 4 - DOLDRUMS AND DISSENSION

Churchill's choice of Wavell as Viceroy was based on false assumptions by Churchill of the man. He expected Wavell "simply to keep things quiet in India till the war ended. No move or initiative on his part towards solving the political problems was expected or desired."<sup>1</sup> Churchill was mistaken, for Wavell's energetic mind would not allow him to sit idly by, without attempting to tackle the challenge posed by India. A skilled and efficient soldier, Wavell was not versed in the art of political manoeuvring; the subtle and to him often sly tactics of the Indian leaders jarred with his natural instinct to be straightforward and unaffected.

Despite Churchill's intention that he was not to get involved in political wrangling,<sup>2</sup> Wavell was to guide India through some of the more turbulent years of the Raj. He would supervise relief for the disastrous Bengal famine of 1943; preside over an abortive conference of Indian leaders in an attempt to reach an understanding between them in 1945, and see the Cabinet Mission come and go without much success in 1946. In fact to Churchill's dismay, Wavell proved to have very progressive views on India, and believed that "Britain, having

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1 P Moon, The Viceroy's Journal, pp.446-7; hereafter referred to as WJ; also see Wavell's note on Churchill's attitude, 8 October 1943, p.23.

2 TP, Vol. IV, 15 June 1943, pp.1-4. War Cabinet Minute. The Cabinet in general agreed that Wavell's task was "mainly a non-political one" and "that our first duty at the present time was to defend India, and that political reforms must wait until the military situation in the Far East had improved." Amery thought that Wavell would "be able to lead and control the Executive Council and to keep India's mind on the war. These were the two most important qualities required of a Viceroy appointed at the present time."

promised self-government, could not in honour disregard her pledges".<sup>3</sup> At the same time Wavell proved to be a staunch defender of princely rights, and listened with grave concern to their grievances.

Not that he was particularly knowledgeable about the states or their problems, having had little to do with them previously. For this reason the Political Department had prepared a memorandum on 'Paramountcy and Policy towards the States' for his benefit. It concluded that much had still to be done in this field in order to regulate both policy and the states to prepare the princes for future change.<sup>4</sup> In this sense Wavell's term as Viceroy can be seen as a period of inactivity, for although sympathetic towards the states he did little or nothing to alter their position. By the end of 1945 when the issues of British India had become increasingly urgent, all that had been achieved in the states was largely due to the initiatives of the Political Department.

Amongst themselves political officers varied in their assessment of policy, and the initial years of Wavell's viceroyalty were characterised by this lack of agreement at the lower levels of the administration. Previous policy was closely scrutinised by the political officers who attempted to discover a realistic future for the states. At the higher levels of government the issue was one of providing the princes with the means to negotiate on equal terms with an independent India. Wavell found himself, in this as in all policy decisions, caught between his own conscience and the determination of Whitehall and the Cabinet. His Viceroyalty was epitomised by the

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3 M Bence-Jones, The Viceroy of India, p.294.

4 L/P & S/13/552 p.13.

constant disagreement between the Government of India and the British government; Wavell noted that Churchill "fears a split in the Conservative Party and trouble in Parliament over any fresh political advance in India, so is determined to block it as long as he is in power."<sup>5</sup>

To a large extent this battle of wills over British India created a vacuum with regard to the states into which the Political Department was forced to step. In the beginning the Political Department of the India Office was a little troubled by Wavell's inexperience: " .. It is impossible to guess how Lord Wavell regards the states. He has given no reaction to the material we gave him about Paramountcy ... I should not expect him to have great faith in the potentialities of oriental monarchy after having studied the one in Egypt at close quarters ..."<sup>6</sup>

This is not to say that Wavell ignored his responsibilities to the princes; the day after he was sworn in as Viceroy he was deeply involved in all the elements of his Indian administration. Wylie saw him on 21 October and "talked about the main problem of the Princes. He agrees with me that the Princes cannot resist reform pressure if we are firm; their only card is that the faith of the British Crown is involved in honouring their treaties."<sup>7</sup>

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5 WJ, 8 October 1943, p.23; also see Lee, op cit.

6 Mss. Eur. F144/6. Patrick to Lothian, 4 October 1943. Wavell's detailed knowledge of Egypt came both from his own service there during World War 1 and his study of Field Marshal Viscount Allenby's methods there during and after the War. Wavell had three books on Allenby published in the 1940's: Allenby: a study in greatness, Allenby in Egypt (Vol II) and Allenby; soldier and statesman.

7 WJ 21 October 1943, p.35.

Within the Political Department these considerations were discussed, for the future of Britain in India was inextricably linked to the future of the states. Patrick expressed the opinion that telling the states what they could do and helping them do it were vastly different things. He referred specifically to the option given the states by Cripps<sup>8</sup> of "setting up their own show."<sup>9</sup> This question had not yet been widely discussed, but would prove to be a bone of fierce contention with Congress in later years.

As it was Patrick's letter was a prophetic one, pre-empting the arguments Congress would use against the Political Department:

I feel pretty sure that His Majesty's Government will not want to 'use' the States to maintain a foothold in a 'free' India, partly because to make an Ulster out of the States is not in itself an attractive proposition to those (an increasing number) who regard the States as a last refuge of the autocracy of voluptuaries which is no longer to be tolerated in Europe on the best Anglo-American democratic principles, and partly because it will be the best way of uniting all elements in the former British India in detesting and expelling us. It would be casting Great Britain in the role of Austria in Italy of the Risorgimento...<sup>10</sup>

Hidden beneath Patrick's imaginative phrases are two important facts; he raised issues which had still to become issues, and gave a very clear indication that the Political Department was thinking about British withdrawal from India and its effect on the states long before the British Cabinet would acknowledge it. This chapter of Political Department history is vital to the understanding of the line taken by the Department from this time until the final transfer of power. The

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8 See Chapter 3. This refers to statements made by Cripps during the 1942 Mission.

9 Mss. Eur. F144/6. Patrick to Lothian, 4 October 1943.

10 Ibid.



Cripps Mission had provided the states with nothing concrete on which to build and its advice was therefore discarded. It was now up to the men who worked most closely with the states to provide a solution.

Before this was possible, the residents needed to be better informed about policy decisions in India. Lothian, then resident of Hyderabad, complained to the Political Adviser about the omission of political officers from consultations affecting all-India. If allowed to continue "the tendency to short-circuit the political officers or treat them as mere Post Offices and to leave them out of consultation .."<sup>11</sup> would leave them obviously unable to

fulfill adequately their proper task of advising and guiding the States. This will naturally encourage the already existent tendency on the part of many Government of India officials to question the value and the functions performed by us as a Department and to argue that we are merely a source of unnecessary delay. For they are quite unaware of the many pitfalls (12) from which political officers save Government of India Departments in their dealings with the States, and of the nature and volume of other work performed by the latter. 13

As had Patrick, Lothian looked forward to the time when India would be self-governing, and saw there a future for the Political Department.

At a time when services like the ICS were abolished

the Political Service would become a local Indian diplomatic service connecting the various units of the future governing India with the British Crown. But this will not happen unless the Political Service continues to play a real and constructive part in the administration of India, and does

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11 Mss/ Eur. F/144/5. Lothian to Wylie, 14 October 1943.

12 Ibid. He gives an example of such a situation: directives issued by the Food Department of the Government of India were "very injudiciously worded, and if their letters had not been very considerably bowlderised before transmission, would have caused a first-class and justifiable row."

13 Ibid.

not become merely a fifth wheel in the coach of Government. 14

Lothian's pipe-dream was never to be realised, but he was expressing a very real fear prevalent among political officers that they could no longer protect the interests of the states if they were ignored by the Government of India. Underlying this was also the knowledge that their careers were in jeopardy unless the Political Department showed its worth publicly and effectively. Lothian had mentioned the matter to his colleagues who considered that at the present time they laboured "under a growing feeling of frustration and futility."<sup>15</sup> As far as Lothian could see, consultation between the Government of India and state officials over the heads of residents would only lead to "an eventual degradation in status, if not to ultimate destruction as a Service."<sup>16</sup>

Both he and Corfield expressed their concern that the Political Department should not be sidelined by the policy makers.<sup>17</sup> He considered it vital that political officers be represented on the National Defence Council, the All-India Food Conference and even more importantly, the post-war reconstruction committees in which leading

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14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 R/1/1/4764. Corfield to Griffin 19 September 1944. Corfield raised the point in connection with the Crown Representative's speech to the Chamber of Princes in September 1944. He stressed that "the agency of political relations must remain a question for the Crown Representative to decide and the nature of this agency can in no way affect the prestige or position of a State." In 1947 he was to find that the Political Department had been expected all along to affect the position of the states. See Chapter 6.

Dewans already participated.<sup>18</sup> Quite what the Government of India intended was not clear, but Lothian and his colleagues could see a trend developing which would eventually displace the Political Department from the centre of states' policy in favour of direct negotiations with the princes. Apart from the natural discomfort over the vision of losing their jobs, political officers were offended that their previously pivotal role was no longer considered as such. Direct consultations with the princes through their Dewans was an unheard of break from the traditional way of conducting relations with the states. It was precisely for this reason that the Political Department existed; any radical change would nullify its *raison d'etre*.

Corfield agreed wholeheartedly with the sentiments so forcibly expressed by Lothian, but not with the methods suggested to counteract them. Wasn't the solution, he queried, to have the Political Department in closer contact with both the departments of the Government of India and with the residents? Frequent visits by the Political Adviser to the residencies, not the states, and the calling of ad hoc residents' conferences would ensure constant communication on all sides.<sup>19</sup>

Lothian amended his original letter to include Corfield's comments. Having a political officer at the Post-War Reconstruction conference who although not a member of the Committee, " would at least have the merit of securing that our Department's point of view was heard, when

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18 Mss. Eur. F144/5. Lothian to Wylie, 14 October 1943.

19 Mss. Eur. F144/5. Corfield to Lothian, 19 October 1943.

it was desirable to press it."<sup>20</sup> He concluded with the thought that these may not be definitive solutions and Corfield may have others, but "the present position is so unsatisfactory that it must be altered."<sup>21</sup>

Contrary to expectations the Political Adviser was not so convinced. Admittedly something needed to be done, but nothing so innovative as his residents had suggested. His reply to Lothian was restrained and low key, almost a reprimand. He told Lothian that he was arranging for either himself or Fitze to attend the post-war reconstruction conference and that all the relevant literature would be sent to the first and second class residents. This would improve matters and was therefore enough for the moment.<sup>22</sup> Wylie made no mention of the Political Adviser's new role or the residents' conference, but such a conference was convened at the end of the year.

The debate engendered by Lothian indicates that within the Political Department the situation had left both the Political Adviser and his officers unsure of their position and uncertain about their immediate reaction. The whole argument has some odd elements which suggest a lack of consensus at the core of the Political Department. Coming as this did just after the inception of a new and inexperienced Viceroy, it was almost as if Wylie was trying to keep the disillusionment felt by his residents from coming to Wavell's attention. If so there is some sense in his attitude, for without a decisive Crown Representative the Political Department could not afford to make it

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20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Mss. Eur. F144/5. Wylie to Lothian, 4 November 1943.

generally known that there was disaffection within, there was already too much unease among the princes.<sup>23</sup> Wylie was justified in soothing ragged feelings, but by the same token he served his residents ill. Their arguments were based on genuine cracks in the system, for British prestige was an all important factor in India, be it in British India or the princely states. What is surprising is that these qualms appeared as early as 1943 when there was little indication that the Political Department was in any danger of dissolution. In fact there is a glimmer of prescience in Lothian's letter which may have struck Wylie more as pessimism. The British government made no secret of the confidence remaining in India, despite the promises of independence; the latter was only contemplated for the distant vision of 'after the end of the war'.

In the meanwhile the states continued to be a matter of constant debate between the British government and the Government of India. Unlike previous years, however, there was disagreement about policy decisions handed down from above; emanating largely from the principal residencies. While Wavell adjusted to the fit of his new Viceroy's uniform voices of dissent from the Political Department were raised and Wylie, with no clear direction from his Crown Representative was forced to take heed, while attempting to educate Wavell in matters

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<sup>23</sup> TP, Vol. V, p.200. Political Department (India) to Secretary of State, 14 November 1944.

The princes had suggested to Wavell in September 1944, amongst other things, "that the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes be given an opportunity to prepare a scheme of minimum standards for efficient administration and to suggest alternative ways of meeting the difficulty presented by the existence of petty Indian States which cannot from their own resources conform to such standards; that thereafter for a period of two years the States may be allowed to work out a scheme of their own without interference from Political Officers,..."

princely.

As befitted his position as the resident of Hyderabad, Lothian made his views known both vociferously and at great length. His interpretation of the situation was unfailingly perceptive. In October 1943 he denounced the alternatives of attachment or grouping<sup>24</sup> being presented, and implemented, in the states. To Lothian neither was favourable: he disliked the former and the latter would not be practicable. He took exception to attachment on the grounds that if the ruler retained his powers, the condition of the peoples could not improve. On the other hand if Britain had the peoples' welfare in mind then there was no need to have the ruler's consent for the absorption of small by big states. All that was required was to take away the prince's sovereignty, place the people under the legislature of the larger state and therefore subject them to its laws, while the prince would become a landowner with a guaranteed succession.<sup>25</sup> Put like this it seems an incredibly simple solution, perhaps too simple.

Lothian failed to acknowledge the guilt complex Britain, a nation honour-bound to keep its promises, had over the princes. Depriving the princes of their rule was contrary to these promises, hence the need for the alternatives Lothian lambasted.

The idea of grouping would only work, he stated, if supervised by a strong central power such as Britain was at that time. There was little likelihood of it being done by consent; no full powered state would accept it. Joint Advisory officers could only function if given

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<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 2 for details of these schemes.

<sup>25</sup> Mss. Eur. F144/7. Comments by Lothian on the future of the smaller states, 13 November 1943.

higher authority than the Dewans, but the advice given by such officers would cause friction if it was seen as an order, and if not it would be ignored. Swinging back to what lay closest to his heart Lothian declared that grouping, unless purely advisory in the form of technical matters or the Judiciary,<sup>26</sup> would only be successful if controlled by political officers and enforced by the paramount power.<sup>27</sup> He therefore suggested a form of mediatisation<sup>28</sup> of the states, such as was done in Germany in the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

Two facts emerge from this welter of criticism. The first is that Lothian was to find his ideas were far too advanced, although Wylie agreed fully with what he had said. The second is the innovative quality of mediatisation. Wylie replied that the resident's approach was 'revolutionary'<sup>30</sup> in more than one respect.

We have not ... yet reached the stage when we admit - even in our secret counsels - that the welfare of the people is in fact the overriding consideration. On the contrary the

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26 Ibid. As was being done in the Southern Rajputana states, Eastern states, Bihar and Orissa and the Central Province states.

27 Ibid. He also discussed the question of revenue and suggested that it needed one crore of rupees annually for each of the 14-15 larger states to support a modern administration. He listed the important states and their revenue and population, and their historical status : Udaipur, Rewa, Cutch and Kolhapur, and concluded that in most cases the available resources were not being used to their full advantage.

28 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Comments by Lothian on the future of the smaller states, 13 November 1943.

29 H Hearder, Europe in the Nineteenth Century 1830/1880, p.31. Early nineteenth century Germany consisted of thirty-eight sovereign states, reduced from some 300 by Napoleon. In 1815 these states had formed a Confederation, with the aim of "maintaining the external and internal security and the independence and integrity of the individual states." There was no concern for the unity of Germany, rather it was "a confederation to prevent a federation".

30 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Wylie to Lothian, 30 November 1943.

Political Department has, practically throughout its history and even up to this very time, concerned itself rather with the interests of the rulers of the Indian States ... It is true that in recent years we have preached much about reform of 'administration' but the implication has always been that administration must be improved in order to deflect criticism from the Princes ... not because the people of the Indian States in the 20th century have the right to spend their lives and develop their potentialities under conditions of civilized government. 31

This was quite an admission for a senior member of the Raj to make! British justification for pressing reform on the princes had been on the basis that only then could the peoples of the states enjoy the benefits of democracy and civilisation. This had been the Congress attitude for a long time. As Wylie pointed out, Lothian's views coincided with Congress views, and that in fact 'mediatisation' would go even further than that. Congress welcomed the participation of the states as long as their governments represented the will of the people. There was as yet no wish to abolish them, merely to turn them into constitutional monarchies; status which even Britain had not granted to the princes.<sup>32</sup>

Personally Wylie agreed with Lothian, and Congress: "I have for years past held the view that the problem of the Indian States will only be finally settled by the performance of an act of State on the part of the British Government."<sup>33</sup>

At first glance Wylie's letter looks like the exposé of British hypocrisy in the Indian states, which in effect it was. There is another side to it however: this letter is one of the few in which the

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31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.



thoughts of a high ranking officer of the Political Service are revealed.

It is obvious that despite Wylie's dislike of Britain's attitude, his position imposed on him the responsibility of silent consent. His personal correspondence with Lothian is not only a glimpse into Wylie's mind, but also a hint that there was honesty and integrity within the Political Department. In this sense the misfortunes of the states cannot solely be laid at the door of the Department, as has so often been done. Yet it is only the unofficial notes and letters which passed between individuals wherein such information is gleaned. Behind the facade lay the pragmatists who desired justice for the princes and their peoples but were constrained by the multitude of promises, treaties and speeches on which British policy was founded.

In this vein Wylie continued to explain that to spring the fact on the princes that "all but 24 must now go"<sup>34</sup> would be extremely difficult; "I realise myself that in the end that is what it may possibly come to".<sup>35</sup> He refused to believe in either one of two propositions:

- 1) that an Indian Union with a Dominion status constitution could exist which did not include the whole area of the states; or
- 2) that the 562 existing states could all be fitted into an Indian Union with Dominion status.<sup>36</sup>

Both the above would be mulled over by the British government. There is no saying how different the end result would have been if Wylie had

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34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

made his opinion known. All that can be said is that the Political Adviser was against both options in 1943 but his successor would see a variant of the second take place in 1947.<sup>37</sup> As he perceived it, Wylie knew that the states as they existed in 1943 would have to go; how this would be done was not up to him to decide, "it will have to be for His Majesty's Government to decide how the surrender - for surrender it is - can be made most gracefully."<sup>38</sup> Although he did not make the decision, Wylie could have used his position as Political Adviser to advise the British government how best to release the states from paramouncy. But he took his stand on protocol, and stressed the Crown's responsibility rather than his own. His unwillingness to invoke the powers and expertise at his disposal in the Political Department opened the way for the Department to be swept aside in 1947. Wylie's attitude in this case would be repeated by Corfield in 1947, when he too took the side of morality over that of practicality and allowed the Crown Representative to decide the fate of both the states and the Political Department.<sup>39</sup> Both Political Advisers allowed principle to stand in the way of pragmatism and did not foresee the dangers to the states of this perspective. In this sense the Political Department can be said to be responsible for the ultimate disappearance of the states, through negligence rather than design.

Clearly Wylie was unhappy with what he would have regarded as a betrayal by the British government. Two courses of action presented

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37 See Chapter 6.

38 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Wylie to Lothian, 30 November 1943.

39 See Chapter 6.

themselves, both unworthy of British trusteeship. The government could openly advocate a policy such as Lothian's, when it seemed to Wylie that some all-India settlement could be made once the war was over. Everyone involved with the states was well aware that the smaller states "are preposterous anomalies in the present day world".<sup>40</sup> If Lothian's course was taken Wylie foresaw a great deal of support from all sorts of quarters, even including some rulers of petty states. The alternative was to drift, which would seriously impede an early all-India settlement "while the bulk of the Indian State Governments will still have to face the prospect - sooner rather than later - of being overthrown, perhaps violently".<sup>41</sup> Understandably he preferred the first method, but "it is very high policy and not for us either to initiate or to decide."<sup>42</sup>

Lothian did not give up, but continued to expand and explain what he had hinted at in his earlier letter. It was not his objective that the Political Department should carry out mediatisation, but that this should be attempted once India was self-governing. The states could then choose to remain outside such a Union or Federation although at the "peril of economic existence",<sup>43</sup> while still enjoying their treaty rights as far as these were of value in the new situation. As for the abolition of rulers - this would only apply to non or semi-jurisdictional states.<sup>44</sup> To some extent he was harking back to the

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40 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Wylie to Lothian, 30 November 1943.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Lothian to Wylie, 30 November 1943.

44 Ibid.

Federation of 1935 which had collapsed because the states had been given a choice. Wylie attacked the plan, remarking somewhat acidly,

It seems to me - and this is where I think that we have recently been in some danger of going off the rails - that to extinguish the existing powers of any ruler whether of a full powered State or a non-jurisdictional taluka is a definite infringement of the treaty and engagement position. 45

He cannot be accused of idealism, for he went on

My personal belief is ... that one day we shall have to turn our backs on the treaty position, as it affects the vast majority of Indian States but I see the strongest objections to doing this piecemeal - particularly in this year of grace 1943 with the Japanese war hardly begun and the political situation in British India in its present unsatisfactory shape. 46

Quite apart from the fact that Wylie had serious doubts as to the possibility of setting up an Indian Union, he firmly believed that they would have to dispose of the states question first. Purely on moral grounds he would prefer to see Britain facing up to its responsibilities beforehand, rather " than just throwing the Princes to the wolves".<sup>47</sup> All in all it presented a very grim picture. Even considering the 'unthinkable', that Britain would guarantee protection to the states after Independence, such protection would be ineffectual. The princes were already so vulnerable; but once Britain withdrew there was no way of preventing widespread attacks on the states which would surely be supported by the new Government of India. Wylie was perhaps too dramatic in his sketch of the scenario. He pictured industrial and social revolution in a British India controlled by the industrialists rather than the landowners, against

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45 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Wylie to Lothian, 23 December 1943.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

which "ruthless pressure " the states industries would collapse:<sup>48</sup>  
ergo the states would collapse.

He told the Viceroy of his fears, who in turn communicated this unofficial view to the Secretary of State. Wavell commented that it was " not easy to reconcile our obligations to the states with our general policy for India."<sup>49</sup> Wylie's advice to Wavell tallied with the Viceroy's own instincts, that Britain should "from now on, avoid as much as we can public utterances about the sanctity of the Treaties and the inviolability of the bond between the States and ourselves."<sup>50</sup> "I heartily agree, but the War Cabinet! (sic) A(mery) "<sup>51</sup> was the pencilled note at the side. In accordance with this letter, others confirmed that the general attitude of Fitze, Patrick, Wavell and Amery was that the small states as they were would not survive and some form of grouping was necessary.<sup>52</sup> The British government would have to state firmly that it would guarantee the survival of the states if they improved the standard of their administration, thereby proving themselves worthy of survival.<sup>53</sup> The non-conformist was Wylie who felt "that this plan is contrary to all administrative principle

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48 Ibid.

49 L/P & S/13/981. Wavell to Amery, 29 December 1943.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 See residents' letters on L/P & S/13/981.

53 L/P & S/13/981. Wavell to Amery, 29 December 1943.

and will get us practically nowhere."<sup>54</sup>

The residents' conference planned for December 1943 was to take grouping and attachment into account in its discussion. The progress and problems of both policies were to be reviewed, but Wylie explained that it would prove difficult to define the issues fully at the conference "since they were administrative and political and they could not discuss the political aspects at the moment."<sup>55</sup> Just why not he did not pursue, possibly because the political aspect of India's future was still so theoretical. Presumably the Government of India and/or the India Office, having no clear cut plans for the states felt the matter best left to them, rather than the residents, to define. Lothian's comments went beyond the scope of the proposed discussions, which were to centre around Linlithgow's hints made to the Chamber of Princes earlier that year.<sup>56</sup> The Viceroy had at that time mentioned that it was time to take stock, to see what had been achieved and how far the plans would go. Wylie agreed with Lothian, but in a different context: unless any plan which was being tried envisaged a real prospect of a real solution, it was not worth agitating the princes.<sup>57</sup> Lothian retorted that it was well worth agitating the princes over something practical, such as

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54 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Wylie to Lothian, 30 November 1943. Wylie stated that some improvement might result from joint technical advisers, but it seemed "idle folly to suggest that by paying for example a 1/39th share for a Political Adviser (Eastern States) the basic administration of a State can be radically improved when that State has in fact not got the necessary resources to support a modern administration at all."

55 Ibid.

56 See Chapter 3, pp.106-107.

57 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Wylie to Lothian, 30 November 1943,

mediatisation.<sup>58</sup> The conference had been arranged for the purposes of fixing the horizons on such plans, although Wylie realised " that the vitally important general issues raised by Lothian would not be discussed at all."<sup>59</sup>

In opposition to Wylie, Sir Kenneth Fitze defended the method of co-operative grouping. Fitze put forward the "interesting suggestion" that the states should establish a regional organisation to deal with all-India matters which were commonly referred to them through their political officers. As for future policy, he disliked Wylie's recommendation that the Political Department warn the princes about the limitations it would impose on the policies of grouping and attachment to calm their fears that such schemes threatened their sovereign rights.<sup>60</sup> Fitze apprehended that this "might produce in the minds of both Princes and Political officers reactions which go far to destroy all hope of effecting improvements by the co-operative method."<sup>61</sup> He also questioned whether the princes were as unhappy and suspicious about the activities of the Political Department as Wylie had implied. In conclusion Fitze urged the continuation of the policy, with the help of the larger states, to act as encouragement.<sup>62</sup>

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58 Ibid, handwritten note.

59 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Wylie to Lothian, 30 November 1943,

60 In early December 1943 the Viceroy found himself embroiled in a legal dispute as to the legality of the attachment scheme. Some of the states involved argued that the British Government did not have the power to transfer their sovereignty elsewhere. The appeal was upheld by the Judicial Commissioner and the British Government's actions were declared ultra vires on 6 December 1943.

61 L/P & S/13/981.

62 Ibid.

Both points of view were laid before the residents at the conference, where by and large those of Wylie's prevailed. A private telegram from Wavell to Amery implied that the conclusions reached in the official communications were all there was to go on at present but that he was not satisfied with the position.<sup>63</sup> Wylie had stirred up a hornet's nest of dissent within the Political Department, much to the concern of the two governments. Patrick gave an indication of how the Political Department in London saw the problem, judging from the conclusions reached at the conference. In his analysis he introduced a whole new concept of the situation in that he connected any policy towards the princes with the retention of the Political Department, just as Lothian and Corfield did. The papers leading up to the conference had revealed

a good deal of unanimity on the thesis that without continuous pressure from Political officers no scheme of co-operative grouping can either come into being or remain in being for very long. This thesis is indisputable; but the Political officers are still there, and until the future constitutional position in India is settled, we can only proceed on the assumption that they will be retained. They may disappear later as a result of a general constitutional settlement, but that is no reason why we should refrain from making use of them in ways that seem best while they still remain, and the pressure exercised by Political Officers towards improved administration may still prove to be the most potent means of persuading Rulers of States which find themselves unable to reach the standard required to embrace the unwelcome expedient of joint administrative measures, or even absorption, with larger States. 64

All of which presented the Government of India with an unforeseen dilemma: how to reconcile the general agreement about grouping with the "defeatist attitude"<sup>65</sup> displayed at the residents' conference. In

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63 Ibid.

64 L/P & S/13/981 :f233-34. Patrick to Wylie, 7 January 1944.

65 L/P & S/13/981.



addition the political officers had opened the Pandora's Box of when and how they were to be informed about their futures. Coming in close behind this was the fact that if the residents were dissatisfied with the policy, they would be hard pressed to enforce it with regularity, especially if it was being implemented because of the lack of anything better.

Lothian was still enamoured with his idea of mediatisation, and in the new year brought it up again. Those states who chose to stay out, did so with the knowledge that the protection guaranteed by treaties would lapse, or at least be modified, when Britain was no longer the paramount power. According to this logic the obvious thing to do was to regard old agreements as obsolete, and if so desired, make new ones adjusted to the changed situation, which would not result in "throwing the Princes to the wolves."<sup>66</sup> In this way the British government could not be accused of a breach of the treaties, considering its reduced capacity to fulfil the obligations of protection. There might be an offer from the government, as far as it could in the circumstances, to guarantee protection, but if the other party mistrusted this capacity then the treaty would not be modified or cancelled. In the case of the non-treaty states, Lothian considered Britain "free to terminate any obligations we have entered into, if we cancel their reciprocal obligations."<sup>67</sup>

If a plan was prepared for an Indian Union with the provision for the adherence of all states big enough, as autonomous units, and the incorporation of others by merger, then it could be said that the

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<sup>66</sup> Mss. Eur. F144/7. Lothian to Wylie, 7 January 1944.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

issue had been faced in advance of disaster.

Of course if the idea of achieving now a single Union for the whole of India, which is the basis of Cripps' proposals, were abandoned, and the States were free to form a separate Union of their own or join Jinnah's Pakistan, should this materialise, the position would be greatly altered, and it might conceivably be wiser to leave the problem of the survival under modern conditions for the smaller Indian States as self administered units for future solution by Indians themselves. At all events there would not be the same urgency to formulate a scheme for this purpose as part of the next constitutional advance. 68

Lothian seems to have outlined all the options open to the states. Mediatisation caught the attention of the India Office and was fully investigated.<sup>69</sup> As late as July 1944 Patrick wrote to Lothian that it was not practical for India, but unless something was done soon, they would end up like the Italian states, "swept away by nationalism".<sup>70</sup> Similarly Griffin<sup>71</sup> wrote that the Viceroy thought the plan interesting, but useless.<sup>72</sup> Amery studied the material but concluded dismally that it contributed very little to solving the Indian problem.<sup>73</sup>

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68 Ibid.

69 See Mss. Eur. F144/7. 6 July 1944; TP Vol.IV. n.9, p.903. The India Office prepared a note on mediatisation, since the Political Department in India did not have the relevant material. The note was done by Lumby for the period 1803-1926; he also wrote a further memorandum on the post 1926 era on compensation granted to Germany's ex-Ruling families.

70 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Patrick to Lothian, 8 July 1944.

71 Griffin, (Sir) Lancelot Cecil Lepel, joined ICS 1923; additional deputy secretary political department 1937; political agent Orissa 1939; resident Jaipur 1940; Secretary to Crown Representative from January 1944-August 1947.

72 Mss. Eur. F144/7. Griffin to Lothian, 13 July 1944. TP, Vol. IV, p.903. Wavell to Amery, 20 April 1944. Wavell expressed an interest in mediatisation and its effectiveness in India in April 1944, before he had seen the India Office material on it.

73 TP, Vol.IV, No.513. p.981, Amery to Wavell, 22 May 1944.

Mediatisation was out; yet the fact that it was ever considered so seriously shows to what extent the India Office would go in its desperate attempt to find an answer; " the deliberate method to which, from our desire to keep the Princes sweet, we seem committed, does not exclude a lot of concentrated thought about the problem ...."<sup>74</sup>

As Patrick read it, what was needed was a show of support for the Indian leaders in the provinces; for them to come out with reassurance that they desired to help the states get settled. There was little chance given the attitude in the provinces, as in the United States and increasingly in Britain, that the states were the last bastions of feudal oppression in the modern world:

India has a better chance of passing from frustration to some sort of constitutional movement and economic progress, if British India and the States come to terms and it is not left to bad hats to provoke a jacquerie. 75

Once again, the states could not move in any direction unless British India agreed and went along too. The Political Department had exhausted the possibilities, had outlined every argument for and against, but by the middle of 1944 had yet to initiate a vital change in policy. The farthest the residents could go was to show their unhappiness with the present state of affairs, which in turn had created distress at the offices of the Viceroy and Secretary of State. The next episode was taken up by these men, who had followed the patchy progress of the Political Department's efforts, and then came up with some suggestions of their own.

The stepping stone was the scepticism revealed at the residents'

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

conference, about the efficacy of the grouping scheme. In effect the residents had declared that "compulsory methods of any kind"<sup>76</sup> were not desirable at the moment. In view of this such experiments would only be encouraged to fill in time until circumstances allowed for more effective action, and to show, when the time arrived, that half-way measures were not the solution.<sup>77</sup>

Wavell's political advisers were to meet the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes shortly. Whatever was said there would subsequently be adopted by the individual residents to pass on to their rulers. Wavell proposed that his advisers explain that attachment would be applied to full powered states; grouping of advisers would be retained and "vigorously pursued", and full cooperation from the princes was expected.<sup>78</sup> The negative conclusions of the conference were to be suppressed but definite assurances that these methods would ensure the survival of the smaller states "would be studiously avoided."<sup>79</sup>

In his following telegram Wavell adjured that Britain was being dishonest with the princes in pretending an ability to maintain the smaller states. The princes should be told, openly, but not at the moment.<sup>80</sup> Everyone expected the meeting in January to be a difficult one. Since the decision on attachment<sup>81</sup> the princes were growing

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76 TP, Vol.IV, p.542. Wavell to Amery, 11 December 1943.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 TP, Vol. IV, p.543, op cit.

80 TP, Vol.IV, p.543. Wavell to Amery 11 December 1943.

81 See p.129, n 60.

suspicious of Political Department motives. Amery realised that progress in this problem was necessary but also disliked the idea of any "drastic advance in policy"<sup>82</sup> at that stage.

Nowhere else is it quite so clear that what the Political Department thought and what the British government thought were completely different. Even when given expert advice from the residents, or at least expert opinion, the British government refused to budge. When the Jam Saheb suggested an informal discussion between the Viceroy and representatives of the states,<sup>83</sup> Wavell turned him down, because "the time is not just yet."<sup>84</sup> Another reason for his reluctance was that he had had, since becoming Viceroy, " a great many urgent matters to attend to with the result that I have not yet been able to examine the problems of the Indian states with all the care that I could wish."<sup>85</sup> As a result he preferred to wait for the outcome of the forthcoming conference in January. He did say he would meet the princes themselves, at some later date, a necessary step because he had been informed that the princes were

in a thoroughly uneasy temper. They suspect the **bona fides** in pressing on with these co-operative grouping schemes in the middle of the war. The argument that we are doing it for their own good has, from what I hear, made little impression. My personal feeling in fact is that they suspect us of plain dishonesty in the whole business. 86

For the moment Wavell was let off the hook by the fact that all this would be discussed in January, but he could not postpone meeting the

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82 TP, Vol.IV, p.574. Amery to Wavell, 24 December 1944.

83 TP, Vol.IV, pp.522-5. Jam Saheb to Wavell, 5 December 1943.

84 TP, Vol.IV, p.556. Wavell to Jam Saheb, 19 December 1943.

85 Ibid.

86 TP, Vol.IV, p.563. Wavell to Amery, 22 December 1943.

princes beyond April 1944.<sup>87</sup> Both he and the British government needed the time to decide what they were going to reply to the princes' undoubtedly searching questions. In typical fashion the states were to be put on ice until the British government had decided the time and place for changes in policy.

What was holding Britain back, other than the obvious emergencies of war? One of the major factors for British recalcitrance was the legal decision taken over the attachment scheme. Only an Act of Parliament could give the Crown representative the power he needed to enforce attachment; the path towards reform in the states was strewn with treaties and obligations which became otherwise impossible. The British government found to its dismay in 1944 that it could go neither forward nor backward because its previous promises had hemmed it in from both sides. Reform could only be undertaken within the framework of the treaties which guaranteed the continuation of the states, large and small. To get away from this deadlock Wavell introduced a lever: unless substantial reforms occurred without pressure, an Act of State would have to impose them, which would be justified by his warning that only states which were worthy of survival would enjoy protection " and that their guarantees of perpetuation would be interpreted from that point of view."<sup>88</sup> Nothing the British government could come up with shows more definitely the lengths to which it would go to prevent the princes crying 'treachery', while all the time gaining points on the reform scale and

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87 Ibid. He could not postpone it beyond the next meeting of the Standing Committee or the National Defence Council. The princes would not wait that long.

88 TP, Vol.IV, n.4, p.543. Wavell to Amery, 11 December 1943.

so the approval of the United States. True to form Britain had covered herself in case of criticism and the India (Attachment of States) Bill was introduced to Parliament on 8 February 1944.

It was not an Act of State, but an Act of Parliament. Amery explained the former was not feasible during the war and probably even for a while afterwards because of the "difficulty of claiming the attention of Ministers here for a problem which, while not of the first order of urgency, demands careful and detailed consideration."<sup>89</sup> While the war was the main priority to Britain, it was not so with the princes, whose futures depended on the time and patience of British Ministers. Nevertheless the Attachment Scheme was hurried into Parliament, leaving the princes to wonder why there was such frenzy to get it through. Patiala asked Wavell to reconsider the matter on the basis of the Butler Committee's decision that the relationship between the states and the Crown could not be altered or transferred without the consent of the states concerned. They had not given their consent to attachment; not that anyone had asked them. The princes were therefore perfectly within their rights to question the propriety of the Attachment Bill. After all, it was argued, "surely no harm can ensue as a result of the status quo ... for these States only for a few months."<sup>90</sup>

The House of Commons was as puzzled as the princes. Many Members had received urgent telegrams from princes begging for a delay, and a

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89 TP, Vol.IV, p.662. Amery to Wavell, 21 January 1944.

90 TP, Vol.IV, pp.686-88. Patiala to Wavell, 1 February 1944.

review of the reasons for the Bill.<sup>91</sup> The reason was best stated by Wylie, on behalf of the Crown Representative, in reply to the Jam Saheb's query. There was no point in discussing the matter further, because the Crown Representative could see no chance of any other new or acceptable solution being produced in which case a delay in the legislation would not benefit the states. Furthermore:

... he firmly believes that the course of action pursued in this case by his predecessor and by himself, acting with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, is the one best calculated both to safeguard the interests of the Princely Order and to promote the welfare of the inhabitants of the States. 92

Wylie was careful to point out that the above was Wavell's view alone. Certainly it was neither his nor that of many of his residents. It was an unimaginative answer from Wavell, who had seemed at first to be breaking the mould of previous policy.<sup>93</sup> Now, at a critical moment, when the Political Department would have given him its full support if he had taken a fresh view of the problem, Wavell faltered. Instead he fell back on what had been done before, just as the British government was doing.

The House of Commons, however, was uninformed about that, and was

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91 See 397 H.C. DEB. 1 March 1944, cols. 1498-1533 for the whole debate.

The Act provided for the attachment of small states to larger surrounding states for the purposes of civil and criminal jurisdiction, and to benefit from the civil services, i.e. hospitals, schools etc., which they could not provide themselves because they did not have enough revenue. The rulers involved would be left with the powers which they had previously exercised; this was guaranteed.

92 TP, Vol.IV, pp.774-5. Wylie to Jam Saheb, 3 March 1944.

93 This was more obvious in connection with British India than with the states, but it did seem to imply that Wavell was not bound by tradition.



instead told that the problem of the smaller states had been under consideration for a long time. The Attorney General stated on behalf of an indisposed Amery: "anybody who has known of this problem for ten, fifteen or more years has realised that it is a very unsatisfactory position. For the last four or five years, under the Viceroy, those who advise him, the Political Department in India have been considering what is the best solution."<sup>94</sup>

That the whole scheme in the view of the Political Department was in fact untenable was never expressed in the debate. It was a lengthy sitting but the Committee Stage of the Bill took place with only forty or so weary members present who after much argument over the morality of the Bill, passed it.

Amery, absent from the second reading, had meanwhile returned to the House. He brushed off the obvious rush with which the Bill had gone through by using the excuse that the Viceroy had telegraphed "how urgent it was to get it through before Christmas if possible."<sup>95</sup> That was just a month since it had been introduced; the Royal assent was given on 21 March 1944. Amery's relief is evident: "so we have extricated ourselves from that difficulty. I do not think there will be any further trouble."<sup>96</sup>

All too easily Britain had found a loophole in the accusations of hypocrisy and treachery which must surely follow this action. More important however, is not the 'how' but the 'why'; one answer to which

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94 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 1 March 1944, col.1500.

95 398 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 14 March 1944, cols.200-201.

96 TP, Vol.IV, p.830. Amery to Wavell, 23 March 1944.

is that the British government, for all its protestations otherwise, had lost touch with the situation in India. While the India Office sat on its hands over British India because Churchill so disliked the idea of giving India independence, the states were not so much ignored as discounted; maybe if less notice was taken of them they would go away. If anything it was the Political Department which was ignored.

But the states were not that easily dismissed. The Viceroy finally gave them his attention. In April he sent some ideas to Amery; inevitably there would have to be a "frank discussion" with the princes about their situation, because Britain's promises of independence for British India were wholly incompatible with their guarantees to the states. Wylie had shown Wavell just how far these guarantees went, which would leave Britain in an unenviable position when trying to reconcile them with the realities of the present.<sup>97</sup> Wavell was a little behind the times, as was the British government, for Britain was already in that position. One possibility had suggested itself with the Cripps Offer, that the states should form a separate Union of their own. Wavell discounted this, with reference to Linlithgow's and Amery's dismissal of such a plan. He concluded that all that was left was to bring the states into a future Indian Union, how he could not begin to imagine. It left the question of immediate action open but the resentment stirred up over attachment made it difficult "and I do not think we should agitate their minds any further at present about the constitutional issue."<sup>98</sup> In the meanwhile he strongly urged that no public reaffirmation of Britain's obligations be made,

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97 Mss. Eur. D997/2 :f19-21. Wavell to Amery, 20 April 1944.

98 Ibid.

unless absolutely necessary,<sup>99</sup> "and we must certainly avoid any suggestion that states can set up an inclusive union of their own, or that every existing Indian State can retain a separate existence in a Union of All-India."<sup>100</sup>

Herein lay Britain's constant error. The Viceroy and Secretary of State continually agreed that the princes must not be upset, in which case any reference to realities was studiously avoided. It is therefore not surprising that in 1947 the princes and the Political Department were accused of blindness and impracticality; but then what else could such critics expect when Britain had so carefully prevented the states from being exposed to the reality of their position. Cripps had suggested a separate union of states back in 1942. Only two years later did the British government decide that this was out of the question. Amery for once was honest about the predicament. There was no answer Britain could give if the princes stated that what Cripps had offered to the provinces must equally apply to them. The real answer lay in the economic and geographical character of such a Union, which ruled it out.

I see no reason why, from the point of view for future bargaining, or from that of forming constituent elements in a future Indian Federation, big compact groups like the Kathiawar or Rajputana States should not each form some sort of entity vis-a-vis British India ... while others would, either individually, like Hyderabad or Kashmir, or in combined groups, form separate elements in the new Constitution, or alternatively stay out under the Crown Representative. 101

Such a distribution of largesse was uncommon for Amery but he reverted

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99 See Chapter 3, pp.88-89.

100 Mss. Eur. D997/2. Wavell to Amery, 20 April 1944.

101 TP, Vol.IV, pp.976-77. Amery to Wavell, 18 May 1944.

to type in the following paragraph where he wished the states would think of the wider view of the future of India rather than their personal futures, it might lead to constitutional discussions.<sup>102</sup> Both he and the Viceroy had emphatically agreed that constitutional discussion was out; "As you say, the moment has not yet come for a full and frank discussion with the Princes."<sup>103</sup> No possible twist of interpretation can bring these contrasting statements together. Amery also adopted the view that the less said about the treaties the better,<sup>104</sup> a policy which became a continuous theme running through any dealings with the states. The Viceroy was to meet the princes for the proposed formal discussions; Amery did not think that regarding the constitutional issue, the British government could say outright that a union of states was not feasible in theory, although it was impossible in practice.<sup>105</sup> In general terms, without going into Amery's exact tactics, the states were to be encouraged by the Political Department to continue grouping or co-operative measures to give them a better position for bargaining with British India when the time came. "I think it is agreed that co-operative grouping has in some of the Agencies attained marked success, although I have noticed in recent correspondence from residents comment corroborating the view of Wylie that this is by itself no sovereign remedy for the ills of small States."<sup>106</sup>

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102 Ibid.

103 Mss. Eur. D997/2 :ff26-29. Amery to Wavell, 22 May 1944.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

Amery was to repeat this in the future and it became a noticeable part of the solution to the states problem. The Viceroy in the end was chiefly concerned with the economic and industrial development<sup>107</sup> of the states.<sup>108</sup> Amery advised him to encourage this for it would put the states in a position to see to their own defence,<sup>109</sup> while the better their economic well-being, the better could they bargain with British India on a basis of greater equality.<sup>110</sup>

Both the princes<sup>111</sup> and the Political Department had suspicions that Britain was going to leave the princes to their own devices and concentrate on British Indian constitutional development. To the Viceroy it seemed that the princes had adopted a 'wait and see' attitude and he doubted whether anything would be gained by making them plan for a hypothetical situation : an all-India Union.<sup>112</sup> That the Viceroy considered it to be hypothetical is all that is needed to show conclusively that Britain intended to keep the Raj for a good while longer. The Political Adviser continued, in private conversation to urge on the more important states the need to rationalise the present position. He had advised Wavell that any

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107 See pp.127-128. This fits in well with Wylie's fears.

108 TP, Vol.IV, p.1129. Wavell to Amery, 29 July 1944.

109 See Chapter 6, pp.24 -24 . Unfortunately the good intentions behind this policy were frustrated by Congress opposition in 1947.

110 Vol.IV, pp.1174-75. Amery to Wavell, 9 August 1944.

111 TP, Vol.IV, pp.1134-35. Note by Bhopal, 31 July 1944. Bhopal emphasized during his private interview with Wavell the fact that the princes wanted to know "what the Crown's policy will be towards the states so that if they are to be left to their own resources, they may at once take stock of the position before it is too late.

112 Mss. Eur. D997/2 :ff41-43. Wavell to Amery, 9 August 1944.

pressure on such states to secure mergers with their smaller counterparts would see the small states retreat behind treaty obligations. Any hope of substantial grouping was therefore doubtful.<sup>113</sup> Wavell's pessimism did not stop the British government from obstinately continuing the policy of grouping and co-operation, even after nearly a year of objections from all sides. That it had failed dismally was obviously not a good enough reason to suspend the policy. The Political Department saw the need to warn the princes of the impending dangers and Wylie told the Chancellor as much in a private interview in August.

He assured the Chancellor that the

official policy of His Majesty's Government and of the Crown Representative towards the Indian States remained unchanged. How that policy was to be adjusted e.g. to the concept of an Indian Union with the status of a Dominion was however a problem of very real difficulty, a problem which every well wisher of the Indian States should be considering most carefully. 114

In fact British policy had changed, or at least the emphasis had. Since the beginning of 1944 those involved with the states had been made aware that the states were to be incorporated in some sense with an Indian Union, whatever form that would take. The Crown Representative's Speech to the Chamber of Princes later that year made that plain.<sup>115</sup> There was no definite time limit, merely a sense of

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113 Ibid.

114 R/1/1/4148. Political Adviser's note: interview with the Chancellor, 1 August 1944.

115 R/1/1/4764. "one of the biggest problems which we have to face is the accommodation of the Indian States in the future constitutional structure of India. The problem, always difficult, is made harder when the exact shape which the inevitable constitutional advance in British India will take is still not discernible."

urgency. No longer were the states being grouped or attached as an end in itself, rather they were doing so to provide themselves with a means of retaining some sovereignty and independence within an All-India Union.<sup>116</sup> Even Wylie could see the eventual disappearance of the small states; a belief which although not British official policy was almost a certainty. To Wylie "the proper way to look at our attachment schemes and co-operative grouping plans was as desparate attempts to solve the political and administrative problem of the small States without infringing the treaty position."<sup>117</sup> For that reason the larger states had a duty to help and not hinder the British government; "my own belief was that nothing much would come out of either of these plans but they were well intentioned and this should be admitted."<sup>118</sup>

The Crown Representative's annual speech would be a perfect time to do just that. The residents presented their views to Griffin in mid

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116 TP, Vol.IV. p.1145. Amery to Wavell, 1 August 1944. Amery wanted to lower the minimum number of princes needed for federation. TP, Vol. IV, Enclosure to No. 670, p.1222. Note by V P Menon, Secretariat of the Governor-General (Reforms). Menon commented on this. It would still give the princes the option to federate, but they would not hold up federation by remaining outside. Therefore federation could be set up immediately, with the princes having a choice to come in or stay out. "It is not difficult to imagine the reaction of the States to such a scheme. In the first place, since the constitution is a temporary one, they will be hesitant to join. Secondly, even if a State wants to come in, and even if H.M.G. is the final authority to accept or reject an Instrument of Accession, it will be found that the negotiations with the States cannot be conducted ignoring the new Government of India especially in regard to financial and fiscal matters. Knowing the sentiments of the British Indian parties as they do, it is most unlikely that the States will wish to join the Federation - in fact, they would have every inducement to stand out."

117 R/1/1/4148. Political Adviser's note: interview with the Chancellor, 1 August 1944.

118 Ibid.

September. Lothian remained convinced that grouping and attachment "as a means of improving the backward condition of small States, was severely limited, and that any more drastic remedy would necessarily involve a major Act of State for which the time was not yet ripe."<sup>119</sup> The advent of a new Viceroy had inevitably created a "lull in the raising of new issues affecting our relations with the States..."<sup>120</sup> Which was a very polite way of saying that in effect the new Viceroy had done nothing about the states whatsoever. Lothian also felt the speech might contain a reference to the fact that increased revenues generated by the war were only temporary; the states would do well to start providing for the post-war depression which would surely follow.<sup>121</sup>

Corfield on the other hand proposed some rather surprising topics for discussion, not altogether out of character for him. Firstly he suggested "that the historical fallacy that States are the creation of Paramount Policy might ... be suitably exposed."<sup>122</sup> This was largely a response to Congress intimation that if it had not been for Britain most of the states would not exist, would not be a problem and had no real claim to survival. During his Advisership Corfield was to take up cudgels with Congress, and it is interesting to see his staunchly protective attitude towards the states exposed here. On a more practical level, regarding joint measures, "the point might be made that, in view of the scarcity of real experts and the growing demand

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119 R/1/1/4764. Lothian to Griffin, 15 September 1944.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

122 R/1/1/4764. Corfield to Griffin, 19 September 1944.



on their services, only the very largest States can afford to stand aside: isolation is a discredited policy and no unit however large can afford the luxury of indulging in it."<sup>123</sup>

Wylie did not find it expedient to make matters quite so plain in the Crown Representative's speech. Griffin's remarks on the states' inability to get together and produce co-operative schemes may, he thought "have to be fined off. His Excellency is aware of my view that this 'co-operative grouping' business is no cure for the small States evil. We should I think avoid any the slightest (sic) suggestion that we think it is. On the other hand we must press the States to take advantage of whatever virtue - and there is some - exists in the 'co-operative' expedient."<sup>124</sup> In the event the speech originally organised for early December, was postponed because the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes resigned.<sup>125</sup>

The draft of the speech dealt mostly with the war effort, reconstruction and food, as had the residents' letters. It also exhorted the princes to greater efforts in raising standards of administration and co-operation; the progress of which had been

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123 Ibid.

124 R/1/1/4764 :f7-8. Note by Wylie, 4 November 1944.

125 See TP, Vol.V, No's. 98; 112; 127; 130; 131; 141; 143; 144; 148; 149; 154; 157; 165; 220; 221, for discussion on this. The Standing Committee's reason for resigning was the British government's failure to consult them over the attachment scheme and Act which enforced it. They felt that the Viceroy's treatment of the princes had worsened and even their very moderate requests made to the Viceroy in September had not received a fair hearing. The princes considered that their position had deteriorated and the disregard for their legitimate interests, especially in recent years, had resulted in the Standing Committee feeling that it could not longer safeguard the princes' interests and had therefore been forced to resign.

"disappointingly slow."<sup>126</sup> Wavell took the rulers to task over their suspicion of and opposition to the suggestions of political officers.

... the line is adopted that my officers should not concern themselves with these arrangements on the spot. This would be less disturbing if there were reason to believe that States are prepared and able to come together spontaneously to work out sufficiently solid schemes and to implement them efficiently without the help of the political authorities. I can however find no justification from past experience for entertaining such a belief and once again I would appeal to the Rulers concerned and those who counsel them, to take the hand which is proffered to them in help in a sphere where they stand in grave need of succour. 127

The draft had been prepared by Wylie, whose touch is unmistakeable, and the actual speech, when given, differed very little.

The need for the Political Department to help the princes had also occurred to Amery. " I will ... emphasise the desirability of acting while we still have the machinery of the Political Department to reinforce any declaration of policy and to supervise its execution..."<sup>128</sup>

He had been pondering the question whether the time was not yet right to give the Rulers of the States, and particularly the smaller States, a stronger lead than we have done hitherto indicating to them frankly our conception of their destiny in the future India and the means which, in our view they should adopt in order to achieve it and to escape the dangers which beset them ... if such a pronouncement is to be made at all, it should be made without delay. 128

With such a pronouncement the policy of non-interference was discarded, a point not missed by the Secretary of State. Any sort of announcement of this kind would necessarily have to deal with "charge

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126 R/1/1/4764. Draft of Crown Representative's Speech, 1944.

127 Ibid.

128 L/P & S/13/981 :f48-59. Amery to Wavell, 26 October 1944.

that it involved a breach of pledges".<sup>129</sup> This was overcome because no treaty could remain eternally binding in changing circumstances; and more seriously for the princes, the British government could take its stand on Linlithgow's adjudication that "nothing which is inherently incapable of survival should be artificially perpetuated" and "what is protected should be worthy of protection."<sup>130</sup> The moment of truth needed to be carefully considered in the light of the massive war effort made by the princes, lest they regard it as an ultimatum laid down by a victorious Britain after the war, to whose victory they had contributed. Apart from this there was again the difficulty of getting the Cabinet's attention to focus on the problem.

Amery at last brought the collective mind of the House of Commons to bear on the matter during the December session. Asked about the future developments of the states he replied "that discussions on this subject and its relations to post-war development in British India were initiated with representatives of the Princes in October last..."<sup>132</sup> Certainly it had occupied Wylie's time; he had written a note on 'Post-war Reconstruction in States ' in October in which he advocated "the drastic use of Paramountcy" as Amery termed it.<sup>133</sup>

A close study of the present problem makes it seem likely that - unless drastic constitutional reform is achieved when the war is over - a new kind of paramountcy, much more intensive in its application, may have to be developed if the entire structure of post-war development which the Central Government are so laboriously building up is not to fall to

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129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

132 406 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 13 December 1944, col.1244.

133 TP, Vol.V, p.304. Amery to Wavell, 14 December 1944.

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Amery's desire for a statement of intent before the war ended was therefore not so strange as it seemed. If timed correctly, before the end of the war, the possible disheartening effect of the announcement, as outlined in Wylie's note, could be softened by a generous distribution of war rewards, as had been done in 1919. More important " a solution of the States problem is clearly an essential preliminary to any satisfactory solution of the Indian problem as a whole."<sup>135</sup> Somehow Amery had imbibed Wylie's earlier views,<sup>136</sup> even if his interpretation differed a little.

The residue of the Cripps Mission had left the impression that only agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League would see India independent, whereas even under these conditions the states were still left out. Above all, the present situation "vis-a-vis the States is so unsatisfactory that it ought to be terminated with the minimum of delay."<sup>137</sup> Abstaining from further assurances would achieve little, even though Britain had promised that attachment would not be compulsorily introduced outside the initial areas.<sup>138</sup> Britain could only lose what little support she had unless the scheme was abandoned

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134 TP, Vol.V, p.304, n.5.

135 L/P & S/13/981. Amery to Wavell, 26 October 1944.

136 See p.128.

137 L/P & S/13/981. Amery to Wavell, 26 October 1944.

138 See TP, Vol.V, pp.199-205. Political Department (India) to Secretary of State. This was included in a letter sent to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes by the Political Department. It reviewed in detail the discussions held between the Viceroy and the deputation of princes in September. The later resignation of the Standing Committee came after it had received the letter.

and her intentions made plain. Amery expected

genuine satisfaction in many important quarters not only in this country and among the United Nations but in such reasonable centres of public opinion as exist in India itself. I recognise that what I have suggested ... constitutes a departure from the policy worked out in the recent correspondence between us. On the other hand that policy was at best only provisional, and we are agreed that it is fundamentally illogical and perhaps even dishonest... It would of course require the presentation of a very strong case to induce my colleagues to approve action liable to be represented in certain quarters as a betrayal of our best friends in India. But it could also be put to them that the maintenance of the status quo has now become impossible on economic and general political grounds irrespective of the prospects of an Indian constitutional settlement in the near future and that it has become our duty as paramount power to review the position in the interests of all concerned before it is too late. 139

The light had dawned in the India Office and Britain was about to take full responsibility for her neglect of one of the most vital issues in her Indian Empire; or so it seemed. Amery's emphatic denunciation of dishonesty and pretence cannot be ignored, even if it had taken him more than a year to declare it.

Wavell was astonished at his superior, but agreed that if there was to be a statement of intention it should be soon. The various possibilities for the states mentioned by Amery<sup>140</sup> did not receive his full consent however, as they were not definite enough nor suitably adapted to the situation. Wavell's consideration of economic factors<sup>141</sup> led him to believe that industrial co-operation would reduce the isolation of the states, and therefore

we should let time and events work for us, postponing any definite move until the constitutional position becomes

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139 L/P & S/12/981 :f59. Amery to Wavell, 26 October 1944.

140 L/P & S/13/981 :f34-41. See Wavell to Amery, 28 November 1944, for the details of these

141 See p.144.

clearer with the end of the war. In the meantime we would of course persist with our present attachment and grouping, whatever their merits and demerits, they do at any rate act as a reminder to the Indian Princes that the problem of the smaller States is a thoroughly embarrassing one both for themselves and for us. 142

In fact a complete reversal of roles by the leading men had taken place. Wavell's extraordinary resistance may have arisen from his belief that the princes would reject it, but in the face of Amery's insistence his desire to wait and hope is inexplicable. Where was the Viceroy who had pressed Parliament so hard for the Attachment Bill? Amery thought the same, and was reluctant in his turn to postpone action until the end of the war. Moreover he felt more would be achieved by personal discussion and suggested that Wylie come home "at the earliest opportunity to explain to us more fully what is in your mind, and try to reach some provisional conclusion on the points at issue between us."<sup>143</sup> Wylie's visit was postponed until March 1945<sup>144</sup> by which time there was a new Political Adviser.

In November 1944 Wavell was confronted with the decision of a replacement for Wylie, who was to succeed Hallet<sup>145</sup> as Governor of the United Provinces. Wylie had still to be consulted over both his

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142 L/P & S/13/981 :f34-41. Wavell to Amery, 28 November 1944.

143 TP, Vol.V, p.339. Amery to Wavell, 28 December 1944.

144 TP, Vol.V, p.339, n.4. Wavell told Amery he would prefer to send Wylie in March 1945, because an immediate visit would be connected in India with the recent resignations and would therefore add importance to it.

145 Hallet, Sir Maurice Garnier; joined I.C.S 1907, Magistrate and Collector 1916, Secretary to Government of Bihar 1920-24, officiating Commissioner 1929, Chief Secretary, Bihar and Orissa 1930-32, Secretary to Government of India Home Department 1932-36, Governor of Bihar 1937-39, Governor of United Provinces 1939-Dec 1945.

successor and his willingness to accept the gubernatorial appointment. Wavell's instinct was for Corfield, as "the most suitable choice."<sup>146</sup> Patrick had two criticisms of the decision. Firstly Wylie should be going to the Punjab, except there was no one else really suitable to succeed Hallet; secondly transferring him after such a short spell as Political Adviser would leave some loose ends "pulled out by an energetic Political Adviser to tie up."<sup>147</sup> He approved of the selection of Corfield whom he considered highly qualified for the post, and who was "mentioned by Linlithgow as a possible candidate<sup>148</sup> at a later stage."<sup>149</sup> Corfield's impact on the Political Department was to be so enormous that his rise to the position is worth noting. Patrick believed that he stood

head and shoulders above the other First class Residents in his wide grasp of political questions and experienced handling of Rulers and that he exercises a very much stronger influence on Sir F. Wylie than do any of his colleagues ... Wylie might ask to stay until December '46 because of the important political issues under discussion - but he should feel that with Mr Corfield as his successor they would be in safe hands. 150

Comments on Corfield's personality were not quite as eulogistic. Patrick had never found him at ease in official transactions and thought he had "a somewhat narrow view of the constitutional relations of the Viceroy and the Government of India with the Secretary of

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146 L/PO/8/102. Extract from Secret and Personal letter, Wavell to Amery, 18 November 1944, original on Political Adviser Collection.

147 L/PO/8/102. Patrick to Monteath, 1 December 1944.

148 See Appendix E for the list of names considered for the post since 1941.

149 L/PO/8/102. Patrick to Monteath, 1 December 1944.

150 Ibid.

State."<sup>151</sup> He tended therefore to suppose that the less information given to the Viceroy the more he would be able to deal with political matters more or less independently of the British Government.<sup>152</sup> Patrick's opinion is borne out by comments made on Corfield when he was a young political officer in Rajputana. Lesley Reynolds<sup>153</sup> the resident had felt that Corfield's long experience in the Government Secretariat had given him a "Secretariat view of things. He is inclined to be self-opinionated and to endeavour occasionally to force his opinion on others. He has a good opinion of himself and I have heard criticisms of his manners which are at times somewhat offhand and casual."<sup>154</sup> Ten years later Lothian remarked "he is temperamentally inclined to be somewhat intolerant of opposition, and to be perhaps a little severe in judgement."<sup>155</sup> All of them would be proved right.

Corfield was relatively young, he was fifty-one, and could therefore complete a five year tenure in the post. His comparative youth was against him because it meant he lacked experience with government procedure and the "appreciation of the importance of carrying

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151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.

153 Reynolds, Sir Leonard William; joined ICS 1897; Assistant Magistrate Allahabad 1898; 1st Assistant to A.G.G. Central India 1905; Deputy Secretary Government of India Foreign Department 1911-14; Commissioner Ajmer-Merwara 1916-18; resident Rajputana states 1918-24; President of Council of Regency Jaipur 1924-27; A.G.G Rajputana and Chief Commissioner Ajmer-Merwara 1927-32; retired 1933.

154 L/SG/11/115. Reynolds, 2 October 1930.

155 L/SG/11/115. Lothian, 30 March 1940.



Parliamentary approval of policy originated in India."<sup>156</sup> Possibly some time in England on leave would "broaden his outlook",<sup>157</sup> since he had not had leave since 1938. Corfield had been on continuous service for nearly six years in which time his principles had crystallised. The Secretary of State offered to review the field of possibles again because he felt the "latest developments suggest that personal handling of States' matters is entering a peculiarly difficult phase."<sup>158</sup> Was Corfield in that case the correct choice? Before Wylie's second term as Political Adviser, the idea had been considered of having "someone of wide general political experience"<sup>159</sup> from London, but no one had been available. Now that Wylie was leaving, the same criteria applied.

The dither over Corfield was peculiar to his case. At the time of his selection he was not the only man who could offer the necessary qualifications, but he was the only one who approached the required standard. He was also the obvious successor to Lothian in Hyderabad and if he became Political Adviser there would be no one else to fill that post. Another factor was that unless Corfield was chosen for a Governorship within three or four years, he would be difficult to place after his term as Political Adviser.<sup>160</sup> There was some urgency in the matter as Wylie was to go on leave and his successor had to

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156 L/P0/8/102. Patrick to Monteath, 1 December 1944.

157 L/P0/8/102. Amery to Wavell, 6 December 1944.

158 Ibid.

159 Ibid.

160 L/P0/8/102. Wavell to Amery, 11 January 1945.

arrive by July 1945.<sup>161</sup> In fact there was a very short list; the Secretary of State, Patrick and Monteath approved Mieville,<sup>162</sup> who declined. They also considered Monckton again<sup>163</sup>, who declined again. Corfield, in other words, was not the immediate and definite choice.<sup>164</sup>

After much name-dropping Wavell finally wrote to Amery in March 1945 that he had come to the conclusion that Corfield should be appointed. He was "the best man available at present for this particular appointment"<sup>165</sup>. The final decision was Wavell's who in the end plumped for Corfield ; "the choice was not an easy one, and I had another look at Corfield ... before making my decision. He is certainly not too young - at 51 most men are probably as good for practical purposes as they are ever likely to be ..."<sup>166</sup>

Nearly six months after his name had been broached, Sir Conrad Lawrence Corfield, CSI, CIE was appointed to succeed Wylie as Political Adviser to the Crown Representative.<sup>167</sup> All the wrangling over his age provides a fascinating sidelight. Considering that Both Wavell and Amery were not young men themselves and whose careers were not yet over, it is odd to think that Corfield could be prejudiced by

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161 Ibid.

162 L/P0/8/102. Unidentified letter to Patrick and Monteath, 19 January 1945.

163 See Chapter 3, pp.96-97.

164 See Appendix E.

165 L/P0/8/102. Wavell to Amery, 9 March 1945.

166 TP. Vol.V, p684. Wavell to Amery, 13 March 1945.

167 L/P0/8/102. Amery to Wavell, 20 March 1945.

the date of his birth. India was not a country which succoured old age, and the attitude taken over this issue makes it quite plain that Britain had no intention of allowing useful men to go to waste. Corfield had a good ten years service ahead of him in the Government of India, or to put it slightly differently, the Government of India expected to be in India for at least another ten years, at which time it would be worrying about a Governorship for Corfield. The war in Europe was fast drawing to a close in 1945; India could look forward to independence at its end, and unexpected political change in Britain was imminent.

Churchill's coalition government had worked well during the war<sup>168</sup> but by the end of 1944 with victory in sight there was some debate over the "renewal of the electoral truce for a further year."<sup>169</sup> The Prime Minister had hoped to continue his government until peace was declared at the end of the Japanese War but was opposed by Clement Attlee,<sup>170</sup> leader of the Labour Party, who wanted a General Election in October 1945. Given that choice Churchill opted for an immediate election and in May the coalition ended, to be replaced with a caretaker government, mostly Conservative, to govern in the meantime. His undoubted popularity as a war leader, together with the allied success in Europe, left Churchill with little doubt that the election would see him back in power. So confident was he that he used his campaign

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168 See Lee, op cit.

169 H Pelling, 'The 1945 General Election Reconsidered', The Historical Journal, 23, 2(1980), p.401.

170 Attlee, Clement Richard (created Earl 1955); member of the Simon Commission 1927; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1930-1; Postmaster-General 1931; Leader of Labour Party 1935-55; member of War Cabinet 1940-45; Lord Privy Seal 1940-2; deputy Prime Minister 1942-5; Prime Minister 1945-51.

to make some vitriolic remarks about his former Labour colleagues, but was unable in the end to convince the country to vote Conservative. The mood in Britain had undergone a shift already discernible during the war;<sup>171</sup> there was a sense of gratitude for Churchill's inspirational leadership during the war, but feeling of resentment about domestic policies<sup>172</sup> resulted in the overwhelming, if unexpected, victory of the Labour Party at the polls.<sup>173</sup> On 26 July 1945 Attlee became Prime Minister at the head of a Labour government committed to the welfare state at home, the granting of independence in India and the unravelling of the imbroglio that was the Indian states. Neither Amery nor Wavell could have predicted that the new Political Adviser would be working under a new British government and totally new circumstances in India, circumstances which presaged the end of the Raj.

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171 See Pelling, *op. cit.*

172 A Wood, Great Britain 1900-1945, p.384. Memories of the General Strike, and the Conservative rejection of the Beveridge Report were against Churchill.

173 From O T Lloyd, From Empire to Welfare State: English History 1906-1976, p.269.

	Votes	Seats	% of all votes cast
Conservatives	9,988,306	213	39.6
Liberal	2,248,226	12	9.0
Labour	11,995,152	393	47.6
Other	854,294	22	2.8

## CHAPTER 5 - MISSION AND MANIPULATION

The years 1945 and 1946 were epochal ones for India, when internal and external factors coincided to form a pattern of change. To Britain the most important fact at the beginning of 1945 was the approaching reality of total victory, a subject which consumed the minds of the Viceroy and Secretary of State from late 1944. Consequent on this was the knowledge that Britain would have to fulfil her promises of Indian independence; "His Majesty's cheque would be presented and would have to be honoured."<sup>1</sup> The Cripps proposals of 1942 were still the basis for negotiation, but any attempt by Britain to move towards implementing them "presupposed first a policy decision, and secondly, as a consequence of it, the resumption of an Anglo-Indian dialogue."<sup>2</sup>

It was towards the second end that Wavell convened the Simla Conference of 1945 with the British Indian leaders, to work out the inevitable problems of post-war reconstruction and more importantly, to resolve the constitutional deadlock which had been the result of the rejection of the Cripps offer.<sup>3</sup> The princes were not invited to attend. Wavell's immediate priority was British India alone.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Simla Conference was only an experiment, preparations for it occupied the Viceroy for the first six months of the year, once

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1 TP, Vol.V, p.1. Note by Sir E. Jenkins, undated.

2 TP, Vol.V, p.xi.

3 See Chapter 4.

4 Moore, Churchill, Cripps and India, pp. 141-2. Wavell proposed a return to the Cripps offer of a transitional government within the existing constitution, and an attempt to re-establish popular governments in the provinces under official rule.

he had convinced the Indian Committee of the Cabinet<sup>5</sup> of its worth. His visit to London in March in order to present his proposals had another significant side effect: the proposed return to the 1935 Federation Act, with amendments, as the starting point for Indian constitutional advance. Equally notable was the presence of Sir Conrad Corfield, who although he only took up his post in July, accompanied Wavell in the place of Wylie and was thus involved in the discussions at the India Office over the new style 'federation' which Amery had previously considered.<sup>6</sup>

These discussions led to the agreement, vital to the states, that the minimum number of states required in order to inaugurate federation, would no longer be a criterion.<sup>7</sup> The Committee also decided that the Crown Representative would remain "in relation both to non-federating States and to federating States in the matters for which they do not federate".<sup>8</sup> Such a decision hinged on the undefined matter of paramountcy, for the states either way would have no guarantee of protection of their rights from the new union government. The Crown Representative would have to exercise his powers enabling him to protect these rights until a satisfactory agreement between the states and the Indian government had been reached. There were numerous difficulties inherent in this, some of which were explored by Patrick who warned that it would be "a fatal mistake to reopen with Rulers the

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5 Sir J Anderson, Mr Clement Attlee, Viscount Simon, Sir James Grigg, Mr L S Amery, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr R A Butler.

6 See p.163.

7 See Chapter 2, p.42, n.3.

8 TP, Vol. V, p.729. India Committee Paper 1(45)37, 24 March 1945.

bargaining at the point at which it was left in 1939."<sup>9</sup> Those states who still desired direct relations with the Crown would have to be carefully handled. Paramountcy powers might include the disciplinary functions of the Crown, for rulers were unlikely to welcome federal intervention, in which case the Crown Representative would be reliant on the help of the federal authorities for any police manpower necessary.<sup>10</sup> All these problems would be unwelcome but pressing in 1947<sup>11</sup> when they had to be tackled once and for all. The final destruction of the states was largely due to the fact that this never happened.

In April 1945 the India Office examined the role of the small states in the context of the proposed renewal of the federation. It was a high-powered gathering, attended by Amery, Wavell, Montearth, Corfield, Patrick and Jenkins, men whose opinions on the states did not always correspond. The question they set out to answer, having agreed that not all the states could survive, was how many they could perpetuate.<sup>12</sup> Wavell's point that revenue might be a discriminatory factor, i.e. that states with minimal revenues were therefore too small to be federal units, was included with other considerations such as the historical background of the state and its membership of the Chamber of Princes. The main issue under review was federation and which of the states could be or were eligible for membership.

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9 TP, Vol. V, p.789. Minute by Patrick, 30 March 1945.  
See Chapter 2, pp.44-48 for discussion of federal negotiations.

10 TP, Vol. V, p.791, op cit.

11 See Chapter 6.

12 TP, Vol. V, p.969. Note of Discussion at India Office 19.4.45.

It was at this meeting that Corfield, in a semi-official capacity<sup>13</sup> presented his views on the states to the India Office. First and foremost he mentioned that confining the Attachment scheme<sup>14</sup> to Western India had placated the princes but had "left Political Officers in the air, there is at present no indication how far the Paramount Power intends to go in the direction of combining States into viable units."<sup>15</sup> Any scheme of mediatisation therefore, was rejected by Corfield with regard to any state to which federation was offered.<sup>16</sup> As for methods of mediatisation, the best way seemed to be to "buy the Princes out", i.e. to offer them compensation for loss of sovereignty. This was a far cry from the honourable Britain of the previous year. Regarding reconstruction, besides suggesting that Corfield get a full-time Economic Adviser, the Committee felt the best way to deal with reconstruction was to improve liaison between Dewans and the Departments of the Government of India, originally Wylie's idea. The Political Department would not be left out, for the Political Adviser would discuss matters of common concern with a nominated body of princes, "before finalising his recommendations on policy".<sup>17</sup> No formal conclusions were reached and the discussion was more useful as background for Corfield to work on the various issues at stake.<sup>18</sup>

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13 He was the Political Adviser appointee.

14 See Chapter 2, p 70.

15 TP, Vol. V, p.969. Note of Discussion at India Office on 19.4.45.

16 TP, Vol. V, p.970, op cit.

17 TP, Vol.V, p.971, op cit.

18 Ibid.



A copy of the proceedings was sent to Wylie "so that he may not think we are doing anything behind his back."<sup>19</sup>

Altogether it was a friendly chat about the states, Corfield's introduction to the politics of Whitehall, and the Committee's introduction to Corfield; all of which was conducted very civilly. The eruptions that Corfield would cause in Whitehall were kept well under control for the time being; he still had to formulate his own policy instead of carrying on with Wylie's. All he had to work on was the exchange of ideas at the India Office, and even then he had partly disagreed.

Corfield as noted was in the fortunate position of having no clear-cut official capacity, and therefore none of the responsibilities. Wylie was still the Political Adviser, although he too was in limbo, between one post and another. It fell to Wavell then, as the Crown Representative, to answer the complaints made against the Political Department by the princes who had resigned from the Chamber the previous year.<sup>20</sup> Bhopal<sup>21</sup> told Wavell that the resigned Standing Committee wished to register its strong protest about the treatment

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19 TP, Vol. V, p.969. Clauson to Corfield, 26 April 1945.

20 See Chapter 4, p.148, n.125.

21 Bhopal, Nawab of; Member of National Defence Council; Chancellor of Chamber of Princes from March 1944.

received by the princes at the hands of the 'Crown Department'.<sup>22</sup> He did not go into detail about these allegations and Wavell dismissed them. Ironically it was the political officers themselves who had mentioned the unease of the princes over the activities of the Department.<sup>23</sup> All the same Bhopal's letter did nothing to improve the reputation of the Department, either inside or outside India, and provided actual and potential critics with useful ammunition. Wavell had his talk with Bhopal in June, and was once again told of the princes' unhappiness. Bhopal's statement "contained vague accusations against the Political Department"<sup>24</sup> but Wavell was having none of it;

I could not accept that the Political Department had oppressed the Princes. I said there might sometimes be difficult Political Officers, but there were very often difficult Princes. 25

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22 TP, Vol. V, p.695. Bhopal to Wavell, 14 March 1945. No statement of the reasons for the resignations would be complete without specific references to the bitter complaints which States have to make in connection with the treatment received by them from the Political Department. The Princes have not understood the policy underlying the treatment particularly during a period of such stress and strain, and when the States have co-operated with the Crown to the fullest extent of their capacity, and opportunity, in all matters relating to the successful conduct of the War. I use the term 'Political Department' advisedly for I feel that whatever the position may be in theory, it is unlikely that His Excellency the Crown Representative, with his many onerous responsibilities in other fields, could reasonably be expected to concern himself with every detail of the Department's day to day dealings with the States. When the occasion for this arises, I hope it will be possible to satisfy Your Excellency that there are the strongest grounds for the complaints (to) which I refer and which, if not met fairly and justly, may continue to subject our relations to a strain which it is in every one's interests to see eliminated.

23 See Chapter 4.

24 TP, Vol. V, p.1160. Note by Wavell on conversation with Bhopal, 20 June 1945.

25 Ibid.

Wavell's support for his Political Department compared with the later attitude of his successor<sup>26</sup> shows Wavell in a creditable light. It also makes nonsense of the accusation that the Political Department acted of its own accord without reference to its superiors.

The princes were not alone in bearing a grudge against the Political Department. Nehru also had plenty. His hostility to the Department stemmed partly from his dislike of the states, of which he made no secret to Wavell. He obviously, stated Wavell, "has it in mind to get rid of Princely rule as soon as possible ..."<sup>27</sup> In September Nehru was at the head of the new interim government which Congress dominated since the League had refused to join. From this position he could heap abuse on the Political Department, and did. He demanded that he be informed of all important correspondence between the states and the Political Department. Wavell considered that he could give Nehru information on administrative matters, but he could not have copies of everything that passed between the states and the Political Department. It would upset the princes and "is quite unjustified as the Central Government will not inherit Paramountcy."<sup>28</sup> Pethick-Lawrence concurred, since it would also be inconsistent with the guarantee to the states that Paramountcy would remain in the interim period and not be transferred.<sup>29</sup> Thwarted here, Nehru turned his attention to the activities of the Political Department, with special reference to the state of Datia, one of the smaller Gwalior states

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26 See Chapter 6, p.256.

27 WJ, p.271, 16 May 1946.

28 TP, Vol. VIII, p.568. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 25 September 1946.

29 TP, Vol. VIII, p.669. Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 4 October 1946.

in the Central India agency.

Datia provides an interesting case study not only of the Political Department but of Corfield revealed through the lengthy correspondence between him and Nehru. The actual events are interesting but not important here.<sup>30</sup> What Datia demonstrated was the growing tension within India, where matters of fairly minor importance became a battle of wills and major issues to the Indian politicians eager to cast Britain out. The states of course provided the perfect scapegoat because of their monarchical government, and Congress made itself heard on this subject loud and clear whereas the Political Department, under strict guidance of Corfield, raised Nehru's ire because it failed to comply with his every wish and made him feel as though it was a law unto itself. Wavell stated clearly that this was not the case and at the same time implied that if Nehru wanted to pick a fight he would have to contend with the Crown Representative,

The position of the Political Department is governed by the proviso to Section 2(1) of the Government of India Act, 1935, (31) and must obviously continue until that Act is replaced ... It is quite untrue that the Political Department either encourages or turns a blind eye upon repression. There need therefore be no conflict on this point. Any conflict on other points would I think be largely obviated, if direct consultation between the Central Government and the States could be arranged ... I shall always be glad to let you have any information you wish regarding the principles which govern the activities of the Political Department, but you will realise that the responsibility for the application of these principles to individual cases must remain within my discretion as Crown Representative ... 32

In fairness it must be admitted that the various complaints made about

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30 See L/P & S/13/1831 for the details on Datia.

31 See Chapter 1, p.17.

32 L/P & S/13/1831 :f15. Wavell to Nehru, 25 November 1946.

the Department in 1946 must have had some validity, but they were exaggerated. Political officers were mostly concerned with the stability of the states, and by the end of 1946 this was especially necessary. There are few instances where the Department worked actively against the states, although Congress may have felt differently. Corfield concluded of the whole matter that "it is clear ... that Nehru does not accept position as stated by His Excellency's reply and intends to secure control of paramountcy as soon as possible".<sup>33</sup> Nehru had lost this particular battle, but in 1947 he would resume the attack with more serious accusations and demands.<sup>34</sup>

Wavell had been kept informed while he was in London awaiting a decision by the India Committee. By May the India Committee had failed to agree on Wavell's proposals,<sup>35</sup> and argued them back and forth while Wavell was kept waiting. The delay was due to the end of the war,<sup>36</sup>

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33 L/P & S/13/1831 :f35. Corfield to Patrick, 10 December 1946.

34 See Chapter 6, pp.249-50.

35 Moore, Escape From Empire, p.15. Wavell's only support came from Cripps, while "Attlee's disillusionment with Congress is apparent in his repeated objections to allowing Wavell to negotiate a Crippsian reform of the executive ... as a body representative of the main parties" as this would allow control to slip away from the Viceroy and be taken by "an Executive Council responsible only to party concerns". This was obviously something Attlee was familiar with having served in the coalition government.

36 Germany surrendered on 7 May 1945 and V.E. day was celebrated on 9 May 1945. The Pacific War ended on 14 August 1945.

Churchill's dislike of the whole matter to some extent,<sup>37</sup> and the establishment of a caretaker government in readiness for a general election.<sup>38</sup>

Finally on 31 May the caretaker cabinet approved a statement to be made by the Viceroy on his return to India, outlining the British government's proposals for India's constitutional future, still using the 1942 offer as a blueprint.<sup>39</sup> The Simla Conference to discuss these was held in June, with twenty-two representatives of British India; neither the proposals nor the meeting included the states; their position had not altered. At Simla, Congress and the Muslim League discovered their differences to be irreconcilable, and the Viceroy closed the proceedings having achieved nothing but a hardening of attitudes on both sides of the religious and political fence. The Cripps Plan had not yet been relegated to the backroom, but was on its way out. One reason for this was the criterion implicit in it that India had first to be united, then independent. Simla showed just how impossible this was.<sup>40</sup>

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37 TP, Vol. V, p.1065. Churchill to Amery, 30 May 1945.  
"No action or negotiation until the election has shown which party is in power."  
See Moore, Cripps, Churchill and India, p.143.

38 The coalition was disbanded on 23 May 1945; see Chapter 4, p.158

39 For the full statement see Cmd. 6652, 14 June 1945.  
The decision kept India out of the election campaign.

40 WJ, p.165, 26 August 1945. Simla was not the death knell of the Cripps Plan, for all its miscalculation, mainly because Cripps himself refused to let go. Wavell commented sardonically, "George Abell tells me that Cripps is the only man in the Government who is really in a hurry over India, and he wants to get back to the Cripps offer. The remainder of the Government, George thinks, are in no hurry, and the rank and file of the Labour Party and the country at large take little interest in India."  
For a full discussion on the revival of the Cripps' proposals, see Moore, Escape From Empire, pp32 - 38.

A month after the failure of the Simla talks Labour took office. It had been Labour's initiative in 1942 which had launched the Crippsian constitution; now in office they had to reject it and think again.

Attlee's knowledge of India dated back to his days on the Simon Commission of 1928<sup>41</sup> and he had presided over the India Committee for five and a half years.<sup>42</sup> Cripps of course was an influential member of the new India Committee,<sup>43</sup> anxious to see his 1942 Declaration come into effect. Sometimes placed between him and Wavell was Lord Pethick-Lawrence,<sup>44</sup> the Secretary of State for India. The latter was seventy-four when he took office, and the pressure of the Indian situation wore him out completely so that eighteen months after

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41 Formally the Indian Statutory Commission, under the Chairmanship of Sir John Simon. The Commission toured India in 1928-9, to enquire into the functioning of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, and report on the possibility of extending further responsible government in India.

42 G Bennet (ed), The Concept of Empire from Burke to Attlee 1774 - 1947, pp.405; 408, a speech by C R Attlee: 'The Labour Party in Perspective', 1937. As far back as 1937 Attlee had made the position of the Labour Party clear:  
"The Labour Party's objectives have been summed up in two words: 'socialisation' and 'self-government'. The exact form which self-government will take must be decided in each case, for there is a grave objection to trying to transplant institutions which are indigenous to Britain into a soil in which they cannot flourish ... A Labour Government would always prefer to err in being too soon rather than too late in the grant of self-government ... The Labour Party has always fully accepted the right of the Indian peoples to govern themselves, but it has recognized that the problem involved in developing self-governing institutions in a great continent inhabited by peoples who differ in language, race and creed is no easy one ..."

43 Mr C R Attlee; Sir S Cripps; Lord Pethick-Lawrence; Ellen Wilkinson; Viscount Stansgate (Wedgewood Benn); Lord Listowel.

44 Pethick-Lawrence, Frederick William, 1st Baron, MP (Labour) 1923 - 1945; Secretary of State for India 1945-47.

his appointment he retired.<sup>45</sup>

Along with the new government in England was the new Political Adviser in India. Wylie's last interview with Wavell in this capacity took place just before the abortive Simla Conference. The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes was on the point of withdrawing its resignations, which they did in early July, all of which from now on would be Corfield's problem. Wavell remarked about Wylie that "he is wise and steady but possibly a little too drastic with the Princes; anyway they don't like being ridden on his rather tight rein and with his rather sharp spurs."<sup>46</sup> And so Wylie went on leave. Corfield took up his position as the last Political Adviser to the Crown Representative. It was a position he would hold for only two years and a post in which he would see the end of the princes and the Political Department. He came as a contrast to Wylie, who described him somewhat caustically

He is a very able person indeed, but his cast of mind is for these days excessively conservative. He has been all his life in Indian States and has imbibed, perhaps, too successfully, the Princely point of view. He does not agree with the present day political developments in British India which make his task as Adviser ... very difficult indeed. ... He was never an ideal appointment, but ... We combed the British Indian Provinces at the time, but there was no senior British Officer in any Provincial cadre who could have filled the post. 47

Corfield had come up through the ranks in just the same way as any

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45 P Ziegler, Mountbatten - The Official Biography, p.356. Mountbatten had a hand in this, for he did not think Pethick-Lawrence capable of the job, and "Attlee needed little convincing ... and was glad to let him go. Lord Listowel was appointed in his place.

46 WJ, p.143, 21 June 1945.

47 TP, Vol.XII, p.682. Wylie to Mountbatten, 12 August 1947.



other ICS officer,<sup>48</sup> and like many others had a family connection with India from an early age.<sup>49</sup> Corfield's background therefore was almost entirely clerical, which "may have conditioned the rather high moral stance he took over the abrogation of the Crown's treaties with the Indian Princes"<sup>50</sup> in 1947.

The states were the least of Britain's problems at the moment. For despite the pessimism displayed at Simla, the long term aspects of the Cripps Plan were due to be taken out of mothballs now that the war was over, as had been promised.<sup>51</sup> New elections in the provincial and central legislatures in India had to be held to create an electoral college and to choose representatives who together with the princes would make up the constitution-making body (CMB). Wavell and Cripps had violently opposing views on this, but Wavell returned to India uncowed.<sup>52</sup> For the states the revival of the Cripps Declaration meant nothing new. Corfield stated firmly that the states must be taken into full confidence before any statements were made and any such announcement must include a guarantee of treaty rights.<sup>53</sup> Whatever

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48 See L/S & G/11/115 for Corfield's service details.

49 Mss. Eur. R16; Mss. Eur. T16.  
His father had been the principal of an Indian High School for Indian Christians in the Punjab and by the time Corfield was brought out to join his father, Reverend Corfield had been a missionary there for seven years and was into his second seven. Shortly afterwards Corfield's mother persuaded her husband to return to England to work for a church missionary society, and the family went home.

50 Dr H M C Corfield (son) to author, 12 August 1985.

51 See Chapter 3, p.80.

52 For details see Moore, Escape From Empire, pp.32-38.

53 TP, Vol.VI, p.199. Colville to Wavell, 2 September 1945.

kind of statement Wavell would make had first to be very carefully thought out. Wavell, as he had said before,<sup>54</sup> wanted Britain to come out into the open with the princes, and tell them that Britain was in no position to honour her obligations fully.<sup>55</sup> Before the statement was even drafted, the Cabinet wanted the residents to have informal conversations with the bigger states "with a view to preparing the ground for any statement which might ultimately be made."<sup>56</sup> These efforts would

no doubt be directed towards bringing the minds of the Rulers...towards the consideration of the question whether in fact they will be able to look indefinitely to the Paramount Power for absolute protection and whether it would not be in their own best interests to co-operate freely in the constitutional discussions with the British Indian representatives, making it their aim to bring about a comprehensive Indian Union in which the position of the States was so secured in the constitution as to make them independent of any guarantee from a suzerain. 57

These were not comforting words. Britain had never before been so blatant about her inability to protect the states. There had been references to this fact since 1942 but never was a word allowed to reach a princely ear. If the residents fulfilled their tasks, then the states would know with certainty that in their time of need no Paramount Power would answer the call. Britain would have no troops in India, and the Crown Representative's Police could not withstand external aggression from British India; the states would have to look to their own defences. Although merely a troublesome but fringe topic in 1945, the realities of the retraction of paramountcy would

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54 See Chapter 4, p.135.

55 TP, Vol. VI, pp.253-4, India and Burma Committee I.B. (45) 5th Meeting, 11 September 1945.

56 TP, Vol. VI, p.459, Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 7 November 1945.

57 Ibid.

highlight the defence deficiencies of the states in glaring detail.<sup>58</sup> Pethick-Lawrence also suggested that Wavell make subtle references to this in a statement of some kind to the princes; especially with regard to constitutional reform. World opinion was making the government uncomfortable,<sup>59</sup> Labour also faced resistance over attachment,<sup>60</sup> in short Attlee had to do something to ease the

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58 See Chapter 6, pp.244-247.

59 The Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, America and Russia were to meet in early September, and Labour had to show that some progress had been made in India because America had been pressing for decolonisation since and during the war.

See J M Lee, The Churchill Coalition, pp.143. "In fact the insistence of Americans at all levels from the President downwards on getting Britain to reconsider both her position as a colonial power and her policies on international trade injected division into the (Churchill) coalition, which reduced any likelihood of Anglo-American understanding. The Americans were sufficiently suspicious of British inclinations towards protectionism for the Empire to make bilateral talks on a number of related topics a necessary condition for the granting of aid." See also W R Louis, Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, pp.8-9, "The President (Roosevelt) made it no secret that he deplored British Imperialism in India and in all other parts of the world... The demand for timetables was a distinctly American contribution to the process of decolonization." For the Labour party's involvement in the colonial issue see Louis, Chapter IV - The Colonial Settlement of 1945. Also see Morgan, op cit.

60 R/1/1/4316, Hancock to Griffin, 7 August 1945. The resident of the Western India states agency reported that he saw "no advantage from now onwards in placing before meetings of Rulers of States' representatives any proposal whatever which involves the pooling of even the minutest measure of sovereignty. At the same time I am not content with such a position for it is in the public interest that the resistance of States should somehow or other be overcome."

pressure about the states<sup>61</sup> though his government clearly had as little idea about what to do with the states as its predecessor.

Wavell proposed that he should refer to the attachment in his speech to the Chamber of Princes, which would open the way both for the residents and any desired statement necessary.<sup>62</sup> The Viceroy did not like the idea of indicating that past guarantees would be withdrawn, not because it made Britain look bad, but because it would weaken the position of the states when bargaining for rights and privileges with British India. The Political Department took up this line in 1946. He was prepared to make it clear to them that they must join the discussion, but no more. In the end whatever constitution emerged would have to be vetted by Britain as fair and reasonable and it was unjust to say that a refusal by the states to co-operate would mean the withdrawal of guarantees. What had to be remembered was that even in 1942 the states had to be assured that non-adherence "would be protected by force if necessary".<sup>63</sup> This was just a gentle hint from

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61 L/P & S/13/974. Suggested statement to the House of Commons by the Under-Secretary of State for India, 10 September 1945.

This shows how his government was thinking:

It must be borne in mind that the Indian States are not British territory and that the Crown's relations are with their Rulers and not with their peoples. There can thus be no question of Political Officers consulting the people over the heads of their Rulers. Nor can they bring pressure to bear upon the Rulers to establish the machinery of consultation in the shape of representative bodies; since the policy of the Paramount Power is in normal circumstances to refrain from interference with the internal administration of the States. While therefore the Paramount Power in no way obstructs the setting up of representative institutions, it believes that the Rulers themselves must decide, in the light of the diverse conditions in their territories, how far it is practicable to introduce popular assemblies.

62 TP, Vol.VI, p.584. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 1 December 1945.

63 TP, Vol.VI, p.585, op cit.

Wavell to his new bosses that Britain was trying to be too smart; there were faint echoes of Amery's tricky solutions in the new proposals although Pethick-Lawrence had not actually stated that refusal meant withdrawal, just that protection was not indefinite. Wavell was getting as sensitive as his Political Adviser when it came to the states. After two years as Viceroy he had found his feet regarding the states and became an advocate of justice for them.

In January 1946 Wavell made his first speech to the Chamber of Princes.<sup>64</sup> It was exactly as he had promised Pethick-Lawrence; he urged reform, combination with other states and co-operation in the joint constitutional discussion. It was no different from what had gone before - except that Wavell divided the criteria for survival into three categories: political stability, financial resources and effective association of the people with the administration.<sup>65</sup> In reply the princes moved a resolution outlining the essential principles of administration that should be adopted in all states although, as Wavell pointed out, this did not necessarily mean reform as the Executive was still not answerable to the Legislature.<sup>66</sup> All the same Wavell felt that the princes were more realistic "and the Political Department will have to keep the states up to the mark in introducing the reforms that have been promised where they are not already in force."<sup>67</sup> The resident of the Punjab had felt that a declaration of policy about the small states would perhaps have been

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64 The 1944 and 1945 meetings had not taken place due to the resignations of the Standing Committee.

65 R/1/1/4771. Crown Representative's speech, 17 January 1946.

66 Ibid.

67 TP, Vol.VI, p.822. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 21 January 1946.

pertinent, as well as the point expressed previously by Corfield<sup>68</sup> that the states were not the creation of the Paramount Power.<sup>69</sup> Both matters were ignored.

In early March the residents were asked for their comments on the issues raised in the speech, especially the progress of their particular wards towards fulfilling Wavell's conditions for survival. They were also asked whether the methods of attachment and joint services already adopted would lead to fulfilment of these conditions and if not how they could be modified to do so.<sup>70</sup> The advent of the Cabinet Mission later that month made these questions irrelevant, and residents were faced with a totally different set of circumstances which made attachment and grouping redundant.

Britain was moving far too slowly in regard to the states, but her attention was distracted by events in British India. Attlee now had to recognise the worthlessness of the Cripps Plan and come up with something original and effective.

In December the idea of sending a 'plenipotentiary' to India became more than just a vague thought, and on 14 January 1946 the India Committee unanimously agreed to send a three man mission to India to discuss and define constitutional arrangements. The three members were Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, Pethick-Lawrence and A V Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty; all three played a different role in the complex and protracted negotiations. Cripps dominated,

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68 See Chapter 4, p.147.

69 R/1/1/4771. Thompson to Herbert, 14 November 1945.

70 R/1/1/4909. 5 March 1946.

with his versatile and agile mind and his close association with Congress. Pethick-Lawrence, usually on Cripps' side, played the mediator and Alexander<sup>71</sup> whose knowledge of India was minimal, was the watchdog of "imperial defence and strategic planning".<sup>72</sup> Wavell was determined that for his part he would not undergo the same treatment Linlithgow had had in 1942<sup>73</sup> when the Viceroy had had little effective say in the deals being made around him. Wavell made this more than plain to Pethick-Lawrence.<sup>74</sup> Before the announcement of the Mission was made in February,<sup>75</sup> the three men gathered together and prepared themselves for the task ahead.

Their plan was based on the vital factor of giving India full self-government, and with this in mind the Mission had specific goals to fulfil, always with the possibility of Indian Union in the forefront. It was only after much discussion and disagreement with both Nehru and Jinnah<sup>75a</sup> that the partition of India became a deciding factor in British withdrawal. Their immediate task was to get the elected representatives of British India together with representatives of the states to agree on the method of framing their own constitution for India. Thereafter a CMB would be established to draw up the

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71 At first seen as the silent member of the Mission, Alexander only came into his own much later.

WJ, pp.269; 310 ; 15 May; 28 June 1946. Wavell who liked Alexander immensely, wished that he had led the Mission : "Alexander was straightforward, sensible and honest ... At the beginning he knew nothing of India and the ways of Indian politicians, and sat back. At the end he really had a surer and more realistic grasp of the situation than either of the other two."

72 Morgan, op cit, p.220.

73 See Hodson, op cit, pp.94-95.

74 WJ, pp.213-4, 17 February 1946.

75 Attlee made the announcement in the Commons on 19 February 1946.

75a Jinnah, Mahomed Ali (Quaid-i-Azam), President All-India Muslim League 1934-47; Governor-General Pakistan 1947-48.

constitution after which it would, Britain hoped, be implemented. Interim arrangements, to come into effect as soon as possible, were also to be made.

The success and failure, progress and process of the Cabinet Mission has been extensively reviewed from alternative aspects; either that of British India, Britain or the states. Nowhere however, has the influence and instruction of the Political Department been considered. What has appeared therefore is the well documented, oft interpreted story of the Mission's ruminations with the states and the Aide Memoire on States' Treaties and Paramountcy. Yet the fact that the Political Department was consulted about policy towards the states throughout the Mission's stay is significant in itself; it was the first time that a British delegation of any kind had brought the Department to the debating table and taken heed of its opinions.

The Mission's brief concerning the states was very straightforward:<sup>76</sup> since Britain did not propose to initiate changes in her relations with the states, no active policy of attachment was to be followed; the British government could not press the states into eliminating themselves.<sup>77</sup> All the Mission could say was that Britain viewed only the larger states as viable units able to stand alone. The rationalisation of the smaller states would be up to the rulers to decide although the Mission and the Viceroy were to urge association with the provinces where feasible.<sup>78</sup> This was the pinnacle of the

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76 R/1/1/4777. They were to take as their text the Crown Representative's speech to the Chamber of Princes of 17 January 1946.

77 TP, Vol. VI, p.989. Note by Pethick-Lawrence, 15 February 1946.

78 TP, Vol. VI, p.998, op cit.



policy of non-interference. Ashton has summed it up succinctly; Britain had consistently declared that she would not transfer paramountcy rights to another authority, and therefore she could not force the princes into mergers, only advise them to merge. "Hence, however unrealistic it might seem, the British had to resurrect the third possibility of the states becoming completely independent."<sup>79</sup>

That left much still to be considered. Although the small states were not to be interfered with a general decision was needed on the states as a whole on whether and how far Britain intended to maintain or modify her obligations to the states. Pethick-Lawrence drew up a general brief for the Mission which included, at the top of the list, the maintenance of the relationship between the states and the Crown in personal and dynastic matters. "This will involve the maintenance of a Political Service such as now exists..."<sup>80</sup> Secondly - in matters of defence - the states would be treated as part of India and the retrocession of areas ceded by states for this purpose would have to begin. For internal defence the Mission would have to impress "on all States the imperative need for making their regimes self-protective - by efficient administration, training of police forces, and in the case of the bigger States, use of State military forces."<sup>81</sup> It would fall to Britain to secure provision for keeping British troops in India for the states who did not accede.<sup>82</sup> Other matters were outlined, but the above were the most problematic, and it was these

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79 Ashton, op cit, p.203.

80 TP, Vol.VI, p.987. Note by Pethick-Lawrence, 15 February 1946.

81 TP, Vol. VI, p.988, op cit.

82 Ibid.

which would give the Political Department endless trouble during the retraction of paramountcy.<sup>83</sup> Of all the conundrums facing the Mission, besides those created by British India, that of paramountcy proved to be the most intractable.

In early February B N Rau, on special duty in the Reforms branch of the Government of India until 1947,<sup>84</sup> drew up draft provisions of the Treaty to be signed between Britain and India at Independence, relating to Defence, Protection of Crown Servants and Relations to the Indian states. The latter is particularly noteworthy as it began the nightmare of paramountcy negotiations. Rau postulated the difficulties involved in the Crown Representative's continuing to carry out his duties to the states under the new constitution. "The problem is not an easy one and objections can be found to almost any solution..."<sup>85</sup>

His solution was that

as a necessary consequence of the transfer of power the Constitution (or Treaty) will have to provide that the rights and obligations of the Crown under the treaties, agreements and sanads with Indian States ... will be the rights and obligations of the Dominion. 86

Britain had already realised full well that with independence the

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83 See Chapter 6.

84 Sir Benegal Narsinga Rau, formerly Puisne Judge, High Court Bengal 1938-44; Prime Minister of Kashmir 1944-5.

85 TP, Vol.VI, p.905. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 6 February 1946. Annex.- Memorandum on Relations with Indian States, November 1945.

86 Ibid.

relations of the Crown with the states would have to be modified,<sup>87</sup> and the Cabinet Mission had been made aware of this. All the same Rau had overstepped the mark; his draft was referred to Turnbull<sup>88</sup> who was quick to point this out:

These articles propose that paramountcy would be placed under an Indian Minister. This seems indefensible. The Crown's relations with the States from which paramountcy arises depend on the Treaties which it is agreed cannot be maintained. Provisions of the kind proposed would make H.M.G. still ultimately responsible for seeing that the new Indian authorities did not abuse paramountcy and fulfilled the obligations under the treaties, and they would not be in a position to do so. 89

Pethick-Lawrence agreed that Rau's idea "seems to us unsound in principle and is contrary to express statements made by Cripps on this point. Paramountcy either rests with us or ceases to exist and the latter is the natural and inevitable result of India becoming autonomous."<sup>90</sup> Nobody could have said it better - when Britain withdrew the states would regain their sovereignty. Pethick-Lawrence's statement became the basic factor of Political Department thinking, and its officers had then set to work towards giving the states the best possible chance as autonomous units in an independent

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87 C.P.(46)96, 7 March 1946 - Directive for the Cabinet Delegation and for the Viceroy - Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India.

"It is clear that the whole position as between the Paramount Power and the States must of necessity be altered by a change in the status of British India. Therefore the Indian States must if possible be brought into such an arrangement, but in the last resort it may be necessary to leave over the form of their eventual participation and to proceed upon the basis of British India alone."

88 Turnbull, Francis Fearon, Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for India, 1941-6; Secretary to the Cabinet Mission to India 1946; Assistant Secretary Political Department, India Office from August 1946.

89 TP, Vol.VI, p.1109. Turnbull to Pethick-Lawrence, 5 March 1945.

90 TP, Vol.VI, p.1122. Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 7 March 1946.

India. The Political Department therefore objected to the inclusion in the draft Treaty of the clause that paramountcy could be transferred. Corfield went so far as to say that "it would be wise, if future embarrassment is to be avoided, to omit from the draft all clauses relating to the States."<sup>91</sup> He explained what the situation seemed to be to him, and consequently the Political Department's role:

It will be our task to ensure that States are offered reasonable terms for accession to the new Federation. If a reasonable offer is made, and accepted, all functions of Paramountcy other than those for which provision is made in the Constitution will lapse. If a reasonable offer is made and refused, the Crown can justifiably claim to have discharged its fundamental obligations to the States and would relinquish the rights and obligations attaching to Paramountcy. But until such time as a reasonable offer is made, the Crown has the duty, and must retain the means, to implement its obligations to the States. 92

All mention of the states was subsequently removed from the draft. The matters which had to be redefined if paramountcy lapsed had still to be taken into account, both by the Cabinet Mission and the British government. A great many political and economic details would have to be organised by the Political Department when the actual withdrawal of Britain took place in 1947.<sup>93</sup>

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91 TP, Vol.VI, p.1229. Corfield to Abell, 20 March 1946.

92 Ibid.

93 See Chapter 6.

The three commissioners arrived in India on 24 March 1946,<sup>94</sup> filled with high hopes of gaining agreement among the parties in India, and with strict instructions that "Paramountcy must not be handed over to an Indian Government."<sup>95</sup> Almost immediately discussions on this point were begun at a Staff Discussion on 26 March with Edward Wakefield<sup>96</sup> representing the Political Department. By this stage the possibility of there being a Pakistan and a Hindustan, although not fully accepted, was under consideration and the states therefore could join either one, or remain outside both. Wakefield's view was that the states, if offered fair terms, would probably join a single union, but given two Unions "the Paramount Power could not reasonably use its influence to make States join either".<sup>97</sup> The question of whether, if there were two constituent assemblies, the states would take part in both or neither remained unanswered. Furthermore the representation

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94 Bennet, op cit, pp.420-1. Just before the Mission's departure to India, Attlee made a speech in the Commons which outlined his attitude to India: "India herself must choose what will be her future Constitution; what will be her position in the world. I hope that the Indian people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that she will find great advantages in doing so. In these days that demand for complete, isolated nationhood apart from the rest of the world, is really outdated... But if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will... If on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so. It will be for us to help to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible."

This was the line which the Mission would take and it was certainly revolutionary. Britain had not previously suggested that India could decide on a form of independence which excluded Britain.

95 TP, Vol.VI, p.1128. Draft Directive to Cabinet Mission, 8 March 1946, approved by Cabinet.

96 Wakefield, Edward Birkbeck, Joint Secretary Political Department India 1946-7.

97 R/1/1/4909 :f1.

of the states on these assemblies could not be agreed upon.<sup>98</sup>

At the following meeting it was proposed that a draft statement should be drawn up explaining the implications of independence, i.e. complete withdrawal from a unitary or partitioned India. This had serious implications for the states which worried Wakefield. Congress wanted independence and Britain was prepared to give it.

The result will be the disappearance from India of the authority of the Crown. The Crown will therefore be no longer in a position to carry out its obligations for the protection of States; the Crown cannot any longer honour the Treaties, and States will have to make the best terms they can with British India. 99

Although an unavoidable issue in any statement made by Britain, "the position we have tried to establish - that the Crown will protect the States until they find protection in the constitution of the New India - is undermined and overthrown."<sup>100</sup> The bargaining position of states, without the backing of the Crown's assurances, would diminish considerably. Wakefield wondered if the statement could not be framed in such a way as to make it less disastrous "for the States tactical position."<sup>101</sup> By this he meant including a mention of the non-transference of paramountcy, because neither the states nor British India had been told. The balance of positions could be held if British India were told categorically that it could not expect to inherit the powers held by the paramount power. Herbert<sup>102</sup> agreed

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98 R/1/1/4904 :f2.

99 R/1/1/4909 :f5, 27 March 1946.

100 Ibid.

101 R/1/1/4909 :f6, 27 March 1946.

102 Herbert, Sir Charles Gordon, joined Indian Civil Service 1920, Indian Political Department 1938, resident Gwalior 1943-4, resident Central Indian states 1945, resident Hyderabad 1946.

with him, and felt it would give the larger and medium sized states the chance to negotiate reasonable terms, while it would "galvanise the small States into action."<sup>103</sup>

The Delegation had in the meantime, drawn up an aide memoire concerning defence, which it was giving to Congress and the League. A copy was sent to Corfield for his comments, since it included mention of the states and the lapse of paramountcy, "that is to say the States individually become free agents and if any Indian Succession Government wishes to obtain any of these rights (e.g. in the economic and financial sphere) that Government must negotiate for them."<sup>104</sup> It was assumed that the Crown would not establish forces in the states. Corfield took exception to this presumption, because the Crown had assured the rulers there would be no change in their relations without the princes' consent, and the aide memoire was a direct contradiction of this: "The former assurance was presumably based on the assumption that the Crown intended to retain its rights under these treaties etc. The latter proposal is presumably based on a subsequent decision to relinquish those rights. The *volte face* can be justified on no other consideration."<sup>105</sup> He concluded that the aide memoire should make it clear that paramountcy would not be transferred, and that it should be shown to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes before giving it to the British Indian leaders.

The delegation took the matter up with the Viceroy in a meeting at

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103 R/1/1/4909 :f7, 27 March 1946.

104 R/1/1/4909 :f36.

105 TP, Vol. VI, pp. 15-16. Note By Corfield, 27 March 1946.

which Corfield was present. Corfield maintained that an addendum to the aide memoire should be written, outlining the position of the states. In the end a draft Aide Memoire in regard to States' Treaties and Paramountcy was prepared dated 13 April 1946; subsequently referred to as the 12 May statement and which provided the basis of all policy towards the states from then onwards. It stated baldly that although paramountcy would remain in effect during the interim period, the British government "could not and will not in any circumstances transfer paramountcy to an Indian Government."<sup>106</sup>

Therefore

when the new constitutional structure of British India becomes an accomplished fact, the duties of the paramount power will become impossible of performances and the whole relationship between the Crown and the States must of necessity lapse. This means the rights of the States which flow from that relationship will not longer exist and that all the rights surrendered by the States to the paramount power will return to the States. Political arrangements between the States on the one side and the British Crown and British India on the other will thus lapse. The void will have to be filled either by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India, or failing this, entering into particular political arrangements with it or them. <sup>107</sup>

The actual 12 May statement was slightly different in structure<sup>108</sup> but the final sentence remained, just vague enough to cause endless

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<sup>106</sup> R/1/1/4909 :f113, 13 April 1946.

<sup>107</sup> R/1/1/4909 :ff114-115, 13 April 1946.

<sup>108</sup> See Cmd. 6835 - Statement by the Mission dated 25th May in reply to the Pronouncements by the Indian Parties and Memorandum by the Mission on States' Treaties and Paramountcy. It was presented to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on 12 May 1946.



argument as to its real meaning.<sup>109</sup> Although the changes were made by Cripps they were done with Corfield's compliance. The value of Corfield's involvement was that decisions about the states were not being made arbitrarily but with consultations with the Political Department.<sup>110</sup>

The residents were informed about the aide memoire in early April at the residents' conference. It was still only a draft, but had been approved in principle by the Prime Minister.<sup>111</sup> The comments and

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109 W Morris-Jones, 'The Transfer of Power, 1947: A View From The Sidelines,' p.7. Morris-Jones provides an interesting explanation as to the unspecific nature of the 12 May statement, p.7, fn.2, what he calls "The studied ambiguity ... First, it was (as the Mission explained in a note issued on 22 May 1946 at the time when the Memorandum was first published) drawn up before their discussion with the political leaders; it indeed simply 'represented the substance of what they communicated to the representatives of the States at their first interviews'. However, in their own plans set out in the statement of 16 May 1946 ambiguity persisted: 'The precise form which (the States) cooperation (in the new development of India) will take must be a matter for negotiation and it by no means follows that it will be identical for all States.' Second, it must be remembered that the Mission plan envisaged no time limit and further provided that during the constitution-making period the Viceroy would remain and be in a position to oversee the negotiations which would either incorporate the States in the new Union of India or lead to 'particular political arrangements.'

110 WJ, p.231, 28 March 1946. Wavell made a note on the meeting which had not gone too smoothly, " Three hours in the morning with the Delegation, mainly on States' problems, the chief issues being how to dispose of Paramountcy - hand it over by consent, bury it, transfer it to the new Government of British India - and the effect on the States of the draft aide-memoire on British troops in India. Cripps' proposal was apparently that the States should regain 'independence', when we gave up paramountcy - a proposal that rather shocked the S. of S. The aide-memoire seemed to bristle with so many difficulties that I questioned the wisdom of issuing it, or indeed of giving out anything on paper, if we could avoid it; this view was I think generally accepted in the end..."

111 L/P & J/10/60 :ff236-8 . A draft was sent to Attlee and the India Office on 30 March 1946.

questions of the residents served to draw out the implications of the document, both for themselves and for the states, and are a reflection of the attitude of the Political Department at this time. Corfield thought the main difficulty facing them was "the weakening of the influence of the Paramount Power during the transition period."<sup>112</sup> He was asked by Lothian whether the Political Department "would continue restrictions, and exercise pressure on the States right up to zero hour."<sup>113</sup> Corfield replied "that increased pressure could come from British India for constitutionalisation. So far as advising states was concerned, Pol.Dept.(sic) could not advise States in the negotiations. But up to, we should advise States in their own interests to secure representation on the CMB..."<sup>114</sup> In other words the role of the political officer had changed: no longer would the states be advised to reform for the sake of reform, but rather in order to get a good deal from British India. The result of this would be a Political Department determined to ensure that the states were treated fairly and not betrayed by Britain. It is from this attitude that the eventual accusations of stubbornness and incompetence by political officers developed.

Lothian also enquired whether, to avoid prejudging the issue of defence, the reference to Britain having no troops in India could be omitted. This would leave the way clear for troops to be maintained in the states, e.g. Hyderabad, for the protection of the states. Wakefield disagreed with the idea because "any ambiguity would attract

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112 R/1/1/4909 f9, 2 April 1946.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

notice, and invite questions from the British Indian side; and questions asked would have to be answered clearly, in a sense different from that desired by Hyderabad."<sup>115</sup> Presumably the answers would have to emphasise full British withdrawal, as Congress would not agree to any British troops being left behind for any reason. If this happened the burgeoning independence negotiations would collapse. Wakefield did not see what advantage would accrue to the states should Britain skate over the issue, nor would the Mission accept such a suggestion.<sup>116</sup> Strangely enough in 1947 the option proposed by Lothian was reactivated.<sup>117</sup>

On the second day of the conference Corfield reported that he had met with the Viceroy the night before and had learned that the princes had suggested that paramountcy controls be relaxed during the interim period. He had observed to Wavell that such action would involve "diminution in the exercise of (the Paramount Power's) obligations, i.e. Protection would be less."<sup>118</sup> Just what this meant to the individual political officer was a question on the lips of all the residents. If there was a discrepancy in the state administration, was the resident to take no notice? Corfield suggested that a middle line be followed:

Advice could be given informally, not as coming from the representative of the Viceroy... the Political Officer could point out that only by constitutionalising themselves could Rulers hope to preserve themselves and their States. We must consistently take the line that a Ruler's best protection -

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115 R/1/1/4909 :f10, 3 April 1946.

116 Ibid.

117 See Chapter 6.

118 R/1/1/4909, 3 April 1946.

indeed his only protection - lies in constitutionalisation. 119

The conference had by no means eased the minds of the residents, neither had it made their position very clear. Events over the next few months did nothing to dispel the confusion. Negotiations with British India had come to a standstill in May at which time the Mission had announced its own plans for a constitutional agreement. It suggested a union of India and the states, where the central government had authority over foreign affairs, defence and communications; the rest would be the responsibility of the provinces. The interim phase of establishing a CMB or a Constituent Assembly (CA) remained. The only stricture laid down regarding the states was that only those units comparable in size and population to a British Indian province could join the Union, either individually or as a group of states. Grouping was back in style with a vengeance. This plan still left the factor of independent states undecided, for the Delegations' statement had not mentioned it at all. Could those states who did not join the Union remain "free to maintain a relationship with Great Britain?"<sup>120</sup> Without saying no, the Mission replied that its attitude was to hope that the states would come into the new constitution and that it would not deal with a hypothetical question such as this.<sup>121</sup> There is a contradiction here which Britain never attempted to resolve - the lapse of paramountcy would leave the states independent and sovereign, yet they could not be independent because the Mission envisaged them in the union. Under such circumstances the Mission

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119 Ibid.

120 L/P & J/10/43 1/1/3 p.1, 16 May 1946.

121 Ibid.

refused to discuss the issue of independent states outside an Indian Union. Suprisingly Corfield at this point was just as much to blame for the inadequacy in settling the issue. He and the Viceroy met with Bhopal in early June who said that

if British India proved unreasonable during the forthcoming negotiations, the States would wish to prepare themselves for their 'independence' ... Could there not be a 'Gentleman's agreement' that, if British India proved unreasonable and States were excluded from the proposed Union ... Britain would enter into a Treaty relationship with them? 122

Bhopal emphasised that the fact that paramountcy would continue in the interim period prevented the states from strengthening their position by gaining the support of an outside power, such as Russia.<sup>123</sup> Nothing could have horrified the Viceroy more. Corfield suggested that the states were free to do this at the lapse of paramountcy, but it was rather more a bargaining point than a practical proposal, in any case "the Chancellor's question was a hypothetical one, since it should be assumed for the present that neither side would be unreasonable during the contemplated negotiations ..."<sup>124</sup> Not that Corfield did not take precautions in any case when he spoke to his residents in December.<sup>125</sup>

Somehow the link between the lapse of paramountcy and the independence of the states did not exist in British minds, one was not a corollary of the other by British standards; rather the lapse of paramountcy meant that the states were free only to negotiate entry into an Indian Union.

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122 R/1/1/4909 :f204-5, 5 June 1946.

123 R/1/1/4909 :f204.

124 R/1/1/4909 :f205

125 See p.203.

So vague was the Memorandum on this point <sup>126</sup> that it is not surprising the residents were as confused as the princes.

Almost immediately queries came in from the residencies demanding explanations of the Mission Plan. Some states had been involved in the grouping and attachment schemes which Britain had promised were no longer to be enforced;<sup>127</sup> yet the Mission Plan allowed for exactly this in order for the units to be large enough to accede. The Central Indian states even under these circumstances were not capable of fulfilling Wavell's conditions or those of the Cabinet Mission. The resident was therefore unsure of how to approach the matter:

It therefore seems that whether I am approached for guidance or whether I am to take the initiative I should have ready advice which i) is something more specific than a general warning to settle terms in negotiation with British India, or ii) does not run counter to advice that may be tendered in other Agencies. <sup>128</sup>

When asked to explain the exact requirements of accession, was he to say that the existing grouping of these states should be scrapped and a larger one established?<sup>129</sup> His own instinct was to "take the initiative myself as I fear a lot of Rulers will be inactive unless personally and possibly collectively, encouraged by the Political Officer to bestir themselves."<sup>130</sup> Herbert explained that the creation of units of states which could accede did not exclude the political officer from taking action, he would facilitate the negotiations

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126 See p.187.

127 See Chapter 4, p.151.

128 R/2/453/60 :f28. Campbell to Griffin, 30 May 1946.

129 R/2/453/60 :f29.

130 Ibid.

between the units and British India. He would also urge on the states the necessity of taking immediate action - either to join or help create a suitable unit where necessary. If the states found it difficult to approach the problem, the resident could frame tentative schemes for the absorption of non-federating into federating units.<sup>131</sup> When the resident from the Eastern states agency enquired<sup>132</sup> he was given the same answer,<sup>133</sup> as were all the other agencies. Such uncertainty was symptomatic of the wider confusion in India caused by the Mission, but the Political Department had to deal with the 'ifs' and 'buts' of a Plan which had not yet been completed, and until it was, political officers could only pretend to understand what the future would hold.

Most of the confusion was clarified by Corfield's speech to various groups of princes in early June. He dealt with the two documents on which the future of the states was based: the Memorandum and the 16 May statement. The former declared publicly that paramountcy would not be transferred, which put the states in the best bargaining position possible, although in practice it would "not be possible for many States to retain an independent position when paramountcy lapsed."<sup>134</sup> In theory the states would be independent, but the withdrawal of British protection should make them aware of the implications of assuming independence. Their future had to be negotiated directly with British India; the Crown Representative would

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131 R/2/453/60. Herbert to Campbell, 18 June 1946.

132 R/2/453/60. Tusker to Herbert, 14 July 1946.

133 R/2/453/60. Herbert to Tusker, 25 July 1946.

134 L/P & J/10/60 :ff27-35, 8 June 1946.

assist during the interim period, but not after. The nature of units able to accede had still to be decided, and until then states could not put schemes of confederation or direct association with the Union into practice. However, in the interim period the Paramount Power would still operate but the princes had to accept two essentials. Firstly internal constitutionalisation would increase local support and reduce outside dictation from British India and the Crown Representative, and secondly the princes must accept any arrangements which would bring the states' interests "to the fore in the determination of policy by the Central Government of British India."<sup>135</sup> Corfield's intentions were plain. He was not prepared to stand back and let British India take precedence in this case, and it was for this kind of attitude that he was notorious.

The Political Department meanwhile would assist states, as Herbert had told the residents, and would undertake the revision of existing economic arrangements, continue to protect the states, and discuss problems of minority administration, dynastic matters and succession which might not be included in the constitution. Contact between the Political Department and departments of the Government of India would be replaced by the Chancellor's Secretariat when enlarged and plans had been made to strengthen this organization. In conclusion he suggested closer contact between rulers and people, so that constitutional monarchy would arise and be "of the greatest value to the future development of India as a whole."<sup>136</sup>

The princes had a few items they wanted clarified, but Corfield's

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> L/P & J/10/60 :f35.



answers were evasive and unhelpful. They wanted to know what would happen if there was no agreement between the states and British India. Corfield replied that the states would have to decide whether to live independently. He was not giving them the go-ahead to be independent, but leaving the decision to them, with the innuendo that they would find it difficult. If it was impossible for a state to take its seat in the CA, it would have to find a different association with the new constitution so as not to be excluded.<sup>137</sup> Corfield's demeanour at this stage was still one of co-operation with British India; he was telling the princes what the Cabinet Mission wanted them to hear. It was only when he detected treachery from Britain's side that he took up the cudgels on behalf of the states. He agreed with the idea of Union, and had done so since 1935. It was therefore not out of character for him to advocate it now, and try and make the princes understand the benefits of Union and the difficulties of independence. Even in 1947 when he upheld the right of states to be independent<sup>138</sup>, he did not do so from stubbornness, but on principle; for he could see as well as Wylie had the obstacles the states would have to overcome.

Now that the princes were informed, Corfield had to do the same for his political officers. Shortly after his talk to the princes a meeting of residents and political agents<sup>139</sup> took place to discuss the two pertinent documents of the Cabinet Mission. They decided that the

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137 R/2/770/366, 10 June 1946.

138 See Chapter 6.

139 Present: Sir W Campbell, resident Central India; Mr C G Herbert, Secretary to the Crown Representative; Major A E G Davy, Secretary to resident; Captain C P Chevereiux Trench, Under-Secretary to resident; political agent for Malwa; political agent for Bundelkhand; political agent for Bhopal.

CA to be established must define what was meant by a unit which from tentative discussion appeared to be the size of a province. Furthermore it was impractical to make plans for all the states now because it was up to the states to negotiate their place in the Union. It was agreed that political officers should help states get together in the interim period, but the actual negotiations "must be made by the States themselves as we won't be here to put them into force."<sup>140</sup> A gathering like this of political officers was unusual and unique, but the times demanded such action. Since no one from the Secretary of State down really knew what was what, the political officers had to find the way for themselves and the important fact is they did, or at least attempted to, before they got bogged down by confusion and indecision. The Cabinet Mission was full of advice for British India, but for the Political Department it had little to offer.

At the end of June the Cabinet Mission left India. The three men had done all they could to bring India closer to independence and when they departed it was with the belief that they had done so. For British India little had been gained due to the unrelenting enmity between Nehru and Jinnah, and the interim government set up by the Mission had no chance of survival try as Wavell might to make it work. The states had no reason to regret the departure of the Mission, they had got only contradictions from it. The Political Department was left holding together the fragile threads of a solution for the states, one which was not only a threat to its position, but a morass of complications. In many ways Cripps's second visitation was much like his first; he brought hope of freedom and independence and left

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140 R/2/453/60 :f25. Meeting at Indore, 13 July 1946.

behind obstinacy and tumult.

Obviously it was to the Political Adviser that both princes and political officers turned for help, the former because they were unsure of what and how much they were expected to do. In an attempt to pacify Bhopal, who had liked the Mission Plan but had questioned its implications thoroughly,<sup>141</sup> Corfield explained the reasons for regional negotiation between the states and the provinces. They were to make the states face facts and they would only do so if the princes met British Indian representatives and representatives of other states. If the princes declined to have such meetings, they would probably get agitation in the states prompted by the political parties in British India. But if they met they would see the facts of the situation, but would not "initiate a consideration of a combination amongst themselves, if a reasonable solution on these lines emerged."<sup>142</sup> Bhopal was not fooled and asked pointedly if the Political Department endorsed or supported the principle that everything must be done to avoid mergers with British India. The Political Adviser side-stepped neatly, to the effect that "our object would be to enable the maximum amount of Indian State Territory to retain its distinctive political character."<sup>143</sup> The interpretation that could be placed on that made it an extremely ambiguous answer; what it did not do was answer the question. From his reading of the Mission Plan, Bhopal understood that the princes could be independent, or join, as they chose. This was precisely the point the British

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141 TP, Vol.VII. p.978. Bhopal to Wavell, 19 June 1946.

142 R/2/770/366 :f28, 29 July 1946.

143 Ibid.

government wanted to suppress, notwithstanding previous statements - the states could not be allowed to think they could be independent.

The Political Department can be faulted for its failure to say a clear 'aye' or 'nay' to the idea, and one explanation for this is that the Department "wanted to maintain an illusion of theoretical independence right up until the transfer of power ... in order to leave the Princes in a strong bargaining position."<sup>144</sup> In 1946 this was certainly not the case. The Political Adviser and his Department did not give the Princes the indication that independence was on the cards, quite the reverse. The bargaining position of the states was strengthened by the fact that paramountcy would lapse, which implied sovereign status for the states, but that was for the benefit of British India so that the new government or governments could not cheat the states out of a reasonable settlement in the mistaken belief that it would inherit paramountcy. The states could therefore use their so-called 'independence' by threatening to ally with foreign powers if the Indian Government refused to make terms.<sup>145</sup> Wakefield had stressed to the Mission that the position must be stated clearly to an ignorant British India, in order to equal the strengths of the two sides.<sup>146</sup> If blame is to be apportioned, some of it must go to the British government, and to Cripps, for stating that independence was the logical consequence of British withdrawal, and then when confronted with this by the states, saying it was only independence insofar as the states themselves used it to negotiate with British India, not

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<sup>144</sup> Ashton, op cit, p.204.

<sup>145</sup> TP, Vol. VII, p.262. The draft Memoire incorporated the comments which Corfield had made on this point to Bhopal

<sup>146</sup> See p.185.

through the Crown Representative. Real independence to the princes meant they could also treat with Britain on an individual basis and it was on this that Britain stalled. The Political Department perpetuated the denial of independence with unwavering consistency.

In December 1946, shortly after the misunderstanding with Nehru,<sup>147</sup> Corfield cornered Patrick on the subject of British obligations to the states. It was not enough, he said, "to assert that H.M.G. have a responsibility to India as a whole, including the States, it is necessary to be clear as to how that responsibility can be fulfilled."<sup>148</sup> Paramountcy could not be maintained for very much longer, and Wakefield had argued in a memorandum that retrocession should begin earlier, during the interim period. Patrick's reply, based on a note by Clauson,<sup>149</sup> said that he saw no flaw in the argument that Britain was rapidly losing the ability to protect the states in all circumstances. But it did not seem to follow that the Crown was therefore justified in terminating formal paramountcy relations with states in everything. This would mean leaving the states with nothing with which to bargain, and open to attack in some form, from British India. It was also liable to bring criticism of the British government for having created a breach in the existing unity of India, before the CA had had a chance to offer the states an alternative way of keeping unity under one constitution. Patrick

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147 See pp.167-168.

148 L/P &S/13/1831. Corfield to Patrick, 9 December 1946.

149 Clauson, Miles John, Assistant Secretary Political (states) Department, India Office 1944 to February 1946; September 1946; Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for India February to September 1946.

could not see what good it would do the states if Britain started a conflict with the interim government over abandoning some of the more important results of paramountcy, e.g. railway jurisdiction, because in some cases this would seem to enhance the power of the states with regard to the CA. The Political Department "may no longer be able to prescribe what shall happen in all circumstances between a State and British India. But this is not entirely a new development."<sup>150</sup> It could still be a buffer between the two, although this was not an enviable role but was more advantageous to both sides than if Britain went back on its undertakings in the Mission Memorandum. In the meantime political officers could say to the rulers quite frankly if they could, that Britain recognised that their rights could not in all circumstances be upheld, but the Political Department wanted to give them all the help necessary as long as Britain remained in India. And it was in the best interests of the princes to stick to the Memorandum.<sup>151</sup> Anyway, he noted, the Secretary of State had to remain uncommitted until the Viceroy's views were known.<sup>152</sup> Unusually Patrick was not prepared to move away from agreed policy if he thought it may be necessary. Previously he had been a champion of the unconventional but the Mission seemed to cast a spell on everyone; all believed it was the only way, except the Political Department.

Ironically Wavell's views were very similar. Earlier that year he had

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150 L/P &S/13/1831. Patrick to Corfield, 24 December 1946.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.

drawn up a plan for a phased withdrawal from India,<sup>153</sup> Province by province starting in the South, which he presented to the Cabinet in December. It was known as the Breakdown Plan, for it was to be implemented in the event of a breakdown of law and order in India following the failure of constitutional negotiations. This affected the states, because the obligations of the Crown to protect them rested on the effective British control of the surrounding territory in British India. Under 'Breakdown' this would be less and less possible. In Wavell's words,

The exercise of paramountcy over the States which lie within the boundaries of Hindustan will be relinquished by the Crown from the date when British control of the provinces of Hindustan is handed over. Paramountcy will continue with those States which lie within the boundaries of North-West and North-East India still remaining under British control. Those States which lie between Hindustan and the proposed areas under British control will be free to adhere either to Hindustan or to the British controlled area. 154

The British government and Wavell differed sharply over the plan and this disagreement "brought about (Wavell's) ultimate dismissal."<sup>155</sup> The only fault with the plan from the Political Department's side was its failure to mention the withdrawal of political officers, although it dealt with the other Secretary of State's Services in the provinces. It was left up to the Political Department to work this out.

The residents' conference in December dealt in depth with the

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153 Moore, Escape From Empire, pp. 183, 185, 189.

George Abell, Wavell's secretary, came up with the germ of the idea in April 1946. Wavell, Pethick-Lawrence and Alexander also worked on a similar plan during May which Wavell perfected in August.

154 WJ, p331, 10 August 1946.

155 Moore, Escape From Empire, p.183.

retraction of paramountcy in all senses. Colville<sup>156</sup> addressed the residents in Wavell's place, and emphasised the need to make rulers aware that their future was in their hands. If they gained the loyalty of their subjects "they can regard without dismay the lapse of paramountcy and the withdrawal of our protection. With the support of their people, they can resist the political attacks that may be made on them from beyond the boundaries of their States."<sup>157</sup> It was towards this goal that the Political Department had to work, to lift the burden of protection from Britain's shoulders.

Two subjects held the residents' attention: the duties and authority of the Political Department during retraction, and consequently the retraction of staff during and after the lapse of paramountcy. Following on the April discussion<sup>158</sup> the first item had to be even more clearly defined and decided so that residents knew precisely what their new functions within the states were.

Corfield opened the proceedings with an explanation of political officers' intervention in internal affairs. Previously they had not been able to give advice about forms of government, but had concentrated on improving the existing administration. Now they could advise along the lines of the Chancellor's Declaration to the last session of the Chamber of Princes, that "the object is to set up

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156 Colville, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir (David) John; 1st Baron Clydesmuir; Secretary to Department of Overseas Trade 1931-35; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of Scotland 1935-36; Financial Secretary to Treasury 1936-38; Secretary of State for Scotland; Governor of Bombay 1943-48; stood in for the Viceroy on four occasions 1945-47.

157 L/P &S/13/1831 p.2, 16 December 1946.

158 See pp.188-190.



forthwith constitutions in which sovereign powers of the Ruler are exercised through regular constitutional channels."<sup>159</sup> The gradual establishment of effective internal checks would lessen the need for external restrictions and intervention;<sup>160</sup> this policy of reduced intervention was both "logical and defensible"<sup>161</sup> but had to be subject to local conditions, so the political officer had to urge rulers to set up genuinely representative committees to discuss reforms which the rulers could promise to implement.<sup>162</sup>

Most important for the successful retraction of paramountcy was the time factor. What was contemplated was a gradual reduction of paramountcy intervention *pari passu* with the gradual increase in states' freedom - to have the smallest possible vacuum of administration at the end of the interim period.<sup>163</sup> Nothing was as easy as it sounded in the states and Corfield warned that it was doubtful if the process could be as gradual as they wanted - it might have to be speeded up. His officers therefore needed a clear distinction between policy they must pursue officially (the gradual relaxation of control) and the possibility that the power to retain paramountcy control might decline rapidly. Officially the Political Department had to assume that the process would follow the Cabinet Mission, i.e. that British India would be reasonable in negotiations with states and it would be possible to retain paramountcy in the

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159 R/1/1/4602, 16/17 December 1946.

160 See Chapter 6.

161 R/1/1/4602, 16/17 December 1946.

162 *Ibid.*

163 R/1/1/4602, 16/17 December 1946.

interim period.<sup>164</sup> As usual the states and the Political Department were dependent on the goodwill of British India. The point made at the conference in this regard though, was not to have as much faith as the British government and the India Office had in the Cabinet Mission Plan. From hard experience the Political Department had learned that when it came to the crunch the states were reliant on the Political officers and they were reliant on the Department. Further than that Corfield was not prepared to go, and in this instance he could only hope it would be enough. Mutual agreement between the parties themselves was the only possible basis for a stable future, achieved by negotiation.

Nevertheless the states could not be left stranded when paramountcy lapsed, and it was up to the Political Department as far as possible to fill the void in advance. A beginning had to be made immediately, to divest political officers of the duties which could during the interim be performed by other agencies. They must also help plan for machinery for the future performance of these duties which would only be handed over at the end, but must not be handed over until other agencies had been created. None of this could be done until the states had negotiated agreed principles with British India.

The duties in question were divided into internal and external functions. The former concerned inter alia matters of Succession,

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164 Ibid.

Minority Administration and Rights and Dignities.<sup>165</sup> The latter concerned the political and economic relations between the states themselves, and with British India. The political officers were to eliminate themselves completely so that there was direct correspondence between the states and British India. For it was only when the existing channels ceased to function that new ones would develop and in the interests of the states it was desirable that new channels were established before the end of the interim period. The need for economic co-operation would become apparent, and co-operation might develop if the offices of the Political Department were withdrawn.<sup>166</sup>

On the whole, the main duty of the Political Department lay in strengthening the states for the negotiations with British India. The Department then had a vital role to play in the states at this time, although it meant working towards its own dissolution, which was very much on the residents' minds. Colville took cognisance of this,

I recognise that political developments in British India and the prospective lapse of paramountcy have weakened your official position. But it is now, as it always has been in the past, the personal influence of a Political Officer which counts most with a Ruler ... Lord Wavell ... is fully aware of the difficult position in which you are placed and the loyalty with which you continue to carry out your duties. Your own interests and those of the officers serving under you will be safeguarded to the best of his ability. 167

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<sup>165</sup> Succession - the promulgation of Laws of Succession and some authority to ensure these laws were promulgated.

Minority Administration - How to make the states involved capable of their own administration. Relax control more than ordinarily. Set up Regent or Regency Council, without full control, joint administration with some other body, i.e. a Board of rulers. Rights and Dignities - the privileges enjoyed by the princes to be protected.

<sup>166</sup> R/1/1/4602, 16/17 December 1946.

<sup>167</sup> L/P & S/13/1831 p.3, 16 December 1946.

In spite of Wavell's responsibilities to the Political Department, it had to look after its own, and the conference laid down the lines along which political officers would lose their careers.

The initial thrust would be to distribute the remaining functions of residents and political agents to a small cadre of officers - reduced in strength by premature retirement. The Crown Representative's policy was as far as possible to release junior officers first; which would leave the Department in the hands of the most experienced men. Corfield thought the best method was retraction by centralisation. By this was meant that at the end of the first stage residencies would be in the charge of a resident with two or three secretaries or under-secretaries; at the end of the second stage there would only be a Political Department at Delhi. Various residents put forward ideas of amalgamation of residencies, with clerical staff being promoted to the position of under-secretary to carry the work load.<sup>168</sup> Everyone knew the end was in sight, and besides helping the states they wished to make it easier on themselves.<sup>169</sup>

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168 R/1/1/4602, 16/17 December 1946.

169 The date of British withdrawal had not yet been decided and therefore the termination of the Political Service had not been settled. Political officers were eligible for employment in other Crown Services and an Employment Bureau was established in Delhi to facilitate this. Nothing else was done to help IPS officers and they were forced to make their own way.

Interview with Sir Francis Pearson, 25 March 1985.

Pearson, Sir Francis Fenwick, 1st Bart; A.D.C. to Viceroy 1934-36; Under-Secretary Political Department 1942-45; Chief minister Manipur 1945-47.

Pearson, when resident in Manipore, was not even told when he was expected to vacate his post. He had to make private arrangements to travel home. Once there he was no longer the responsibility of the Political Department.

See Hunt & Harrison, *op cit.* The final chapter deals in personal terms with the end of the ICS.

Yet every effort was made to equip the states for the Political Department's departure so that once it was gone the states would not mourn its passing. Britain took great pride in the benefits she bestowed on India, and was determined to leave a legacy of goodwill. On a smaller scale the Political Department felt the same way, and despite some failure and contention, the residents who gathered around their Political Adviser in December 1946 must be given the credit for the confidence they instilled in their states to add substance to the ground work they had been told to lay. "It was imperative for us to recognize that the future of the States was not in our hands but must be decided in India by Indians."<sup>170</sup>

Much had happened in 1946. Britain had changed her tactics and new ideas and policies were promulgated and discarded with rapidity previously unseen in India. Sadly the end of the year brought the demise of certain facets of life in India. Wavell, who had battled with the governments of India and Britain throughout his time as Viceroy, was dealt an underhand blow unworthy of Attlee. On 17 December, a day that had seen Wavell trying for the third time in two years to get his point across to the Cabinet, Attlee proposed to the King that he be replaced by Lord Louis Mountbatten. Wavell only knew this for sure in early 1947, although he must have expected something of the sort when Britain continually quashed every effort he made to achieve peace and progress. He was disheartened by the events of 1946, and told the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State and Alexander that "... Neither I nor the Governors nor any responsible officials can act with any confidence or decision unless we know,

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170 R/1/1/4602, 16/17 December 1946.

quite clearly, what policy H.M.G. proposes to follow..."<sup>171</sup> Another element that had gone was the trust held by India in Britain and her motives. Attlee fervently hoped that Mountbatten would restore it, Mountbatten would do away with the need for 'Breakdown', that Mountbatten would prove to be the Viceroy to end all Viceroys. A new year, a new Viceroy, a new India; 1947 was the breaking point.

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171 WJ, p.389, 3 December 1946.

## CHAPTER 6 - RETRACTION AND RECRIMINATION

The final months of the Political Department's existence were its most frenetic. It was a time when the schizophrenic situation of the Department became apparent; a 'tug of war'<sup>1</sup> between tidying up and closing down, as India moved inexorably towards independence. Residents and political officers found themselves caught between the unremitting pressure from Congress to leave the states to their people, not their rulers, and the despairing pleas of the rulers not to abandon them.

The stunning announcement of 20 February 1947 that Britain would leave India no later than June 1948 was the first time Britain had ever set a date for independence.<sup>2</sup> India was to prepare her own constitution, under British guidance, as laid down in the Cabinet Mission Plan.<sup>3</sup> If this was not done by the deadline Britain would hand over power in a form she felt best suited to Indian interests.<sup>4</sup>

On 20 February Attlee dismissed Lord Wavell and replaced him with Lord Louis Mountbatten. "New men were needed for a new policy."<sup>5</sup> Abruptly the silent Viceroy was gone.

Mountbatten's Viceroyalty has come under the closest scrutiny,

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1 MB 198. Minutes of the Residents' Conference, 11 April 1947.

2 Cmd 7047, Indian Policy - Statement of 20th February 1947.

3 See Chapter 3.

4 H.C. DEB. 5. s. 20 February 1947.

5 C R Attlee, As it happened, p.183.

especially in more recent years.<sup>6</sup> It has been said that he virtually wrote his own orders as Viceroy,<sup>7</sup> made demands on Attlee which could not be refused,<sup>8</sup> and went to India with plenipotentiary powers.<sup>9</sup> This view has been explored and to some extent distilled,<sup>10</sup> but what still remains is the expectation aroused both in Britain and India that here was a Viceroy capable of tackling the issues of Indian independence with style and vigour.<sup>11</sup> Despite Attlee's confidence Mountbatten would still have to prove his worth. His link with royalty<sup>12</sup> impressed the princes, but they were to find his royal blood did not give him a princely view.

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- 6 For literature directly relating to Mountbatten see:  
D. Butler - Lord Mountbatten - the last Viceroy  
A. Campbell-Johnson - Mission with Mountbatten  
R. Hough - Mountbatten - Hero of our Times  
P. Ziegler - Mountbatten - the Official Biography  
Emberdore Ltd & J Terraine - The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten  
For more general literature in which Mountbatten's Viceroyalty is discussed, see bibliography.
- 7 Hodson, op cit, p.199,
- 8 Hough, op cit, p.208,
- 9 Hodson, op cit, p.201.
- 10 Moore, Escape From Empire, pp. 220 - 223; and Ziegler, op cit, pp.355-356.
- 11 Stimson Papers 11, 3 April 1947. An inside look at impressions in India was given to H R Stimson, the BBC correspondent, by Wavell's Private Secretaries who had decided to stay on for a few months. " Both of them feel Wavell was given a rather raw deal and neither of them is anxious to stay on under the new regime. They are ruefully amused at the council of war that Mountbatten holds every morning at ten-o'clock. Ismay, Meiville, Abell, Campbell-Johnson and one or two others go to it ... in order, in Scott's words, that 'Ismay & Meiville (sic) may tell one another how many new provinces of British India each has discovered since the previous day'."
- 12 He was a direct descendent of Queen Victoria and second cousin to King George VI.



Corfield, the personal embodiment of the role of the trustee by the Political Department on behalf of the princely states, was to clash sharply with the views of the new Viceroy. But not immediately. At the time of Mountbatten's arrival in March 1947 nothing could have led either man to predict this outcome.

The Cabinet Mission plan still served as the basic formula for the states, as Attlee made clear in his 20 February statement. Paramountcy powers would not be transferred to any new government of British India nor would the system of paramountcy cease until the final date of British withdrawal. In the interim the Crown's relations with the states would be adjusted by agreement.<sup>13</sup>

The vagueness about the states in Mountbatten's directive was in keeping with that of Cripps in 1942 and 1946:<sup>14</sup>

... so long as the paramountcy of the Crown is continued you will do your best to persuade the States Rulers to progress rapidly towards some form of more democratic Government in their States and you will aid and assist them in coming to a fair and just arrangement with the leaders of British India as to their future relationship. 15

The text of this had been drafted before Attlee's Commons speech. It was later amended slightly to include the fact that policy towards the states would adhere strictly to the Cabinet Mission Plan : "... but in there being no agreement in sight by the beginning of 1948 on a fully representative Central Government, you are authorised to enter into negotiations with individual states for adjusting their relations with

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13 H.C. DEB. 5. s. 20 February 1947, col. 1401.

14 See Chapter 5, p.187.

15 TP, Vol. IX, p.653. Attlee to Mountbatten, 8 February 1947.

the Crown."<sup>16</sup> The actual directive was identical.<sup>17</sup> The Cabinet Mission Plan was clear: paramountcy would remain, although subject to adjustment, until the final transfer of power.

Once in India, Mountbatten found that "the hectic pursuit of a settlement acceptable to Congress and the Muslim League drove all minor considerations from his mind".<sup>18</sup> His relegation of the states to the background was in keeping with the tenor of British policy towards the states since the 1930's.<sup>19</sup> Mountbatten inherited and continued this practice until he could no longer ignore the problem.

Conflicting policy had caught up with the states:

Since Political Officers were precluded from giving advice about the form of government in States, these attempts were necessarily confined to the administrative sphere; and emphasis was accordingly laid on administrative rather than constitutional integration. 20

It became apparent that attempts to create common administrative services, although valuable in their own right, were no substitute for constitutional integration. It was not until the Cabinet Mission Memorandum had been published<sup>21</sup> that it became possible for the Crown Representative to encourage the smaller states "to form or join administrative units large enough to enable them to be fitted into the

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16 TP, Vol. IX, Draft directive, p.670. Attlee to Mountbatten, 11 February 1947.

17 TP. Vol. IX, p.973. 18 March 1947.

18 Ziegler, op cit, p. 405.

19 See Ashton, op cit.

20 R/2/770/366 :f92, Memorandum by Wakefield, 24 March 1947.

21 See Chapter 5, p.187.

constitutional structure".<sup>22</sup> But this encouragement was limited by the fact that there was still uncertainty about the size of a unit capable of being joined to the Centre. Rulers were therefore urged to discuss amongst themselves schemes for confederation which would allow direct accession to the union "for such preliminary discussion would, it was thought, bring home to them the practical implications of grouping and make them face the realities of their situation."<sup>23</sup> But no final commitments could be made towards any kind of confederation until the nature of the acceding units had been established. The 20 February statement made matters worse. The process of integration which normally would need years to complete, must now be done in months and it was impossible for the Crown Representative to postpone positive action until the mediators between the states and British India had agreed. Wakefield told the residents that they now had to "employ every means in their power, during the short time left, to ensure that their advice is followed."<sup>24</sup> Subject to the decision to be made at the forthcoming residents' conference<sup>25</sup> in respect of particular agencies, it was the Crown Representative's intentions that political officers would be withdrawn in the course of the summer and autumn. If the small states were not to disintegrate after British withdrawal, they must have effective regional grouping. Political officers would have to ensure too that there existed in the states an executive body to whom they could transfer their duties. The urgency of the matter required the Crown Representative to actively encourage

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22 R/2/770/366 :f92, Memorandum by Wakefield, 24 March 1947.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 See p.218.

grouping schemes.<sup>26</sup> And so the Political Department was back to grouping, a subject which offended the princes concerned. The chickens hatched by the initial attempts at grouping<sup>27</sup> had now come home to roost, and the Political Department had to build the chicken run.

In April the residents were called together to discuss all these issues. The previous residents conference in December 1946<sup>28</sup> had given political officers some idea of what was expected of them and the approach to be adopted. Wavell had written to the Secretary of State in February 1947 to confirm the methods outlined there.<sup>29</sup> The Crown Representative, he thought, should be given full discretion to apply the general policy approved by the British government, although Wavell would keep them informed and consult the Secretary of State in cases of doubt, time permitting. Pethick-Lawrence agreed fully, and noted that the object was in fact "to enable States to stand on their own feet to encourage them to stand together but to do everything to encourage them to co-operate to the full with British India."<sup>30</sup>

Corfield for his part also wanted leeway to conduct retraction: "If we are too slow about it the resulting vacuum will be filled by British India (thus negating the promise that paramountcy would not be inherited) and that the States cannot learn to stand on their own legs in time."<sup>31</sup> But the residents' conference could not plan for

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26 R/2/770/366. Memorandum by Wakefield, 24 March 1947.

27 See Chapter 2.

28 See Chapter 5, p.203. Residents' Conference December 1946.

29 R/3/1/136, p.8. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 27 February 1947.

30 R/3/1/136, p.12. Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 5 March 1947.

31 L/P & S/1831:f191. Corfield to Pethick-Lawrence, 26 February 1947.

contraction until there was a decision about the termination of the Political Service, "without putting individual officers into a difficult and me an embarrassing position."<sup>32</sup> The India Office was completely sympathetic to this point, and M J Clauson<sup>33</sup> felt it was

absolutely vital that we should leave as much discretion as possible to the Crown Representative and the Political Adviser. Sir Conrad Corfield and the Residents have immense experience of these intricate and detailed questions and discussion of them at high level at this end is not likely to be fruitful. 34

Pethick-Lawrence agreed<sup>35</sup> and the Political Department now had the confidence of the India Office and the full responsibility for the retraction of paramountcy.

The new comprehensive policy of the Political Department was one which Pethick-Lawrence felt the India Committee<sup>36</sup> could "cordially approve".<sup>37</sup> It meant in effect that the states should be encouraged to work together and with the central government. But although retraction was unavoidable some of the weaker states could not be left entirely to their own devices and would need political officers up to

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32 Ibid.

33 Clauson, Miles John; Assistant Secretary Political (States) Department, India Office 1944 - Feb 1946 and from Sept 1946; Feb - Sept 1946 Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for India.

34 L/P & S/1831 :f160. Note by Clauson on letter from Corfield to Pethick-Lawrence, 26 February 1947.

35 R/3/1/736, p.12. Pethick-Lawrence to Mountbatten, 5 March 1947.

36 India Committee: Mr C Attlee (Prime Minister), Mr H Dalton (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Sir S Cripps (Pres. of the Board of Trade), Mr A V Alexander (Secretary of State for Defence), Viscount Addison (Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs), Lord Pethick-Lawrence (Secretary of State for India and Burma) and from 23 April 1947 the Earl of Listowel (Secretary of State for India and Burma).

37 TP, Vol.IX, p.838. Memorandum by Pethick-Lawrence, 25 March 1947.

the last possible moment.<sup>38</sup>

Pethick-Lawrence expected the question of retraction to be brought up in the Commons debate, and wanted to make it clear that the object of the exercise was to "create a situation in which independent and self-reliant States or groups of States can play their full part in the development of a free and united India."<sup>39</sup> The British government would therefore take the line in any debate that the statement of 20 February "is quite clear and means precisely what it says."<sup>40</sup>

Cripps spoke for the government in the debate:

As we have repeatedly stated, there is no intention of handing over our rights and obligations under paramountcy to anyone else. When we transfer power in British India the rights and obligations of paramountcy will lapse ... We have envisaged in the statement (20 February) that some States may wish, in these final stages of paramountcy, to adjust or modify their position, *vis-a-vis* the Paramount Power, and we have stated that we are prepared to agree to such modifications where they are necessary and reasonable. But such modifications will not, of course, in any way determine the future relationship of the States to the rest of India. It is purely a matter of transitional convenience. 41

Members of the House were not at all sure that Britain was taking the correct line with the states. On one side the policy was too

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38 Ibid.

39 TP, Vol.IX, p.839, op cit.

40 Ibid.

41 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 5 March 1947, col.507.

lenient<sup>42</sup> and on the other not lenient enough.<sup>43</sup> The debate reflected the British government's own uncertainty. Nonetheless, the Political Department had full and clear instructions as to how the retraction of paramountcy was to be conducted: along the lines laid down in 1946.

On 11 April the residents' conference convened, and the Crown Representative was invited to attend. Mountbatten left immediately after opening the proceedings. His heavy programme of engagements prevented Corfield from "acquaint(ing) him with the real problems which affected the future of the States after the transfer of power". Consequently, as Corfield noted, the conclusions were forwarded to the Secretary of State, who had the final responsibility for deciding them."<sup>44</sup> Yet the conference had been significant enough for the

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42 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 5 March 1947, col. 539. One Member thought the government had shown a weakness in refusing to surrender paramountcy to the new Indian government. The States were, in his opinion chronological errors. " They have no historical right to exist. It is as absurd to have Indian States in India, as it would be to have large tracts of modern Britain ruled by Norman Barons. I believe that once we withdraw British support from those places, without entering into military agreements with them, those States would be bound to enter the Indian Federation under the Central Government. I hope the Government will not be tempted to enter into separate agreements with the Indian Princes, ... because that would be regarded as an attempt to pepper India with about 300 Ulsters. It would be regarded as such, both by Indians, and progressive opinion in Britain."

43 H.C. DEB. 5 s. 5 March 1947, col 563. Another Member asked whether the British government was going to have " those Indian States which have given such loyal and disinterested service, in good times and bad, like isolated islands in an angry and hostile sea. I would hope that paramountcy might give place to protectorate ... I do not know whether the Indian Princes have been consulted, but I should like to know whether the matter has been considered. We see that this violent change has to be made because the word of the Government and of the British people has been pledged, but could not some clause be inserted in the deed of transfer, whereby those States to whom we are handing over authority, would remain within the British Commonwealth for, say, five years, until this complex and intricate process of handing over is completed? "

44 Mss. Eur. D850/6.

British Broadcasting Corporation correspondent to have sent home a full report of it.<sup>45</sup>

The hammering out of the details of the retraction of paramountcy took two days.<sup>46</sup> The programme to be discussed was the withdrawal of all political agents by autumn, and residents by the end of 1947. The main functions of the Political Department would be discontinued by the end of March 1948.<sup>47</sup> Whatever problems were encountered due to local conditions, the programme must be followed. It was asking a great deal of a Department and a Service that had been operating in India since the days of the Company.<sup>48</sup>

The Department's operation was to be wound up in three phases: the reduction of references, in terms of correspondence and files, the

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45 Stimson Papers 1, N43, 9 April 1947:

Lord Mountbatten today took what may be regarded as (the) first practical step towards liquidating (the) paramount authority of (the) British Crown over (the) Indian States. He presided over (a) meeting of (the) Residents of (the) Indian States who ... will discuss means (and) ways by which (the) British Crown can divest itself smoothly (and) peacefully of its powers (and) obligations towards the India of the Princes ... the eleven Residents ... are officials who have direct day to day contact with (the) Indian States and form (the) strongest link between (the) Viceroy and (the) Princes. Some time between now and June next year (the) Viceroy ... will cease (to) exist. So will all political officers who help advise him in the sphere of Princely India. As (a) result there will be (a) vacuum which must be filled in (a) matter of months if there's (sic) to be (a) smooth transition...

46 L/P & S/13/1827, Corfield to Bhopal, 24 February 1947. Corfield had warned Bhopal of the dangers of delay : "If steps are not taken at once to devise new arrangements which can operate independently of the assistance of the Crown Representative and his officers, the end of paramountcy must inevitably be followed by a major administrative breakdown, injurious alike to the people of the States and to the people of British India."

47 Corfield, op cit, p151.

48 See Chapter 1.



withdrawal of personnel including medical officers,<sup>49</sup> and the disposal of the property of the residencies and agencies. All of these would be achieved by the relaxation of control over rulers and states and the discontinuation of reports, returns and correspondence in the residencies, agencies and the Department in Delhi. References would also be reduced by putting the states in direct contact with the provinces. Although the procedure was subject to local conditions, certain general rules applied throughout. The residents were to decide when the political officers under their control could go, for example, within one to two months prior to the termination of posts and the residency; for states dependent on political officers the shock of separation would be staggered this way. The withdrawal of political agents had to be soon, but was to be regulated by the decrease in work. Temporary staff could go first unless permanent members wanted to leave immediately. After the political agent had gone, some of his staff might have to remain for a while for the final winding up of the agency, otherwise all staff should be gone by the time the political agent's post was terminated. Residents would remain in their posts until these had been officially terminated, the exact date of which would be fixed in consultation with the resident; this would not necessarily be the same for each post. Other staff arrangements would be the same as with the agencies. The rulers were to be fully informed of every move, as there was no need for secrecy;<sup>50</sup> in fact the more the princes knew the sooner they would

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49 They were to leave residencies or agencies at the same time as the resident or agent unless it was convenient for them to leave sooner.

See Chapter 1, p. 39 for details of residency staff.

50 MB 198. Residents' Conference Minutes, 11/12 April 1947.

step in to fill the gaps.

It all looked orderly and progressive, but there were many complex arrangements which flowed from the reduction of personnel. In an attempt to outline the issues to which the contraction of the Department and paramountcy gave rise, the residents' conference minutes are at best a useful guide to the kinds of problems facing the Department. It is not enough, however, to view these minutes as the definitive list of the required activities, because, as was the norm with the Political Department, none of them were as simple to perform as they seemed. The controversies<sup>51</sup> stirred up by the conference decisions stemmed from the attempts of Corfield and his officers to implement the decisions made and approved by the Secretary of State. These matters can be categorised, to some extent, for easier reference because the wider context of British India intervened with unfailing regularity and as with the whole history of the Political Department, this inevitably made for changes in the original programme.<sup>52</sup> In order of detail rather than importance, the categories may be regarded as those matters which affected only the states; those which affected the dealings between British India and the states; and the relationship between the states and Britain. The Political Department therefore had a great deal on its collective mind in April 1947.

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51 See pp.227-53.

52 Stimson 1, N45, 11 April 1947. The programme for the Crown agreed on at the conference was reported as being "to divest itself of paramountcy authority over (the) Indian States in accordance with the Prime Minister's declaration of February 20th". Stimson's source of information was Wakefield, with Corfield's and Mountbatten's concurrence, which meant in effect that the programme had been seen and agreed to by the Viceroy, and Corfield's subsequent actions were legitimate.

The Secretary of State was equally concerned, and he had written to Mountbatten in March expressing his doubts over the retraction of Political Officers in those agencies which had formerly required constant attention. He felt that "the intervention of Political Officers may well require to be continued on more or less the present basis beyond the period contemplated in other Agencies, and possibly up to the date of our departure."<sup>53</sup> What Pethick-Lawrence wanted was to see progress from the states governments in associating themselves "with their peoples, thus eliminating the need for close paramountcy control, and with the future structure of British India."<sup>54</sup> Mountbatten quickly disposed of this query.<sup>55</sup> A delay in the withdrawal of political officers would defeat the object of making the states stand up alone. Only by their withdrawal would the Political Department be able to keep up the pressure behind the "shock of February 20th statement."<sup>56</sup> The desire of the Secretary of State to keep his finger in the pie was summarily rejected: "The India Office are always inclined to try to run the States from Whitehall, and it is a particularly hopeless task at present."<sup>57</sup>

Of immediate concern to the Political Department was the need to stabilise the states sufficiently to allow Political Officers to become redundant. To begin with the ruler had to be in a position to cope with changing circumstances and to do this he had to be secure.

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53 TP, Vol.IX, p.1000.Pethick-Lawrence to Mountbatten, 21 March 1947.

54 Ibid.

55 See Chapter 5, p.189; p.195; for Corfield's suggestions to residents on this issue.

56 TP, Vol. X, p.132. Mountbatten to Pethick-Lawrence, 5 April 1947.

57 R/31136 :f29. Note by Abell, 26 March 1947.

The Political Department had been in control of succession in the states, to avoid any unrest due to a disputed succession. Succession laws<sup>58</sup> therefore had to be promulgated to make each state responsible for its own ruler. Along the same lines, minority states, where the political officer supervised the affairs of the state because the ruler was a minor, the political officer's involvement had to be terminated wherever they could be and a Regency established.<sup>59</sup>

The issue of Regencies and Succession Laws, although seemingly minor points, were in strict accordance with the policy of retraction and are examples of the kinds of detail managed by the Political

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58 MB 198. Residents' Conference Minutes, 11-12 April 1947.  
The laws were needed to keep stability in disputed cases, especially if they rested on popular authority, the states Assembly and the High Court. The states could expect little help from outside authorities (e.g. Federal Courts) as their decision had no sanction, but groups of states could set up Tribunals for disputes in the Succession Acts, which would be given weight by the armed forces available to them. The Political Adviser would draw up a model act, but the residents must get Succession Acts passed in all the states in anticipation of the model.

59 MB 198. Residents' Conference Minutes, 11-12 April 1947; L/P & S/13/1831 :f3 27 June 1947; July 1947.  
A Regency would consist of either a Council of Regents or a Regency Board, placing the rulership in commission. Members would be chosen from the ruling family, with strictly limited functions of sovereignty under constitutional safeguards, as in a constitutional monarchy. The Council could not interfere with the day to day administration, which would be under the control of the Executive Council of the state and/or Dewan as before. There could be a sole regent, if he was trustworthy but he could not maintain his position after the lapse of paramountcy. In order to get this underway, a letter was sent to all residents in late June, authorising the residents to set up Regency Councils or appoint Regents, on whatever terms they thought fit in accordance with the principles laid down at the conference. A further note in July explained that it was important that the Regency enjoyed local support, so that administration would not be disrupted by popular discontent.

Department.<sup>60</sup> Every action of this kind helped to establish more firmly the fact that the Political Department was indeed leaving, and it gave each state further opportunity to take control of its own affairs, which was the object of the exercise.

Corfield covered every eventuality. Even before the residents' conference he had written a memorandum for Wavell on 'Alternative Machinery to Political Department' to carry out Political duties once the Department had contracted. He summarised the duties of the Department as those which had been decided in 1937,<sup>61</sup> and explained that all of them could be dealt with by methods other than that of creating a Political Department of the new central government.<sup>62</sup> If such a Department were established the states would be suspicious, seeing it as an attempt by the central government to gain paramount powers. He felt that there was no need for such a department, during the interim period anyway, since all the expertise needed was available in the departments of the Government of India, especially in matters of common concern.<sup>63</sup>

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60 MB 198. Residents' Conference Minutes, 11-12 April 1947. Other details of this kind, all of which could be placed under the first category of retraction subjects mentioned on p.221 were the relaxation of restriction in states. All restrictions placed on the ruler's power would be removed. The Political Department would deal with those restrictions which concerned the employment of Europeans and other government servants; inter-Statal loans; jurisdiction over Europeans; mail robbery rules; visits to Delhi or Hill Stations; mining leases or licenses; memorials which protected small landowners which could be amended or withdrawn; restrictions on rulers concerning minorities, incompetency or dynastic powers would be removed under certain conditions or lapse automatically with the transfer of power.

61 See Chapter 1, p.16, n.84;86 for example of matters dealt with by Political Department.

62 Some of these suggestions were implemented, for example in the form of Regency boards.

63 TP. Vol.X, PP.29-31. Corfield to Abell, 27 March 1947.

This was the beginning of the policy of 'direct contact' which caused consternation in India.<sup>64</sup> Corfield could put the states into contact with the departments of the government of India, and whether "this ... will lead to those Departments obtaining some new control over States corresponding to the past control of paramountcy is a question with which we are not concerned. We cannot alter the economic and geographical unity of India."<sup>65</sup> Here were signs that Corfield, who has been called an idealist, faced up to the realities of the Indian situation.

All that was left for the Political Department to do was to "relieve itself of its duties as swiftly as possible";<sup>66</sup> encourage the states to make alternative arrangements and put them in contact with the central and provincial governments, while the Political Department was still available to help. "Any other course would be interpreted as a breach of faith and would not lead to satisfactory conclusions ..."<sup>67</sup> This paper was discussed at the Viceroy's 6th Staff Meeting in March where Corfield stressed the difficulties of getting the states to form administrative units, until they firmly understood that Britain was withdrawing. Only the physical retraction of Political Department personnel would persuade them to take action. His statement was approved by the Viceroy.<sup>68</sup> Strangely Mountbatten's Secretaries took

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64 See p.238.

65 TP. Vol.X, p.31. Corfield to Abell, 27 March 1947.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 TP. Vol.X, pp.48-49, 31 March 1947.

exception to Corfield's comments. Scott noted that it was logical to have a States Department to avoid an administrative vacuum. With this in mind he recommended that the paper not be sent to the Secretary of State and that Corfield may have written it differently if he had known it was going to London.<sup>69</sup> As it was Corfield decided not to send it.

Corfield's concern that the states should not suspect a transfer of paramountcy was valid. His change of mind is less understandable, for at the residents' conference and directly afterwards, he proposed and implemented direct contact between the states and the government Departments<sup>70</sup> with the knowledge and approval of the Secretary of State; he already had the Viceroy's. The latter, however, changed this policy and encouraged and aided the creation of a States Department, a matter in which his and Corfield's views were seriously incompatible.<sup>71</sup>

But the Political Department could not have continued with retraction without the approval of the British government. Despite any ideas to the contrary, the programme envisaged by the conference was in accordance with the Cabinet Mission Plan and it was to this that the Political Department had to adhere. The 20 February statement had not implied any changes to the Plan, but "it was of course not beyond the bounds of possibility that before June 1948 the Viceroy might report that there is no possibility of the Mission's hopes as regards the states being realised, and in that event he might propose to His

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69 TP. Vol.X, pp.53-54, Note by I.D. Scott, 1 April 1947.

70 See p.238.

71 See p.257-58.

Majesty's Government some other means of fulfilling our undertakings."<sup>72</sup> Listowel's letter gave the Viceroy the authority to change the Political Department's programme as he saw fit.

In May Lord Mountbatten sent Lord Ismay to London and Corfield asked to accompany him to discuss with the Secretary of State and his advisers action which should be taken on the recommendations of the residents' conference.<sup>73</sup> Permission was granted and the meeting at the India Office on 9 May 1947 included Corfield, Listowel, Henderson,<sup>74</sup> Patrick, Monteath and Clauson. Corfield began by making a general statement on the current position. The Cabinet Mission Memorandum of 12 May which had originally been drafted with partition in mind, still held good. It was especially up to the states to negotiate with British India on the future regulation of matters concerning both. Up until this stage the states had made very little progress because they were waiting to see to whom the British government would transfer power. It was hoped that a new draft statement by the British government would provide guidance on this point.<sup>75</sup>

Concerning the retraction of paramountcy, the Crown Representative's present policy was as it had been laid down at the residents' conference.<sup>76</sup> "It was agreed that this procedure was right and in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 12 of the statement of February 20;

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72 TP, Vol. IX, p.432. Listowel to Mountbatten, 25 April 1947.

73 See Appendix G.

74 Henderson, Arthur, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India 1945-47.

75 R/1/3/136 :f140B - 140G, 9 May 1947; also TP, Vol.X, Doc.37.

76 See p.218.



progressive retraction before June 1948 would provide the best hope of avoiding a vacuum after complete British withdrawal."<sup>77</sup>

The group agreed on a number of matters about retraction. Arrangements made for the interim period to provide the Crown Representative with adequate information about the internal developments in the states might be inadequate, but the withdrawal policy would not be implemented rigidly and if necessary special messengers could be sent to get information. On the question of political officers advising rulers promptly and thereby avoiding the need for the paramount power's intervention, it was decided that the pressure of events would be more powerful than the advice of the political officer in getting the rulers to co-operate. If however, a serious situation arose which required intervention, the Crown Representative's police could be used. The actual termination of paramountcy could be formally negotiated, announced by the British government or allowed to lapse 'sub silentio'.<sup>78</sup> If a ruler requested that paramountcy cease before June 1948, this would be considered and arranged, otherwise paramountcy would remain until the transfer of power and then lapse. If the British government decided on some form of partition in India, any new statement about partition should give material for advice to princes about the course they should take in negotiations with the new governments. Those states that decided not to join the CA and had declared their intention to remain independent (e.g. Hyderabad and Travancore) should be assisted only to the extent that the Crown Representative would do his best to provide a forum for the

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77 R/3/1/136 :f140B - 140G, 9 May 1947.

78 See Chapter 1, p.39.

negotiation of matters of common concern with the relevant Indian authority.<sup>79</sup>

As for the future of the States Armed Forces, the decision taken at this meeting would be remembered when the issue was being argued at a later date in India.<sup>80</sup> The central government would have to comply with legitimate demands for equipment by the states, to keep law and order. The Crown Representative usually decided what was 'legitimate' and this was then accepted by central government. In future it was hoped that the states Forces would be a branch of General Headquarters, (GHQ) India, to co-ordinate the supply of arms to the states. There was the problem of the central government not meeting states demands for arms because Congress feared well-armed states might resist interference by an independent India. Corfield emphasised that this reluctance by the government of India might have to be tackled during the interim period. In this case there would be no export of arms from Britain to the states. On the other hand the paramount power had an obligation to the states in this regard which would be faced when and if the states needed protection.<sup>81</sup>

This last decision proved to be an immense stumbling block when the central government began to pressure the states to accede. The unrealistic attitude of the India Office was again a clear indication that the British government had no definite policy, even then, about how to deal with the lapse of paramountcy. It was sheer cowardice on Britain's part, to avoid having to face the exigencies of her lack of

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79 R/3/1/136 :f140B - 140G, 9 May 1947.

80 See p.245.

81 R/3/1/136 :f140B - 140G, 9 May 1947.

foresight, but also a means of survival by expediency.

Similarly with the relationship between the Crown and the states. When Corfield referred to this the Secretary of State was more interested in the arrangements about railways and communications between the states and the rest of India. Corfield said he did not suppose the states wished to cut themselves off, but the difficulty so far had been that they did not know with whom to negotiate these arrangements.

And so as in all matters of importance, the end result was the same; until Britain decided and announced the future of British India, the states would have to delay their important negotiations. In the meantime Corfield wanted to start the process of retraction and contraction. He was given permission to act on the decisions taken. With his mission accomplished Corfield was in a hurry to return to India.

When he arrived back Mountbatten had left for London and "the time was already too short to implement the Secretary of State's policy in full"<sup>82</sup> In fact there was even less time than Corfield realised, for Mountbatten had cut down the period until the transfer of power from June 1948 to August 1947.

Mountbatten's surprise decision, taken to contain the threat of communal violence, entailed scrapping all previous plans and drawing

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82 Mss. Eur. D850/6.

up his own. Nicknamed 'Plan Balkan',<sup>83</sup> the basic difference between it and the Cabinet Mission plan lay in the transfer of power to the existing constituent assembly of the Hindu provinces,<sup>84</sup> but giving an option to the Muslim majority provinces<sup>85</sup> either to join the assembly or to group with other provinces in one or more constituent assemblies. Both Congress and the Muslim League rejected the Plan and V P Menon<sup>86</sup> drafted an alternate one. No longer were the provinces given the choice of separate independence; Menon had accepted the concept of partition only in that if India was to be divided, it would be into two Dominions only, thereby giving the Muslim states the option to stand out but only as a single unit.<sup>87</sup> What became known as Plan Partition also included the Indian states, as had Plan Balkan, but the essential policy of the British government as expressed in the

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83 The details of 'Plan Balkan' can be found in Moore, Escape from Empire. The word limit of this thesis precludes them being included here although it was in an earlier draft.

As a point of interest there has been confusion over which draft of Plan Balkan Jinnah and Nehru saw. N Mansergh et al, TP, Vol. X, p.488, n.1, have identified it as either document Appendix C of VCP 38, dated 30.4.47, or document Appendix C of VCP 36 dated 28.4.47, but the difference between them was only verbal. Jalal, The Sole Spokesman, p.254, n.27 and n.28, incorrectly bases his reading of Plan Balkan on Appendix B of VCP 28, dated 14.4.47, but this was amended on 30.4.47. It was the latter draft which Ismay took to London and which Cabinet revised.

84 Madras, Bombay, Orissa, Central Provinces, Bihar and the United Provinces.

85 Assam, Bengal, Sind, the Punjab, and the North West Frontier Province. British Baluchistan was dealt with separately.

86 Menon, Rao Bahadur Vapal Panghnni; Reforms Commissioner to Government of India 1942; Secretary to Governor-General 1945-6; Secretary of States Department 1947.

87 The Menon-Mountbatten, or Nehru-Mountbatten plan was accepted by the British government and presented to the Indian leaders at a Conference held in Delhi on 2 June. Nehru, Patel and Kripilani accepted on behalf of Congress; Baldev Singh for the Sikhs, and Jinnah signified his agreement by a nod of his head.

Cabinet Mission Memorandum of 12 May 1946,<sup>88</sup> remained the same. All that had changed was there were now two constituent assemblies with whom to negotiate. At a Press Conference on 4 June Mountbatten told reporters that "British Paramountcy over the Indian States would end as soon as power is transferred in British India. The States would then be free agents though they would not be invited to join the British Commonwealth..."<sup>89</sup>

Attlee announced Plan Partition in the Commons on 3 June 1947.<sup>90</sup> On 4 July Attlee introduced to Parliament the Independence of India Bill, which would end the British Raj on 15 August 1947.

While in London Mountbatten wrote to Delhi asking Corfield's advice on two different proposals concerning the states.<sup>91</sup> Both involved the issue of paramountcy, but in different ways. Obviously Mountbatten and the India Committee were not certain about paramountcy even now. One suggestion had been that the treaties between the states and the Crown would not lapse, except for paramountcy functions, while the other offices of the Crown would continue. The Political Adviser would be replaced by a Minister of the central government, to discharge these duties.<sup>92</sup> The second alternative put forward proposed two Dominion states in India under one constitutional Governor-General.<sup>93</sup> Mountbatten's concern was whether any of the states would choose

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88 See TP, Vol.XI, p.93.

89 Stimson 1, N102, 4 June 1947.

90 See TP, Vol. XI, p.89, Statement of 3rd June 1947, or Cmd 7136.

91 TP, Vol.X, p.890. Mountbatten to Mieville, 18 May 1947.

92 TP, Vol.X, p.890, n.1, op cit.

93 TP, Vol.X, p.888. Alternative 'A'.

independence. How then would they be dealt with under the second plan without enraging Congress? The Political Department itself would have to be wound up by the date of the transfer of power, and if partition occurred "then the respective governments will immediately take on direct dealing with the States which join their Constituent Assembly. Nehru will never agree to a continuation of a Political Department."<sup>94</sup>

Corfield's reply was not long in coming. To begin with he regarded the first idea as misleading. The Cabinet Mission Memorandum of 12 May 1946 was still operative as far as the states were concerned and British policy had not veered from this. Paramountcy would lapse with the transfer of power, whether there was partition or not, and the states would regain all their rights. The Crown could not therefore maintain certain rights under paramountcy if it was not fulfilling its paramountcy obligations. Nor could the successor government inherit such rights because that government had retained links with the Crown. If a Minister of the central government became responsible for the relations with the states, that would mean a transfer of paramountcy, even if his duties were merely co-ordinating ones. The states could not be forced to deal with this Minister without being able to charge the British government with a breach of faith.<sup>95</sup> Mountbatten's second query raised a similar problem. During the interim period the states represented in a CA might agree to direct relations with British India, if they agreed on the choice of Minister with whom they would deal. Certain states might not agree at once, and other arrangements would have to be made, both during the

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94 Ibid.

95 TP, Vol, X p.902. Mievilto to Mountbatten, 19 May 1947.

interim period and under the new constitution, if they decided to remain independent. These arrangements "should be by direct dealings with appropriate departments of dominion status governments if allegations are not to be made that paramountcy is in practice being transferred."<sup>96</sup> He added that direct contact with these departments had already been started.<sup>97</sup>

As for the Political Department, it must be wound up by the date of the transfer of power, earlier than June 1948 if Dominion status were to be granted earlier. The constitutional position of the states, whether they joined a CA or not, was the same until a new constitution had been accepted by a state. Direct contact with the new government or governments would be necessary for all states once the Political Department had gone, the "machinery only might vary by agreement."<sup>98</sup> If states represented in the CA were prepared to accept a Minister to co-ordinate matters, Congress would have

established a new machinery by agreement. If they can secure this, no element of paramountcy would have been transferred by the Crown. We should however have to be entirely neutral over procuring such an arrangement, and must be prepared to assist in negotiating other direct arrangements if any States so desire. <sup>99</sup>

The Viceroy's views on the matter were slightly different. He considered that if there were to be two dominion states with two Governors-General, the states would have to be told their relations with the Crown would be through the Governor-General. There could be no direct relations between the Crown and independent states, as this

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> See p.238.

<sup>98</sup> TP, Vol. X, p.902, op cit.

<sup>99</sup> TP, Vol.X, pp.902-903, op cit.

would lead to the disintegration of India. Those matters of common concern, such as economic or administrative arrangements, would have to be renewed with the new governments, which would "seem to be harmless. There would be no question of Paramountcy being inherited".<sup>100</sup> The states would also be discouraged from making contact with foreign powers.<sup>101</sup>

Corfield had an answer to this too. The states could only be offered a relationship with the Crown through the Governor-General, they could not be forced to accept it and were at liberty to refuse. In this case if direct relations with the Crown were refused, only the force of the states' public opinion could prevent them from having dealings with foreign powers. Economic and other negotiations with the new governments could be arranged, and the states would probably agree to standstill agreements in the interim period while constitutional negotiations were going on. They could also decline to have such agreements, if they were not in the states' interests, and there would not be a paramount power to force them into line with all-India interests.

Lastly, Corfield pointed out that the Crown Representative as a representative of the British government must be abolished with reference to the states, if the Governor-General was to be fully constitutional. The Crown Representative could still use his position in an area over which the Governor-General still had certain powers until these lapsed. The Political Department would have to shed all its paramountcy duties with the transfer of power, and since there

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<sup>100</sup> TP, Vol. X p.923. Abell to Mievill, 20 May 1947.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.



would be no Crown Representative the Department could only operate under the Governor-General. Even if these last minute duties were only of a co-ordinating nature, the charge of breach of faith might only be mitigated if it were made clear that the Political Department would only operate for a limited period in order to settle alternative arrangements and that no paramountcy functions whatsoever would be continued thereafter.<sup>102</sup>

Patrick mentioned the matter of the Crown Representative later that month, when he told Corfield that the government was planning to pass legislation on the Crown Representative functions in early August. It would repeal the provisions in the Government of India Act of 1935 relating to the powers of the Crown towards the states. There was still doubt however, as to whether paramountcy should end at the transfer of power, or on the passage of the Bill. On the question of whether temporary provision should be made for "continuing essential relations with Rulers during liquidation period through some co-ordinating channel in substitution for the Crown Representative",<sup>103</sup> it was thought the simplest way was to empower the Governor-General to fulfil this function during the interim period.<sup>104</sup>

The whole correspondence reads like a lesson in paramountcy from the Political Adviser to the Viceroy. Mountbatten went to London wholly unprepared on the most important matter of the states, the lapse of paramountcy. At the same time he should also have been more fully versed in the matter of paramountcy and its attendant problems than he

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<sup>102</sup> TP, Vol.X, pp.925-6. Mieville to Abell, 21 May 1947.

<sup>103</sup> Mss. Eur f200, Patrick to Corfield, 28 May 1947.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

was. On Corfield's side then, it is no wonder that he felt frustrated by Mountbatten, to whom he had been trying to explain such things since his arrival in India. The contrast with Wavell must be made, for the Political Department did all it could to educate him in the way of the states<sup>105</sup> and largely succeeded. With Mountbatten, just when the British Indian side was being clarified the Viceroy fell over the obstacle of paramountcy, making him turn to his Political Adviser less instead of more.

In India the contraction of the Political Department continued unabated, following Corfield's agreed instructions from the Secretary of State,<sup>106</sup> but not without its inherent problems.

The disappearance of political officers was not to the liking of the provinces. The Chief Minister of Orissa stated the case: the Eastern States were badly placed in terms of their boundaries, since they made up one complete island within the province. "At present the Political Department and the Resident formed a valuable link between Orissa and the States, and they ironed out all difficulties: but with the winding up of the Political Department, these contacts would have to be replaced by direct negotiations with the States."<sup>107</sup> Herein lay the problem, since the states were not being very co-operative. Mountbatten stressed to the Minister that paramountcy had to be returned to the states, and the Crown Representative could bring no legal pressures to bear on them to make arrangements with the provinces.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> See Chapter 4, p.112.

<sup>106</sup> See p.227.

<sup>107</sup> MB 193. Interview with Krishna Mahtab, 3 May 1947.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

The Political Department could, and did, exert its influence in this direction. A memorandum was sent to all residents<sup>109</sup> requesting them to send those provinces likely to correspond with their states a list of those states and the names and addresses of the correct authorities.<sup>110</sup> All correspondence with the states through the Political Department was to cease on 15 May, all new correspondence "on matters which do not involve States generally or a large number of States"<sup>111</sup> was to go directly to the states or the resident, but channels previously controlled by the Political Department were to be closed before the resident was withdrawn. When direct correspondence was started the Political Department was to be informed so it could transfer all the relevant papers to central government and close its files.<sup>112</sup> To begin with there would only be a limited number of states involved so as not to swamp central government departments. For the other states, the provinces would correspond directly with the resident who would inform his state whether to reply directly or through the old channels.<sup>113</sup>

But now at the penultimate hour, the Political Department was begged to do its job. Provincial governors pleaded for its liaison service

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109 A similar letter was sent to the Governors of the Provinces.

110 R/3/1/136 :f48-77. The memorandum also contained a list of all the major states; the names and addresses of the people to be contacted, and a list of all the functions of the central government departments.

111 R/3/136 :f60.

112 This fits in with category 2 of retraction, see p.220.

113 R/3/1/136.

to continue.<sup>114</sup> They were opposed to 'direct correspondence'. Resistance also came from an unexpected quarter: the finance department of the government of India. There was to be an inter-departmental conference to discuss 'direct contact' on 24 May. The finance department stated that it could not handle any correspondence until the broader issues had been discussed at the conference, and requested that the instructions to the states be stopped pending the result of the conference.<sup>115</sup> The Political Department replied, "It would cause a most unfortunate impression on the States concerned if at the very moment that they are starting, as requested, the procedure of direct correspondence, they were asked, for no particular reason, to desist from it."<sup>116</sup> In the light of these letters, it was considered that the 17 April memorandum<sup>117</sup> should be put into abeyance, since the relations with the states were still under discussion,<sup>118</sup> but Scott disagreed. That the Political Department was being wound up was settled policy and had been followed for some months. This issue was just one aspect of the retraction of

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114 R/3/1/136 :f136.

The Governor of Orissa objected to the withdrawal of the political agent on the grounds that unless he directed the states to make arrangements on common matters with Orissa nothing would be done. This request had been made when paramountcy was to continue until June 1948. Since paramountcy would actually lapse in August 1947 there was no question of keeping political officers on for an extended time.

Mss. Eur. F200/142.

The Nawab of Bhopal also wanted to keep the political officer, as a tutor for his grandson. It was decided that only once paramountcy lapsed could political officers take employment in the states.

115 R/3/1/136. D.1142 P/47, 14 May 1947.

116 R/3/1/136 :f138-9, Griffin to Brockman, 15 May 1947.

117 See p.238, n.109. A copy of residents' letter sent to Governors.

118 R/3/1/136 :f140. Note by Nicholls, 16 May 1947.

paramountcy and could not be separated and stopped. To reverse the policy of winding up the Political Department was impracticable, unless a decision was taken to keep the Indian Political Service for a long time ahead. Even if the situation allowed, the Political Department had no place in the new India whether independent or a dominion, and in the latter case the states would probably be directly associated. The Governor-General would still be the Crown Representative, but would not need the Political Department to represent the states as they would have their own representatives. He, therefore, approved a reply sent to the Finance Department stating that the request to states and departments over direct correspondence should remain in force.<sup>119</sup> Brockman sent a gratifying reply: he knew from a conversation with the Crown Representative "that there was no intention in his mind to reverse the steps which had already been taken in regard to direct correspondence ..., in the light of the approaching termination of paramountcy."<sup>120</sup> In other words, the entire correspondence over this issue ended in complete justification of the Political Department's actions; it also helps to show how one small attempt at retraction could become so complicated and involve so many factors. It is interesting to note, however, that a seemingly logical move should create such controversy and that it should throw into relief a comment such as Scott's, that the Political Department had no place in the new India. Admittedly he was correct, but that he should feel such harsh explanations were necessary for a relatively minor matter underlines the impact which the Political Department's existence and abolition had on the Indian

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119 R/3/1/136 :f143. Note by Scott, 17 May 1947.

120 R/3/1/136 :f144. Brockman to Griffin, 18 May 1947.

sub-continent.

The lapse of paramountcy had a very basic reason: once Britain could no longer fulfil her paramountcy obligations, paramountcy must expire. Britain's ability hinged first and foremost on her being in India, to carry out these duties - most importantly that of protecting the states against internal or external aggression.<sup>121</sup> This would no longer be possible once India gained self-government because British troops would be withdrawn along with British personnel, resulting in an absence of the power to guard and guide the states. In the end, therefore, it came down to the obvious facts - no British troops, no paramountcy. Although the 20 February statement had said that paramountcy would remain during the interim period, this assumed that Britain would be able to fulfill her obligations in this time. If she could not, what were the consequences, queried the Political Department? The Crown Representative was responsible for the prompt discharge of paramountcy obligations, and he had at his disposal 1000 police officers, who formed the Crown Representative's Police. The cost of keeping this force was charged on Indian revenues,<sup>122</sup> a section of the 1935 Act which might be attacked by the interim government. The Crown Representative's police force was, however, seriously limited because it could only operate within state borders. All other means of control were under the government of India; only with their assistance could the Crown Representative fulfill paramountcy obligations. The retention of paramountcy during the

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<sup>121</sup> See Chapter 1, p.5. The Butler Report of 1929 had stated that the object of paramountcy in this regard was also to prevent the elimination of the ruler by violent means, and the setting up of an alternative government.

<sup>122</sup> R/3/1/136. Note by Corfield

interim period, therefore, depended on the ability of the Crown Representative to do this, i.e. he was dependent on the readiness of the government of India to give him help which constitutionally it could be asked to do if the security of a state or ruler was threatened. Consequently Britain and the Viceroy should be certain that if such help were needed, it would be forthcoming.<sup>123</sup>

If such a situation arose, and no help was proffered from the government of India, there would be a constitutional crisis. In extreme cases the only alternative was for the Governor-General to ask for the resignation of the Executive Council, or a "repudiation of its obligations by the paramount power."<sup>124</sup> The second choice would be the best because the Governor-General could not govern without the cooperation of his Executive Council. Should a provincial ministry refuse help, in a province with a one-party administration, it would be difficult to solve the crisis without sacrificing the interests of the state concerned. The Governor of a province could be asked to take action, but his Ministers might refuse, or delay giving their cooperation until it would come too late to be effective.<sup>125</sup>

Such was the scenario outlined by the Political Adviser in an attempt to make the Crown Representative aware that he should be prepared for these eventualities. The princes had been urged to set up constitutional governments, and the British government had approved the principles of limited intervention when the rulers accepted internal

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123 H.C. DEB. 5. s. 12 March 1935, cols.328-331. Clause 33(f) debate on Annual Financial Statement; H.C. DEB. 5. s. 11 April 1935, cols 1468-1469.

124 R/3/1/136 :f125.

125 R/3/1/136 :f126.

constitutional checks on their personal rule. Therefore, when rulers started democratizing their states, the decline in the Crown Representative's power to protect them would parallel the decrease in the need for protection. Ideally both would run together, and ultimately disappear with the lapse of paramountcy. That did not mean that protection would not be needed at all, the paramount power also had to protect the states people from oppression, the ruler from his people and aggression from external sources. The states could have constitutional government, but if the people demanded full political backing from British India and full responsibility, the paramount power would have to step in. To the extent that the Crown was unable to fulfil its obligations, it must "pro-tanto" divest itself of paramountcy rights",<sup>126</sup> an action which was only logical and fair to the states.

The sequel to Corfield's warning was the discussion at the residents' conference in April, which included methods to enable the states to take on their own protection. It was decided that the only alternative to preventing the need for paramount intervention was "constitutionalisation" within the states, which would provide internal stability. It would be impossible, even if it was desirable, to get help from the provinces. The Indian Army was theoretically available, but political expediency ruled out asking help from that quarter. The various agency police forces were to be reduced and abolished as retraction progressed, so all that remained was the Crown Representative's Police, which would therefore have to be maintained up to the end of 1947 and maybe longer. Thereafter the entire force could be handed over to one state, a group of states, distributed

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126 Ibid.



between various states, or disbanded.<sup>127</sup>

There had already been a discussion with the Defence Department over the jurisdiction of cantonments used by the Indian Army, and the location of troops in the states. As with other ceded areas, all the territory would be given back to the states, but that did not include ownership of property or buildings, which would be dealt with separately.<sup>128</sup>

That left the states forces themselves. They would need to have supplies of arms and equipment.<sup>129</sup> It was proposed to create at GHQ a branch parallel to the Military-Adviser-in-Chief HQ which would deal with the states. Arrangements in this regard had been started and states forces had been given more favourable treatment than had been expected. There had also been delays in equipping the States Police and the Political Adviser considered the prompt arming of Police vitally important, and would take the matter up with the Defense Department and GHQ. If they could not assure him that the legitimate demands could be met from within India they would have to think about importing machinery to manufacture arms in the states. If on the lapse of paramountcy the states found that they could not keep law and

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127 MB 198. Residents' Conference Minutes, 11-12 April 1947.

Some Agencies were to make their own arrangements, such as Kathiawar. The resident of the Western India states had offered the Kathiawar Agency Police to the states jointly. If they refused the offer the men would be transferred to Bombay, or the Force disbanded.

128 L/P & S/13/1831/ :ff119-121, 2 May 1947; and MB 198, Residents' Conference Minutes.

All territory ceded to the Crown by the states was to be returned, but buildings and other materials would be offered for sale or disposed of by other means.

129 See p.229 for Corfield's previous warnings on this matter.

order because of the lack of weapons etc., "the accusation would most certainly and possibly justifiably be made against the Crown Representative that he had failed in his duty towards them."<sup>130</sup> Any complaints from the residents about securing what the states needed would have to be very carefully worded to avoid the risk of the Political Department "being misrepresented as encouraging the splitting up of India into warring elements."<sup>131</sup>

Baldev Singh,<sup>132</sup> the Defence Member of the interim government expressed the concern of the central government over the states acquiring arms. Wherever the Crown Representative had an effective say, he wrote, he should stop this supply; the Defence Department and the Defence Member technically had no jurisdiction. He thought that nothing should be given to the States Forces or Police until the Dominions were established. He concluded by asking Mountbatten to agree to a suspension of supplies to the states for the present.<sup>133</sup>

Singh's letter was forwarded to Corfield, who absolutely disagreed. Arms and equipment were being issued only to authorised units of the

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130 MB 198. Residents' Conference Minutes, 11-12 April 1947.

131 Ibid.

132 Baldev Singh, Sardar, Minister of Development, Punjab 1942-46, Defence Member of interim government, September 1946-August 1947.

133 Mss. Eur. F200/143 Annex A, Baldev Singh to Mountbatten, 7 July 1947.

States Forces and the Police with the agreement<sup>134</sup> of the Defence Department on the advice of the Adviser-in-Chief, supported by the Political Department. It was only fair since they were responsible for the internal security of the states governments.

If Corfield was correct, it is odd that Singh should be so surprised about the states being armed, as he was consulted on this matter by Corfield. Abell annexed a note stating that he felt the Crown Representative should tell Baldev Singh that all properly authorised demands were to be met at once, in accordance with agreed policy, unless the Defence Member had a justification for refusing.<sup>135</sup>

Instead Mountbatten issued a stand still order suspending the supply of arms to the states.<sup>136</sup> He had decided that there was little chance of securing deliveries before August 15 even had Congress agreed and he preferred to keep the matter pending.<sup>137</sup>

The Viceroy's standstill order was to remain in force until the Partition Council and the Provisional Joint Defence Council had studied a statement of arms in the country and decided their division

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134 Mss Eur. F200/143 Annex B, Corfield to Abell 9 July 1947. Corfield had written to the Defence Member on 15 April (just after the residents' conference), a meeting had been held with the Deputy Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary to the Defence Department at which it was agreed that the ordinary legitimate requirements of States Forces and Police would be met as far as possible. Any increases to this would be considered by GHQ and if the Crown Representative thought it necessary to keep internal security.

135 Mss. Eur. F200/143, Annex C. Note by Abell, 10 July 1947.

136 Mss. Eur. F200/143. Mountbatten to Listowel, 19 July 1947. Also TP, Vol. XII, p.268. There is no date given for the stand still order.

137 Ibid.

(between India and Pakistan). The Viceroy recommended for the consideration of these Councils that the order remain until an all-India allotment of arms between the two Dominions had been approved by them.<sup>138</sup>

However unavoidable this particular decision was especially ignominious, since the states had less than a month before the transfer of power. In other words, after independence when the states were more than ever in need of some means of defense, they would have neither the paramount power nor their own arms, leaving them at the mercy of the new governments.

After 15 August those states which had not yet acceded (Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagadh), unable to defend themselves, were overwhelmed by the military supremacy of India in the period of transition from August 1947 to 1950, and forced into federation.<sup>139</sup> For this the British government and the Viceroy's equivocation over such a fundamental issue, vital to the states' chances of survival in the new India, must be denounced.

Congress also was not entirely innocent. Nehru had not forgotten his

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138 Mss. Eur. F200/143. Note by Viceroy's Staff, undated.

139 See Menon, *op cit*, for the full story of the military take-over of these three states. Junagadh was the first to go in June 1947, Hyderabad in September 1948 and lastly Kashmir, which was finally divided between Indian and Pakistan in January 1950.

R L Hardgrave Jr., India Government and Politics in a Developing Nation, pp.130-31. The princes themselves did not vanish from the political arena. From 1949 to 1974 various princes played a significant role in the new Parliament (Lok Sabha) of India. In 1971 there were sixteen princes of different political parties in the Lok Sabha. Congress attempts to abolish princely privileges left over from the days of the Raj finally succeeded in 1971.

grievance with the Political Department in 1946,<sup>140</sup> and rushed headlong into another confrontation in 1947. In April he began by protesting to the Viceroy about the Department's secrecy and complained that political officers "frown upon progressive tendencies"<sup>141</sup> in the states.

Abell passed this onto Corfield, who replied that Nehru had had an opportunity in 1943 to "penetrate the mysteries of the Political Department"<sup>142</sup> and had not taken it. He emphasised that it was due to the Political Department that there had been progress in the states towards reform, but "we are precluded by the Secretary of State's orders from interfering in any way with the form of government in States, though now may, and in fact do, encourage liberalisation in every way open to us."<sup>143</sup> The central government was not unaware of the Political Department's activities, as there was day-to-day contact between them, inter-departmental Conferences had been arranged, as well as joint Conferences with states' representatives. In conclusion Corfield pointed out that the Political Department was closing down and it would not be "permissible to allow Pandit Nehru to secure control over the Political Department, since this would insensibly lead to handing over the powers and obligations of paramountcy to a successor Government contrary to the promises to the States."<sup>144</sup>

Mountbatten had looked up the previous correspondence between Nehru

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140 See Chapter 5 pp.166-67.

141 TP, Vol.X, pp.160-1. Nehru to Mountbatten, 9 April 1947.

142 TP, Vol.X, p.384. Corfield to Abell 23 April 1947.

143 Ibid.

144 TP, Vol.X, p.135, op cit.

and Wavell and found that most of Nehru's points had been dealt with then. He repeated Wavell's offer to let Nehru have any information he wanted

regarding the principles which govern the activities of that Department. I have, however, decided that in view of the prospective lapse of paramountcy, these activities should be curtailed as rapidly as possible. Thus the Political Department will die a natural death, and be replaced by such direct arrangements as may be found most convenient and acceptable. 145

This is particularly interesting considering that everything the Political Department tried to do to curtail its activities was hindered by the Government of India.

Nehru was not satisfied and waded in with reproach of the Political Department. He had been told that as the residencies closed down, the residents were destroying important papers, papers which he suggested might be of great historical interest.<sup>146</sup> Such action by the residents was fully in accordance with the Crown Representative's instructions issued in November 1946.<sup>147</sup> The issue had already been fought out with Wavell<sup>148</sup> but now there was an additional factor which was the basic reason for Nehru's complaint. He claimed that the Political Department was, in the past and still, financed by the Government of India and therefore all the property of the Political

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145 TP, Vol.X, p.428. Mountbatten to Nehru, 25 April 1947.

146 TP, Vol.X, p.489. Mievilte to Mountbatten, 30 April 1947.

147 TP, Vol. IX, p.23. Secretary of Crown Representative to Secretary of Political Department, 7 November 1946.

"The authorities in charge of these records have been instructed to take steps without delay for weeding out and destruction, under capable supervision, of such records as (a) possess historical interest, and (b) are patently valueless for purposes of future reference."

148 See TP, Vol.IX.

Department belonged to the Government of India.<sup>149</sup> This sounds like a last stand argument, so naive was it. He then changed the subject a little: the residencies and agencies were being abolished, and the states would be in direct contact with the Government of India.<sup>150</sup> Nehru was aghast that this should be allowed, for all these actions vitally affected the Government of India and it should therefore be consulted. His concern was with matters common to both the states and the Government of India which had not yet been negotiated and settled, especially in the economic, fiscal and administrative fields.<sup>151</sup> "To break up the existing machinery of the Political Department and the Residencies without anything taking its place would be to encourage chaotic conditions. The destruction of the records of the Political Department would add to the confusion."<sup>152</sup>

Direct correspondence between the states and the Departments of the Government of India would also be disruptive to economic and financial activities without a co-ordinating agency to act as a middleman. "I would therefore, request you to have the destruction of records now in

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149 TP, Vol.X, p.515. Nehru to Mountbatten, 1 May 1947.

150 Ibid.

151 All these matters of common concern were taken care of by the drawing up of Standstill Agreements between the states and British India. They allowed for all arrangements to remain as they were until after the transfer of power and the negotiation of a new constitution for both dominions. At that stage new agreements would be made or the old ones modified, by agreement on both sides. This was written into the Independence of India Act of 1947, and would have remained in effect if the states had not been forced to integrate by signing Instruments of Accession. The Political Department helped draw up the original Standstill Agreements, but their duties were taken over by the States Department before anything had been finalised. For this reason the issue has not been dealt with in detail.

152 TP, Vol.X, p.516, op cit.

progress stopped; also to suspend the present arrangements of the abolition of Political Agencies,"<sup>153</sup> and direct correspondence.

While Corfield was in London in May<sup>154</sup> Mountbatten backed down. He decided it would be useful for Nehru, Corfield and himself to have a talk but they would have to wait for Corfield's return. In the meantime he had ordered the destruction of records to be stopped.<sup>155</sup> This was a parallel of Mountbatten's suspension of the supply of arms; Congress had once again won over the Viceroy.

Corfield also took the opportunity of his trip to London to straighten out some of Nehru's queries. He told the Secretary of State and the India Office that Nehru obviously disliked the procedure of retraction, and had argued that since the structure of paramountcy had been built up between the states and the Governor-General in Council, the successors to the Governor-General in Council should inherit the agreements with the states.<sup>156</sup> This line of reasoning was as transparent as that of the Government of India inheriting all the records and the India Office saw through it at once. The agreements were between the Crown and the states. Up to the 1935 Act, the Crown used the Governor-General in Council as an agent. The Act had designated the Crown Representative as the Crown Agent and the Government of British India was no longer involved. Furthermore it seemed that Nehru was anxious for the British Government to do just what they promised not to, and that was to transfer paramountcy. In

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153 Ibid.

154 See p.227.

155 TP, Vol.X, p.604. Mountbatten to Nehru, 4 May 1947.

156 R/3/1/136 :f140B-140G, 9 May 1947.



any case there could be no question of legislating to transfer the Crown Representative's powers to a successor government. Legislation could only abolish the post of Crown Representative and that would automatically result in the voiding of paramountcy and of any agreements between the states and the Crown.<sup>157</sup>

Nehru had played out his hand. His understanding of what the Government of India should inherit was incorrect, and was based on his political desires grounded in many years of Gandhian politics which assumed that once Britain left India, all would be left for the Indians. Historical facts could be made to fit the situation if the hypothesis was adhered to, and Gandhi had taught Nehru the virtues of obstinance.

Knowing full well that he was repeating himself, Nehru became even more vindictive.

We consider the activities of the Political Department objectionable, harmful and discourteous to the Government of India. The Political Department has long been considered as being opposed to Indian progress and unity and it will be unfortunate if anything is done to substantiate this general impression. 158

This reads suspiciously like a threat. Abell noted dryly "Yes; really the second paragraph of the letter is the only feature on which advice is required, as the rest of the letter is the old, old story!!"<sup>159</sup>

On Mountbatten's return to India, Nehru was waiting for him, and a letter arrived poste-haste from Nehru to the Viceroy. It was exactly like all the others, and Corfield had by now lost all hope of getting

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157 R/3/136 :f140B-140G, 9 May 1947.

158 R/3/1/136 :ff150-51, 27 May 1947.

159 R/3/1/136 :f151.

Nehru to understand. His feelings were indicated by his reply to Abell on the latest Nehru piece: "Pandit Nehru's letter contains so many misconceptions which we have attempted to clarify in correspondence with Lord Wavell and His Excellency during the last eight months, that I feel it would be valueless to comment on the contents of this letter in detail."<sup>169</sup> Corfield could be called to task for apparently failing to see that the reality of British withdrawal forced him to accommodate Nehru in order to smooth the path for the states. At the same time it is clear that Corfield had been as helpful as he could be, given the constraints of British declarations *vis-a-vis* the states. Nehru's constant demands for attention came with unwarranted frequency in the context of the ongoing retraction process.

The retraction programme had been examined and approved by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, and had been operating for two months. The whole object was to ensure the least possible administrative chaos, and it was going well enough except in matters in which the central government would not co-operate,<sup>161</sup> as Corfield had reported to the Crown Representative.<sup>162</sup> If the programme was attacked as a whole, by Congress, as well as there being non co-operation on certain aspects, there would definitely be chaos which the Political Department could not prevent.

A showdown between Corfield and Nehru was not far off. Mountbatten's lack of power to control Nehru might have been turned to Corfield's

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<sup>160</sup> TP, Vol.X1, p.131. Nehru to Mountbatten, 4 June 1947.

<sup>161</sup> e.g. See pp.245-248, the attitude over the supply of arms.

<sup>162</sup> See TP, Vol.X, p.556, Enclosure to Doc. 25.

advantage, had he been able to use his position effectively and so deal with Nehru himself. The impossibility of doing this arose from the fact that the Government of India, and the British government, had shown that Congress was dictating the terms. Corfield was also without the necessary authority because of the Viceroy's practical denial of that authority.

All that was needed at this stage was a meeting of the Indian political leaders, the Political Adviser and the Viceroy, to argue the matters raised by Nehru, and to try to resolve them. Such a meeting took place on 13 June 1947, with all the principals present.<sup>163</sup> It was a catastrophic one for the Political Department, for Nehru and Corfield finally faced each other.

There are numerous accounts of this meeting<sup>164</sup> but it is worth examining closely because it was here, more than anywhere else, that the Political Department really came to an end.

From the beginning it was a stormy discussion. Nehru began by expressing the opinion that this was the first time that members of the Interim Government were being invited to discuss matters concerning the states. Thereafter the Political Department and its decline were the focus, with Corfield explaining, once again, that the functions concerning the states were the responsibility of the Crown Representative, not the Governor-General in Council and could not

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163 TP, Vol.X1, p.320, 13 June 1947. Those present: Mountbatten, Corfield, Nehru, Jinnah, Patel, Kripalani, Nishtar, Baldev Singh, Liaquat Ali Khan, Ismay, Mievill, Erskine Crum.

164 See Menon, *op cit*; Moore, *Escape from Empire*; Corfield, *op cit*; Hodson, *op cit*; Ziegler, *op cit*; Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*; L. Moseley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*.

therefore be considered the Interim Government's concern. Nehru argued that he had consulted eminent lawyers on what was considered a controversial issue. He questioned the Political Department's authority in taking action injurious to the Government of India, a matter about which he had written numerous letters. Furthermore he and his colleagues had not been consulted until now, and "Completely unilateral action had been taken continuously. (He) said that he charged the Political Department and Sir Conrad Corfield with misfeasance.<sup>165</sup> He considered that an immediate enquiry on the highest judicial level into their actions was necessary."<sup>166</sup>

Corfield's immediate reaction to this astounding pronouncement was to say that everything he had done had been under the orders of the Crown Representative and with the Secretary of State's approval.<sup>167</sup> He later wrote that he had noticed Jinnah looking at the Viceroy, in the expectation that he would defend the Political Adviser, "But nothing was said."<sup>168</sup> Ziegler says that in this Corfield was unfair, and "that the Viceroy supported Corfield by saying that he was doing no more than carry out the policy of the Secretary of State."<sup>169</sup> This means that the policy was not the Crown Representative's. Mountbatten in fact confirmed that "from his experience, what Sir Conrad had said

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165 Misfeasance - The improper performance of an act that is lawful in itself.

166 TP, Vol.X1, p.321, 13 June 1947.

167 Corfield, op cit, p.15. Corfield stated that Nehru accused him of 'malfeasance'- the doing of a wrongful or illegal act, especially by a public official.

168 Ibid,

169 Ziegler, op cit, p.408.

was absolutely correct."<sup>170</sup> Whether he was referring to the discussion of the Crown Representative's duties versus those of the Governor-General in Council, or Corfield's actions being quite legitimate is unclear. Mountbatten said he had been told by Wavell on his arrival in India that "... the Political Department had been acting strictly in accordance with the Memorandum of 12th May."<sup>171</sup> Certainly, what he implied by this answer was that he could not vouch for what Corfield had done under the previous Viceroy and that the policy carried out had not been his. As such it was hardly a defence, and lacked the enthusiasm the Political Adviser could have expected.

Mountbatten subsequently made an apology of sorts to Corfield over Nehru's attack.<sup>172</sup> By that time it was too late to remove the cloud under which Corfield would end his career as Political Adviser.

Before the meeting ended Corfield quoted that final, undefined paragraph of the Cabinet Mission Plan which left the States to make "particular political arrangements"<sup>173</sup> failing federation which Corfield interpreted as meaning autonomous units. Nehru finally

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170 TP, Vol.XI, p.321, 13 June 1947.

171 TP, Vol.XI, p.322.

172 He explained that it had always been his policy to refuse to enter into discussion with the Indian leaders concerning the behaviour of British officials. Nevertheless, he felt that on the occasion referred to, he should perhaps have made it perfectly clear to Pandit Nehru that he had of course completely disassociated himself with the latter's remarks and was unable to consider accepting the various strictures which he had made. (He) added that he could not believe that Pandit Nehru would even have followed up his accusations if he had been asked to substantiate them and had been told that they would be carefully gone into.

He also received a verbal apology from Nehru.

173 See Chapter 5, p.187.

arrived at his meaning: the states could not be forced to join the CA, but they would have to come to some arrangement which excluded any declaration of independence.<sup>174</sup> Nehru considered that no changes should be made to the present system other than that the Political Department and residents should continue to function under the aegis of the central government. Paramountcy functions would lapse, but others would remain.<sup>175</sup> Mountbatten then horrified his Political Adviser by agreeing that such a Department should exist, for both dominions, but that it should be called the 'States Department'; the Political Department "would give all possible assistance and advice in the formation of this new Department."<sup>176</sup>

Corfield had been against this scheme from the very start, on the grounds that the states would view it as the transferrance of paramountcy. He pointed out that it could be done once paramountcy lapsed, but not before, but was overruled.<sup>177</sup> It was more than obvious where Mountbatten's priorities lay. The Political Department had now to establish the States Department, something which went against the grain for Corfield but which he could not avoid.

Mountbatten's directive was indicative of the Political Adviser's loss of status, and the ascending star of V P Menon, who became to all intents and purposes, the Political Adviser. He became the Secretary

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174 TP, Vol.X1, pp.322-23, 13 June 1947.

175 TP, Vol.X1, pp.324-5, 13 June 1947. Nehru's true feelings about the States were revealed by this statement:"If any State took up a line of opposition to the policy of the Central Government, this would be considered as an unfriendly act, and all the privileges which the States enjoyed would cease."

176 TP, Vol.X1, p.325, 13 June 1947.

177 Ibid.

of the new Department which was established on 27 June 1947, under Vallabhai Patel.<sup>177a</sup> The States Department was the cornerston of Menon's later policy of integration.<sup>178</sup> Menon took over the Political Adviser's role before the Political Department had even gone, before paramountcy had lapsed and while Corfield was still in India. It seemed that all Corfield's fears had been realised.

All that remained was for him to leave physically, and this he did before Mountbatten delivered his *coup de grace* to the rulers on 25 July.<sup>179</sup> This speech was purely and simply one of Mountbatten's best performances, and the "apogee of persuasion".<sup>180</sup> Campbell-Johnson described it as Moutbatten's first and last meeting with the princes.<sup>181</sup> The states respresentatives were told that "tecnically and legally" their states would be independent after the Indian Independence Act released them "from all their obligations to the Crown".<sup>182</sup> The form their independence would take in Mountbatten's opinion, was best realised by maintaining the continuity of "essential agreements" with the rest of India,<sup>183</sup> and further, by three subject accession.<sup>184</sup> To have a larger organisation handling Defence,

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177a See opposite page.

178 See Menon, op cit.

179 Gwyer and Appadorai, op cit, pp.772; also see TP, Vol.XII, pp.347-52.

180 Menon, op cit, p.108.

181 Campbell-Johnson, op cit, p.140.

182 Gwyer and Appadorai, op cit, p.772.

183 This refers to the Standstill Agreement drafted by the Political Department and amended by Menon and Patel.

184 The 1935 Act had introduced the idea of states joining a federation through an Instrument of Accession. Menon adapted the Act for his own accession ideas.

Communication and External Affairs for them seemed such an obvious convenience that Mountbatten was at a loss to understand why some rulers were reluctant to accept the position. After all they had been quite ready to accede in this manner in 1946, under the Cabinet Mission Plan. The draft Instrument of Accession which the Crown Representative circulated provided that the central government would have no power to intervene in the states on any other matter, and accession would "in my view, be a tremendous achievement for the States."<sup>185</sup> It would also have been a large filip to Mountbatten. "But" he warned them, "I have still to persuade the Government of India to accept it (the Instrument of Accession)."<sup>186</sup> This is palpably untrue, since Menon and Nehru were agreed on the scheme already.<sup>187</sup>

Other amalgams of truths and half truths followed, so it is small wonder that Corfield was unimpressed with Mountbatten's behaviour. The India Office disapproved of Mountbatten's speech too. It was inconsistent with assurances given in Parliament that no pressure would be applied to the princes to force accession.<sup>188</sup> The Secretary of State wrote to Mountbatten criticising him sharply for having broken all the golden rules laid down in the Cabinet Mission Memorandum about leaving the states to decide freely.<sup>189</sup>

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185 Gwyer and Appadorai, op cit, p.772.

186 Gwyer and Appadorai, op cit, p.775.

187 Moore, Escape from Empire, p.303.

188 TP, Vol.XII, p.383. Minutes by Rumbold, Patrick, Henderson, 28/29 July 1947.

189 Mss. Eur. F200/144. Listowel to Mountbatten, 1 August 1947.



Mountbatten frequently professed his good intention and was undoubtedly angered when his motives were questioned, and seemed touchy about having to explain himself. But because basically the states had been virtually bullied into accession the British government could pat the Viceroy on the back for his achievement, all moralistic arguments long forgotten.<sup>190</sup>

Mountbatten eventually triumphed. Corfield has since gained the reputation of being Mountbatten's "most bitter opponent". But a study of the facts as contained in appendix G does not lead to the usual conclusion that Corfield was deliberately obstructive, knowing what Mountbatten intended to do under Plan Balkan. Rather the conclusion to be drawn is that his intimate acquaintance with the states and states' policy led him to make the statement he did at the Governors' conference, and in fact Mountbatten had not yet even then given the Political Adviser clear instructions about the states. Quite reasonably, Corfield then turned to the Secretary of State, with whom he had been corresponding independently of the Crown Representative, "on the issue of guaranteeing the Princes complete independence on the

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190 Moore, 'The Mountbatten Viceroyalty', Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, 12, 2, 1984, pp.209-10.

Moore offers an explanation of Mountbatten's change of policy towards the states.

The change of mood and pace in Mountbatten's treatment of the states problem in July is most plausibly explained by reference to what he called 'Jinnah's bombshell'. On July 2 Jinnah conveyed to an astonished Mountbatten his decision to become Pakistan's Governor-General. Mountbatten was thus to lose the leverage on which he had relied to settle at leisure such post-Independence problems as awkward accessions - the status of Governor-General of both Dominions. With remarkable frankness Mountbatten confessed, at much the same time, that he 'should have foreseen' Jinnah's decision and cleared the position 'three or four weeks ago' and that he had 'not been able to grip the States problem before.'

lapse of Paramountcy..."<sup>191</sup>

Corfield had always seen as his prime task "to look after the interests of the Princely States. It was not part of my job to make things easier for India."<sup>192</sup>

In this connection it was also part of Corfield's job to work together with his Crown Representative who was after all the head of the Political Department. His failure to explain the implications of the lapse of paramountcy could very well have flowed from his frustration about not being able to get to Mountbatten in those frantic days. Corfield was also bearing the brunt of years of British policy towards the states which had always put them into second place behind British India. Perhaps Corfield should have been more tolerant of Mountbatten's undoubtedly heavy load as Viceroy. But his frustration with Mountbatten as Crown Representative was almost an accumulation of the frustration of all past Political Advisers who had banged their heads against the unyielding wall of British policy.

By the date of independence only three states stood out against the Viceroy's imprecations, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagadh, but by then the Political Department had ceased to be a factor in India, except to itself. It had been left without a Political Adviser, for Corfield left India on 23 July, deliberately absenting himself from Mountbatten's meeting with the princes<sup>193</sup> for he knew what would be said in principle and he did not want to hear it in fact, and having

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191 Mss. Eur. D850/3. Corfield to B. Krishna, 13 May 1962.

192 Moseley, op cit, p.162

193 See p.259.

set the demolition of the Political Department in progress there was nothing else for Corfield to do but leave.

No one was there to bid farewell to the last Political Adviser; none of the princes he had so staunchly defended, nor the Viceroy with whom he had differed so sharply. Corfield left with a heavy heart, convinced that the Viceroy had committed an irreparable breach of faith by using his royal connections to influence the princes into self-destruction. They had been promised that their internal autonomy would be respected, and when Mountbatten asked Corfield for his congratulations over having secured this concession, the Political Adviser could only ask "what guarantee was there for the fulfillment of the promise after independence?"<sup>194</sup> None, as Menon and Congress knew only too well.

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194 Mss. Eur. D850/6.

## CONCLUSION

Without paramountcy the British Raj was unthinkable for it was the princes of India who had given Britain her foothold that became a stranglehold on the subcontinent. Paradoxically by 1947 without the Raj princely India could not exist. Each fed on the other until Britain, sated, departed.

The many headed hydra of paramountcy which Britain exercised, was, as can be shown, never defined.<sup>1</sup> It followed that British policy towards the Indian states was inconsistent, veering from what was loosely referred to as 'limited intervention'<sup>2</sup> to 'non-intervention'<sup>3</sup> in the internal affairs of the states. Expediency was the *leitmotiv* of British policy. Whether Conservative, coalition or Labour British governments viewed the princes as allies either against the political maelstrom of British India or during world war two the armed threat of Japan. In such times of duress Britain tended to relax the pressure on the states to reform their governments. But as the tide of war turned in the Allies' favour domestic and international pressure on Britain to withdraw from India mounted. Simultaneously there was a sharper focus on the states which because they were regarded as backwaters of autocracy were judged unfit to survive unless they reformed.

But the form such changes were to take had to be carefully monitored because Britain did not want it to reach the stage where a prince abrogated his power and deprived Britain of her paramountcy rights.

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1 See Chapter 1, pp.4-6.

2 See Chapter 1, p.15.

3 See Chapter 1, p.4. This was the policy under Lord Wellesley.

Hence the strenuous efforts that were made to camouflage Cripps' advocacy of democracy for the states in 1942.<sup>4</sup> The fulcrum on the lever of intervention by the paramount power was the Political Department.

This institution is the main focus of this thesis. Firstly, its piecemeal development has been traced in detail because this has not been done elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, what also emerges is that despite the formalisation of the Department's structure and authority in 1935, these changes did very little to improve its image.<sup>6</sup> Thirdly, the question of training and recruitment of Indian Political Service (IPS) personnel has been looked at beyond the point of what other historians dismiss as a second-rate service.<sup>7</sup> Their argument is illogical and boils down to the fact that a political officer was ill-trained and unimaginative because he was a political officer. Such a judgement, it is demonstrated, is difficult to equate with the fact that an IPS candidate came originally from the Indian Civil Service (ICS) or the army and was trained by them. Unless he transferred to the IPS, he was deemed suitable for service in the British Indian provinces. A move across to the IPS did not dull his intelligence, but it may have altered his outlook and it is on this aspect that historians should concentrate. Also stressed in this thesis is the fact often overlooked that the training of an ICS candidate was inadequate, and

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4 See Chapter 3.

5 See Chapter 1, pp.3-4; 9-18.

6 See Chapter 1.

7 See Chapter 1, pp. 20; 22; 27; Chapter 2, p.46.

by the 1920's outdated.<sup>8</sup> To teach a provincial magistrate English Literature and Animal Physiology was absurd.<sup>9</sup> The shortcomings in the training of an ICS officer after 1935, have not been sufficiently covered and it is a gap which needs to be filled out. Not that the IPS as such can be absolved from all stricture. Its position, as also demonstrated,<sup>10</sup> would have been greatly strengthened if it had filled its ranks with qualified Indian candidates. That the princes objected to its indianisation was a facile excuse as Britain well knew. Indianisation could only have upgraded the IPS, but like all other proposals to this end, it was discarded.<sup>11</sup>

Nothing though can alter the fact - a constant refrain of this thesis - that the Political Department was treated as a poor relation and frequently regarded with contempt. Political officers were not consulted on matters which affected the states, in particular the 1935 federation ploy.<sup>12</sup> In the latter case the reason given was that political officers were ignorant on the matter. Whose fault was that? They have been castigated for the failure of federation, accused of sabotaging it to save their jobs, amongst other things. But as shown in this thesis it was chiefly the British government and Congress that were to blame.<sup>13</sup>

Cripps made the same errors in 1942 when he did not consult the

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8 See Chapter 1, pp.29-30.

9 See Appendix B.

10 See Chapter 1, p.22-24.

11 See Chapter 1, p.34.

12 See Chapter 2, pp.42-46.

13 See Chapter 2, pp.49-50.

Political Department over his Plan to grant India Dominion status after the war. The aftermath of his visit was a thoroughly rattled princely order that demanded an explanation for his statements. All this could have been avoided had he listened to the warnings of political officers instead of merely dismissing their comments as the pessimistic objections of disgruntled officials. The Political Adviser was ultimately invited to join the discussions on India's future constitution only in 1946.<sup>14</sup> But as Cripps did not like Corfield, most of his advice was disregarded; yet within a year Cripps' Plan was rendered redundant. This lack of consultation with the Political Department was taken to the extreme by Lord Mountbatten whose brushing aside of the states and the Political Department culminated a long saga of cumulative neglect of their point of view.

Since 1935 each Viceroy had approached paramountcy in a different way. Each had had a particular goal which he set himself and all three underestimated the intricacies of the hydra and came to India without any real knowledge of the states. Lord Linlithgow arrived to set up federation and expected it to be fully workable during his viceroyalty. He was duped by the British government who were aware that his efforts could not succeed. The 1935 federation plan was not intended to be workable and Britain was almost certain that the princes would reject it.<sup>15</sup> Linlithgow ended up trying to persuade India to fight the war. He chose to exclude the Political Department from federal negotiations but he deserves to be recognised as the only Viceroy who tackled the issue of grouping and attachment of the

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14 See Chapter 5, pp.183-188.

15 See C Bridge, The Conservative Party and All-India Federation 1927-1940. Unpublished Ph.D, Flinder University, Southern Australia.

smaller states to make them more viable.<sup>16</sup>

These efforts continued under Lord Wavell though he used up most of his energy to mobilise all India to defeat Japan. In these circumstances the Political Department was largely left to its own concerns. When Wavell eventually, but too belatedly, turned his attention to the states he became a defender of princely rights and the Political Department and took his stand firmly when he clashed with Nehru.<sup>17</sup>

The last Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten was of a different cut. He took Nehru's side in the final attack on the Political Department. His determination was to give India independence and he had little time for the states and the Political Department until he could no longer ignore them. His solution to the problems created by the retraction of paramountcy was to establish a States Department under the new government which, to all intents and purposes took over the functions of the Political Department. It was with this decision that Mountbatten broke the back of the Political Department.<sup>18</sup> With very little time left he stampeded the princes into integration and broke every promise ever made to them by Britain.<sup>19</sup>

This brief overview of the years between 1935 and 1947 poses many questions touched on in this thesis. The most frequently asked is, could the Political Department have made any difference to the final

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16 See Chapter 2.

17 See Chapter 5, pp.166-68.

18 See Chapter 6, pp.257-58.

19 See Chapter 6, pp.258-59.



fate of the princes? The answer is emphatically in the negative. Britain had already discarded the princes in 1935 by being already then prepared to bully them into federation. 1947 was merely the culmination of that earlier betrayal.

Or else there is the question, if Britain had paid more attention to the states, would that have averted 1947? One aspect, in particular, as highlighted in chapter 2,<sup>20</sup> was the opinion of many political officers that a Westminster system could not work in the states. They raised the interesting question as to whether Britain could not have ensured the survival of the states better by strengthening their traditional form of government, namely monarchy rather than imposing her alien democratic institutions indiscriminately? This discussion enters the debate on colonialism and imperialism, identified by Moore as "the post-imperial malaise, the West's conscience-stricken self-doubt about its justification and capacity for ordering the non-Western world, the suspicion of ideologies".<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately this debate has not yet touched on the Indian states; perhaps it should. The Political Department frequently told the Secretary of State and the Viceroy that certain policies were being rejected by the princes and that they should be rethought. Grouping and attachment was just one such instance, and although political officers carried out this policy they were constantly obstructed by the princes. What this thesis reiterates is that the advice of the former was not taken seriously. It was too often disregarded as pessimism or worse, but if listened to the result might have been a more co-operative princely

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<sup>20</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.63-64 and Chapter 3. p.106.

<sup>21</sup> R J Moore, 'Recent Historical Writing on the Modern British Empire and Commonwealth', p.61.

order in 1947 with whom a realistic compromise could have been made.

Certainly not all the states could have remained independent but the Political Department had never suggested they should. If anything political officers persisted with reform in order to make the states into viable federal units. Perhaps Mysore could have stood out, but not in the circumstances of 1947 with a Congress government unwilling to accept anything but the complete destruction of the princely order.

These circumstances, it is demonstrated, were created by Britain's surprise decision to leave India. The Political Department had had no warning of it at all. The link between the reconstitution of the Department and federation in 1935 is evidence that Britain had no intention of leaving India then. Likewise in late 1944 the Political Department was asked by the Home Department of the Government of India to draw up a programme of post-war recruitment to the IPS, which looked ahead some seven to eight years after the war.<sup>22</sup> (At that point there were 155 officers in the Service.) There is thus the evidence that Britain even so late in the war envisaged remaining in India for still years to come. Consequently the work of the Department was continued without undue haste, other than the usual urgency of fitting the states for a better future. It was Mountbatten's announcement in May 1947 that India would gain independence on 15 August 1947 which finally pulled the rug from under the feet of the Political Department. That decision rendered an orderly withdrawal from complex and intricate paramountcy bonds impossible. As it was, the retraction process was bitterly opposed on

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<sup>22</sup> L/P & S/13/1803 :ff127-137.

all sides.<sup>23</sup> Even the inevitable fact that the states would have to deal directly with the provinces and the government departments without a political officer to act as the middleman, created resistance. The states needed reform and the princes had sometimes to be forced to take the appropriate steps. Only political officers had made strenuous efforts to achieve this<sup>24</sup> and without them the provinces of British India knew that little progress would be made. It is in Chapter 6 that the finally irony is demonstrated; that it was precisely in the very hour of its demise when crippled by Mountbatten's determination to scramble out of India that the Political Department was finally asked to do the job it had been trying to do all along.

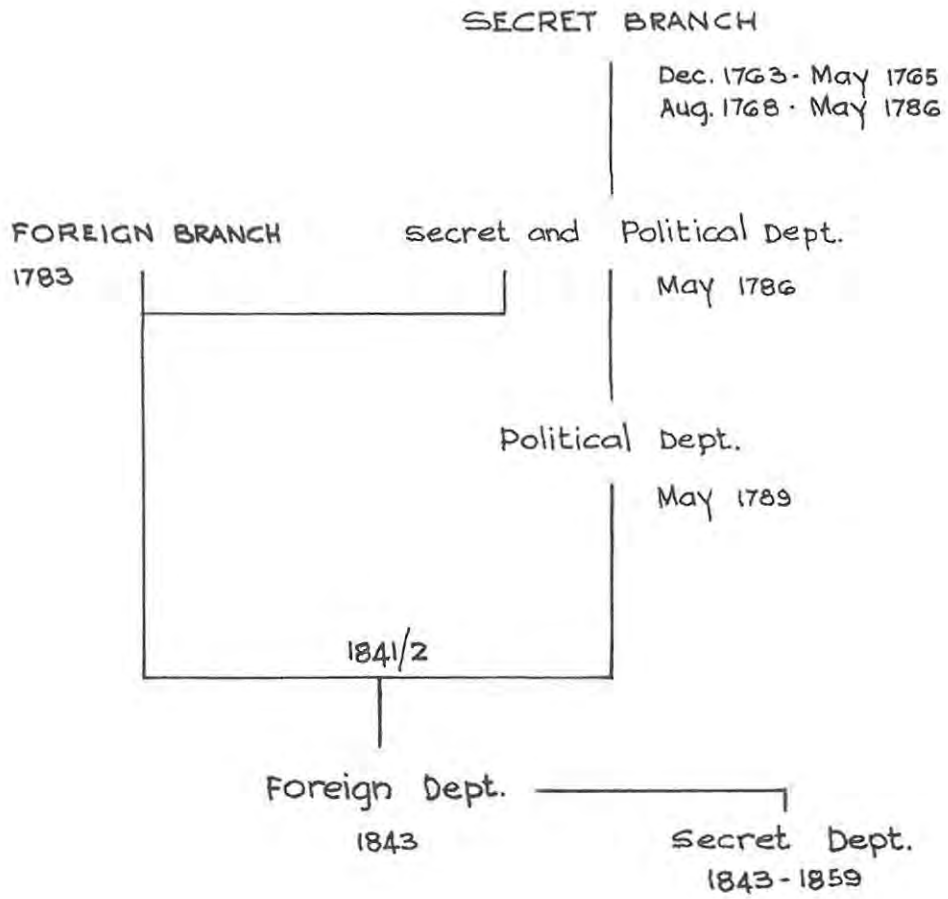
To conclude, the Political Department has been the Cinderella of historians, British governments and Viceroys. Given its inadequate training procedures, poor staffing and generally inferior image, it deserves credit for doing as much as it did, not least the role it almost made its own, to be the custodian of Britain's word of honour in India. For that reason alone it should be awarded a legitimate history. This thesis has attempted to begin to put the record straight. There remains a great deal still to do.

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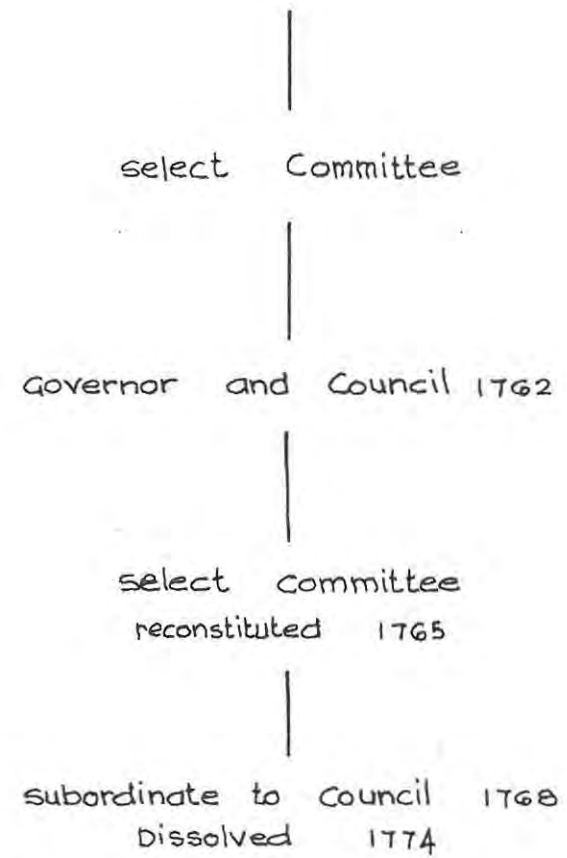
23 See Chapter 6, pp.231-240.

24 See Appendix F.

APPENDIX A (1)



**SECRET SELECT COMMITTEE (AUG-DEC 1756)**



APPENDIX A (2)  
 FOREIGN BRANCH/DEPT. (1843)

1884

Internal External Frontier General (1891)

1906

General Frontier A Frontier B External A External B Internal A Internal B Cypher 1904 Registrar 1902-1926 Issue Persian Stores 1903-1905

1914

1914

FOREIGN AND POLITICAL DEPT.

General A General B Establishment A Establishment B External A External B Frontier Internal A Internal B Internal C Cypher Registrar Library

1922/3

General Honours Establishment Accounts External Mid-Asia Political Internal 1924-1927

Reforms 1920-34; 1946-47  
 Butler Committee Special Branch 1930-31  
 Federation 1935-41

APPENDIX A (2)

1937

External Affairs Dept.

Political Dept.

1947

abolished 1947

Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations

----- Dept. of States 1946

----- Ministry of States 1947  
 ----- abolished 1957

APPENDIX B

64TH Report of Civil Service Commissioners Examination papers etc 1919  
Examination Subjects

Corfield - Indian Civil Service probationer (+ 63 others)  
Capt. M.C. - selected in November 1919.  
(Rank with Forces)

Examinations - as to May 1919.

Indian Civil Service - same as Clerkship (Class 1) Fee £6.00.

	<u>Marks</u>	
1. English Composition	500	
2. Sanskrit Language and Literature	800	
3. Arabic Language and Literature	800	
Greek - not less than two subdivisions, of which one must be Translation -		
4. Translation	400	
5. Prose Composition	200	
6. Verse Composition	200	
7. Literature etc.	300	
Latin, not less than two subdivisions, of which one must be Translation -		
8. Translation	400	
9. Prose composition	200	
10. Verse Composition	200	
11. Literature etc.	300	
12. English Language and Literature	600	
13. Italian, Translation, Composition and Conversation	400	The history of these languages and their literature can only be taken by candidates who also offer themselves for the rest of the examinations in these languages
14. Italian, History of the Language and Literature	400	
15. French	400	
as Italian	200	
French	200	

17. German	400
as Italian	
18. German	200
19. Lower Mathematics	1,200
20. Higher Mathematics	1,200
<p style="text-align: center;">Natural Sciences i.e. any number not exceeding <u>four</u> of the following or <u>three</u> if both Lower and Higher Mathematics be also taken</p>	
21. Chemistry	600
22. Physics	600
23. Geology	600
24. Botany	600
25. Zoology	600
26. Animal Physiology	600
27. Geography	600
28. Greek History (Ancient, including Constitution)	500
29. Roman History (Ancient, including Constitution)	500
<p style="text-align: center;">English History, either or both sections may be taken</p>	
30. i. to A.D. 1485	400
31. ii. A.D. 1485 - 1848	400
32. General Modern History	500
33. Logic and Psychology	600
34. Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy	600
35. Political Economy and Economic History	600
36. Roman Law	500
37. English Law	500

From the marks assigned to candidates in each subject such deduction

will be made as the Civil Service Commissioners may deem necessary in order to secure that no credit be allowed for merely superficial knowledge.

Consistently with the limitations specified above, candidates are at liberty to name any of the foregoing subjects, provided that the maximum number of marks that can be obtained from the subjects chosen is limited to 6,000. If this maximum is exceeded by a candidate's selection he will be required to indicate one of his subjects, the marks for which should, in his case, be reduced so as to bring his maximum marks within the prescribed limit. The marks so reduced will be subject to a corresponding reduced deduction.

Moreover, if a candidate's handwriting is not easily legible a further deduction will, on that account, be made from the total marks otherwise accorded him.

(It is notified that the number of marks deducted for bad handwriting may be considerable).

Age Limit :- Candidates must have attained the age of 22 and must not have attained the age of 24 on the first day of August of the year in which the Examination is held.

Certain deductions for age will be allowed for service in Army/Navy/Air Force during War.



## APPENDIX C

### Introduction to Manual of Instructions to Officers of the Political Department of the Government of India.

(The Manual was originally devised in 1909, but was revised in 1924 and was still in use in 1925.)

" It embodies the main principles which, in the opinion of the Government of India, should guide Political Officers in their relations with the Darbars (sic) of Native States."

#### Introduction

Local conditions, economic and political, and the idiosyncracies of dealing with political questions as they arise. Each case has to be considered on its merits, the object being to attain a result satisfactory at once to the Imperial Government and the Durbar. Precedents are valuable as a guide, but no more. They can only safely be followed when all conditions are the same; and conditions, as between different States, are rarely the same. Even in the matter of procedure it is not possible to secure uniformity without the sacrifice of larger interests, and the rules in the Manual must in practice be elastic. Any substantial deviations to be referred to the Government of India.

But while uniformity is unattainable and undesirable in itself, it is necessary to have some general instructions for the guidance of young officers joining the department, in order to enable them to deal successfully with Durbars, to focus their ideas and catch the true proportion of questions which may come before them in detail:-

The first duty of the Political Officer is to cultivate direct, friendly personal relations with the Ruling Chiefs with whom he works. A Political Officer as the representative of the Imperial Government has a dual function; he is the mouthpiece of the Government and the custodian of imperial policy; but he is also the interpreter of the sentiments and aspirations of the Durbar. In the exercise of this dual function he will gradually acquire an experience and attitude of mind which will lead him instinctively to right, sound courses of action.

i) He should assume an identity of interest between the Imperial Government and the Durbar and discuss questions freely in oral conversation; while the ordinary principles of public business require that there should be a written record of the proposals, the principle phases of negotiation, and the final decision in any case, written correspondence with Durbars should be reduced as far as possible, and all letters except on purely routine subjects should be drafted by himself in a punctiliously courteous style; he should avoid employing intermediaries;

ii) He should always endeavour to place himself in the position of the Durbar and endeavour to realise the Durbar's point of view;

iii) He should ordinarily refrain from offering advice unless it is sought, particularly in the matter of appointments, promotions, punishment of Durbar officials; when his advice is sought he should give it freely ...

- iv) He should be careful to uphold the dignity of the Durbar; he should not interfere between the Durbar and its subjects, encourage petitions and letters against former; nor should he on his tours inspect the district offices and institutions except at the wish or invitation of the Durbar;
- v) He should not do anything which could violate or abate any pledge or engagement given by the British Government or a British Officer.
- vi) He should leave well alone; the best work of a Political Officer is very often what he has left undone.

He will ordinarily find his relations with Durbars made easy if he cultivates frankness, courtesy, patience, tact, care in matters of ceremonial, and above all readiness to see the good in things, and slowness to criticise.

### Policy

The policy of the Government of India is a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, but there are exceptions to this policy, though they are rare. Having guaranteed internal independence to the States, and having undertaken their protection against external aggression, the Imperial Government have assumed some responsibility for the maintenance of order and fairly efficient government in them, and cannot consent to incur the reproach of being an indirect instrument of oppression. The degree of misrule which will call for interference is a question for decision on its merits in each case. It may be stated generally that, unless misrule reaches a pitch which violates the elementary laws of civilisation, the Imperial Government will usually prefer to take no overt measures for enforcing reforms: and in any case the attempt to reform should, as long as is possible, be confined to personal suasion...

The Governor-General in Council is opposed to anything like pressure on Durbars to introduce British methods of administration. He prefers that reforms emanate from the Durbar, and grow up in harmony with the traditions of the State. Administrative efficiency is at no time the only or indeed the chief object to be kept in view. This should specially be borne in mind by officers charged temporarily with the administration of a State during a minority, whether they are in sole charge or associated with a State Council. They occupy a position of peculiar trust, and should never forget that their primary duty is the **conservation** of the customs of the States. Abuses and corruption should be corrected as far as possible; but the general system of administration to which the Chief and the people have become accustomed should be unchanged in all essentials. The methods sanctioned by traditions in States are generally well adapted to the needs and relations of the ruler and people. The loyalty of the latter to the former is personal, which administrative efficiency if unsuited will impair.

## APPENDIX D

Rules regulating the admission of junior members of the Indian Civil Service to the Political Department of the Government of India (vide Notifications No. 3104-Est. - A., dated the 6th October 1910, and No.724 Est.-A., dated the 15th April 1915).

1. All applications for employment in the Political Department should be submitted officially through the proper channels, with information in the form attached. Such applications will be considered in the Foreign and Political Department, and each candidate will be duly informed, through the Local Government under which he is serving, of the result of his application.

2. The choice of probationers will ordinarily be made from officers of not more than three or four years service, but the Viceroy reserves full discretion to select any officer of any standing.

2-A. In making selections much weight will be given to linguistic Urdu, Hindi, Persian, Arabic, Russian and attainments, especially in French. the languages specified in the margin.

3. A married officer will not ordinarily be eligible for admission to the Political Department, and the name of an accepted candidate will ordinarily be removed from the list in the event of this marriage.

4. Officers selected for employment in the Political Department will be required to undergo a medical examination.

5. An officer selected for the Political Department will be on probation for a period of three years. During this period, reports on his work and general suitability for the Department will be submitted once every six months, through the proper channels by the Political Officer under whom he is serving. Should any officer marry during this period he will ordinarily revert to his Province.

6. An officer will, on selection, be posted for six months to a Native State or a Frontier District for training in political or frontier work. At the end of this period his general knowledge of Indian History and Political subjects or frontier conditions will be tested by examination which will be both oral and in writing and include questions on the following works:-

### For officers under training in a Native State.

- (a) Lyall's "Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India."
- (b) The introduction to Aitchison's Treaties for Central India or Rajputana as the case may be.
- (c) The Political Department Manual.

### For officers under training on the Frontier.

- (a) Lyall's "Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India."

- (b) The introduction to Aitchison's Treaties in regard to Afghanistan.
- (c) Articles in the Imperial Gazetteer on the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan.

Candidates will also be expected to have some knowledge of standard works bearing on the country in which they are serving; i.e., in the case of -

Native States. - Tod's Rajasthan, Malcolm's "Central India," Sleeman's "Rambles and Recollections," Lyall's "Asiatic Studies;" and in the case of -

The Frontier. - Edward's "Year on the Punjab Frontier," Thornton's "Life of Sir Robert Sandeman," Chirol's "The Middle Eastern Question."

7. An officer will not be confirmed in the Political Department unless he can speak Urdu fluently and in a manner befitting the occasion.

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Information to be supplied by a member of the Indian Civil Service who is a candidate for Political Employ.

(Application form of Conrad Corfield, 8 February 1921.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Name and profession of father   | 1. Egston Corfield<br>Clerk in Holy Orders   |
| 2. Where educated  | 2. St Faith's School, Cambridge<br>St Lawrence College, N.<br>Ramsgate.<br>St Catherine's College,<br>Cambridge.   |
| 3. University honours and distinctions   | 3. B.A. (war degree)<br>Classical Scholar, St<br>Catherine's Coll.<br>Goldsmith Scholar (1913).  |
| 4. Language qualifications, stating degree of proficiency and examination (if any) passed in each. | 4. Urdu - Higher Standard.<br>(Departmental Examination).  |
| 5. Brief statement of how and where service has been passed.                                       | 5. Army Service 1914-1919<br>Assistant Commissioner and<br>P.A. to D.C. Lahore May 1920<br>to Feb 1921   |
| 6. Whether married or single.  | 6. Single.   |
| 7. Names of any near relatives who have served or are serving in India.                            | 7. J. Coldstream Esq I.C.S. Sess.<br>Judge Delhi (2nd cousin)<br>Father Educational Missionary<br>Punjab 1885-1900<br>Brother -do-<br>(None in I.C.S. nearer<br>relations than cousins). |

8. Names of persons, other than immediate superiors, who can testify to character and qualifications.

8. Maj. Genl. Sir H.D. Watson KBE  
I.G. of D.S.T.  
Sir Mackworth Long (late L.G. of Punjab.)

Information to be supplied by his immediate superiors respecting C.L. Corfield, I.C.S., an applicant for Political employ.

-----

(This form should be forwarded through the Local Government, for transmission, with remarks, to the Secretary to the Government of Indian in the Foreign and Political Department.)

-----

1. How long have you been acquainted with C.L. Corfield?

1. Since May 1920

2. Is he popular -

2. A presentable, goodlooking agreeable young man.

(a) with his brother officers and in society generally?

(a) Yes

(b) with those Natives of India whom his duties or relations bring him into contact?

(b) yes, accessible and has a good manner with Indians.

3. Do you consider that he shows tact in dealings with Natives of India?

3. Yes. His upbringing and outlook predispose him to be good with Indians.

4. Give a Medical Officer's opinion respecting his physique and general health

4. Both good 11.2.21 (signed)

5. Is he of active habits and proficient in field sports?

5. Captain Cambridge University hockey team - good tennis and cricket player. Has already stalked ibex and red bear (Oct '20)

6. Is he a good, bad or indifferent horseman?

6. Good.

7. Do you consider him to be in general ability above, up to, or under the average of his rank and service?

7. Above.

8. Has Mr Corfield in any way specially distinguished himself?

8. Served for the whole of the war, commanded his battalion at times and received M.C. and three medals.

9. Add any general remarks you may have to offer in respect to his ability, character, &c. 9. Turn over

\* It will be convenient if reasons are given for the replies to these questions, which should usually be answered in some detail.

I believe him to be specially suited for political employment by ability, temperament manners and appearance - He promises to speak excellent Urdu and is likely to become proficient in other languages as may be necessary.

(signed) M Ferrar DC  
Lahore

I support Major Ferrar's recommendation.

(signed) Cecil King  
Comm Lahore.

16/2/21

APPENDIX E

Suggested names for the post of Political Adviser to the Crown  
Representative

<u>May 1941</u>	Sir R Maxwell Sir F Puckle Sir B Reilly Sir F Wylie Sir H Craik Sir A Street
<u>August-1941</u>	Sir H Craik - considered as stop-gap Sir A Street - preferred by Viceroy, could not be released
<u>September 1941</u>	Sir M Peterson Sir F Humphrys - rejected by Viceroy Sir B Newton
<p>Up to August 1941 Sir F Wylie was the only possible candidate. He could not take it as he had been appointed Minister to Afghanistan. The post was to held in abeyance for him until his return. Instead Sir H. Craik was appointed to fill the gap.</p>	
<u>January 1942</u>	Sir S Tallents - rejected by Viceroy
<u>February 1942</u>	Sir P Duff Sir M Holmes - rejected by Viceroy Sir B Ogilvie
<u>May 1942</u>	Sir G Whiskard - rejected by India Office

Sir H Young - rejected by Viceroy

June 1942 Sir W Monckton - declined

Sir H Craik was kept on until Wylie's return in 1943

September 1942 Sir G Thomas - rejected by India Office

January 1943 Sir H Young  
 Sir G Thomas - rejected by Viceroy  
 E Mieville

Viceroy suggests Wylie's recall - Wylie appointed

November 1944 Sir C Corfield

January 1945 Sir C Corfield  
 E Mieville - declined  
 W Monckton - declined  
 Sir P Duff  
 Sir H Young

February 1945 G Cunningham - rejected by India Office  
 Rennel  
 R R Maconachie  
 Sir B Reilly  
 R Lockhart - rejected by Viceroy  
 Hutton  
 G Laithwaite  
 Sir C Corfield  
 Sir B Clifford  
 Major General C O Harvey



Revised list of candidates ex-India

Age

Sir H Young	-	60	already rejected by Linlithgow
Sir B Clifford	-	54	Governor Trinidad
Sir P Duff	-	55	H.C. designate No. 2
Sir R Maconachie	-	59	Director of Talks, BBC; later Minister, Kabul
Sir F Tribe	-	52	Secretary, Minister Fuel and Power

March 1945 Sir C Corfield appointed, remained until 1947

## APPENDIX F

### Statement of Constitutional Reforms introduced in Indian States.

#### HYDERABAD.

Hyderabad. A further step forward in the Reforms scheme has been taken with the promulgation of three new regulations - The Hyderabad Village Panchayats Regulation, which provides for the constitution and functions of Village Panchayats of which there are to be 1000 in the State. The Local Authorities Loans Regulation, which specifies the purposes for which Local Authorities may borrow money and the conditions within which borrowing may take place, and the Cantonments Regulation, which provides for the constitution, functions, powers, etc. of Cantonment Committees.

#### RAJPUTANA.

Jodhpur. - 43 new Panchayats have been established.

Jaipur. - State Small Town Rules have been framed. A Committee to revise the municipal laws and another to consider and report on constitutional reforms in the State were formed.

Kishengarh. - Rural representation on the Advisory Board was increased from four to eight by reducing four official representatives.

Bundi. - Rules of Business and Standing orders of the Central Advisory Board have been put into force.

#### WESTERN INDIA STATES.

Cutch. - An executive council has been established consisting of three members with the Yuvraj as President.

Wadhwan. - An executive council of four has been established with the Thakor Saheb as President.

#### PUNJAB STATES.

Mandi. - The Legislative Council has been empowered to introduce resolutions and interpellate (sic) on matters of administration. An Executive Council with defined powers has been created.

Pataudi. - A Panchayat Board consisting of elected members has been introduced.

#### BARODA AND THE GUJARAT STATES.

Dharampur. - A Municipal Act has been framed introducing the elective element based on liberal and adult franchise and giving a clear majority of elected members.

#### KOLHAPUR AND THE DECCAN STATES.

Kurundwad (Senior). - Election rules under the State Representative Assembly Act, 1942 have been framed.

#### EASTERN STATES.

Daspalla. - The composition of the State Advisory Council has been altered so that two thirds of the members are now elected instead of one half as previously.

Hindol. - The number of members of the Praja Parishad has been increased from 10 to 12, 6 elected and 6 nominated.

Ranpur. - In place of the 3 official, 3 nominated and 6 elected members previously composing the Praja Pratinidhi Sabha, the number of official members has been reduced to 2 and the number of elected members increased to 7. A Village Panchayat Act has been passed.

Seraikela. - The Darbar has promulgated a Village Administration Act and a Town Administration Act, both designed to give local authorities a measure of self-government.

Sonepur. - The number of elected members in the Bihar Samity has been increased from 8 to 13 and the number of subjects open for discussion has been considerably enlarged.

Tigiria. - Village Panchayat Rules have been promulgated.

Bastar. - A Council of Administration consisting of 4 members has been set up.

Korea. - The number of Praja Sabhas has been increased from 4 to 5. Village Panchayats have been formed.

#### Statement of Administrative Reforms introduced in Indian States.

##### HYDERBAD.

Hyderabad. - To systematise the procurement of grain surpluses for the Central Government and for the famine areas of the State, the "Hyderabad Commercial Corporation Ltd." was set up. The nominal capital is entirely owned by the State and the Directorate consists of members of Council and other officials and a few unofficials with experience of the grain trade.

##### CENTRAL INDIA.

Almost all the States in the Bundelkhand Agency have put into force Army Rules of a uniform pattern. A number of States have begun codifying their laws, while others, who employ a Common High Court Judge, have given up the formality of interstatal extradition proceedings.

Ratlam and Alirajpur have enacted a High Court and subordinate Courts Act.

##### RAJPUTANA.

Jodhpur. - Separate Hakims for judicial and executive work have been

appointed.

Sirohi. - The Tehsildars have been relieved of their civil work.

Jaipur. - The status of the Chief Court was raised to that of a High Court and it was made the highest court of the State both in civil and criminal matters. The Judiciary was separated from the executive and three new Sessions divisions were created. A Committee was constituted to revise the existing, and enact fresh laws. A recurring grant of 2 lakhs was provided for introducing certain subjects in the post graduate section of the College and for expansion of education in other directions. Teachers grades of pay were revised. The College Library was improved. Compulsory vaccination was introduced and the Lady Willingdon Hospital and King George V Solarium started functioning. A lakh of rupees was provided for improving means of irrigation. Town improvement works were organised and a separate division for improving road communications formed.

Kishengarh. - The Co-operative movement was extended to rural areas and greater facilities given for the distribution of Taccavi. Grain was given from the State for sowing.

Shahpura. - Revised grades of pay were introduced for the teaching staff in the schools at the capital.

Tonk. - Time scale graded salaries were introduced for the employees of the Education Department.

Bundi. - The police force has been reorganised and increased.

#### WESTERN INDIA STATES.

Limbdi. - The interest charged to cultivators by the State Guaranteed Bank has been reduced and the procedure for granting loans simplified.

#### PUNJAB STATES.

Chamba - A committee has been appointed to assist the Chief Judge in codifying custom and law. The Chamba Legal Practitioners' Act has been liberalised and Pleaders are now allowed to appear in subordinate courts. A Superintendent of Industries has been appointed, together with an Industrial Advisory Committee to assist him in exploring possible developments in trade and industry.

Khairpur. - A training school for Primary teachers has been started and a commercial class added to the Naz High School.

Malerkotla. - The grades of the college staff have been improved and rural uplift propaganda begun.

Nabha. - The judiciary has been separated from the executive.

Patiala. - The judiciary has been separated from the executive. The standard of certain schools has been raised. Eleven new Post offices have been opened in rural areas. The activities of the rural Uplift Department have been extended and roads and other means of communication improved. Another touring Dispensary has been sanctioned.

Suket. - The police force has been increased.

#### BARODA AND THE GUJARAT STATES.

Dharampur. - A special judge has been appointed for the disposal of cases under the Dharampur State Agricultural Relief Act.

#### KASHMIR.

Kashmir. - The codification of Revenue rules and orders has been started. Considerable changes have been effected in the organisation of the State Medical Service. The staff and equipment of the three main hospitals at Jammu, Mirpur and Srinigar have been reorganised,

new hospitals at Mirpur and Jammu have been built and another is under construction at Srinagar, while considerable progress has been made in the Laboratory and the small scale manufacture of over 200 medicinal preparations has begun. To prevent the migration of agricultural labour from Kashmir during the winter months, the Kashmir Government have introduced several important measures, such as a new road construction programme, further irrigation projects and a scheme for the manufacture of putoo cloth. Employment for nearly 10,000 people has already been found in these ways.

#### GWALIOR-RAMPUR AND BENARES.

Rampur. - The post of Minister in charge of the Legislature, which was formerly combined with that of the State Advocate, has been separated. An additional judge has been appointed. The police force has been reorganised and good conduct and efficiency allowances introduced. The grades and pay of the Jail Force have been revised. A new centre for adult education has been opened and adult education has been introduced in the Jail Department for the benefit of the convicts in the State Jail. The Public Health Department has been reorganised and a post of Director of Public Health created.

#### MADRAS STATES.

Travancore. - A broadcasting station was opened.

Cochin. - An Act was passed conferring occupancy rights on tenants at will and entitling the tenant to a share in the compensation awarded if any part of the holding is acquired under the Land Acquisition Act. A Finance Committee of the Legislative Council was constituted. In the place of the old Village Panchayat Courts, village courts for

individual or groups of villages have been constituted under the new Cochin Village Courts Act.

#### KOLHAPUR AND THE DECCAN STATES.

Kolhapur. - Several of the administrative departments were re-organised on a more efficient basis, and new scales of pay for certain officials were sanctioned. An Inspector of Education was appointed and a 5 years scheme for the expansion of Primary Education was launched.

Mudhol. - An enactment has been made prohibiting non-qualified men from practising as medical practitioners. The preparation of a revenue "Record of Rights" has been completed.

#### EASTERN STATES.

Athgarh. - A ten-year plan for rural water supply has come into operation with the building of a "band" which should irrigate 2000 acres of land in 18 villages. Time scales of pay and a Provident Fund for all State servants have been introduced.

Athmallik. - A law to regulate bonded labour has been promulgated.

Bonai. - Seven more primary schools have been opened. A law has been promulgated to regulate bonded labour. Time scales of pay and a Provident Fund for all State servants have been introduced. The rules regarding the killing of wild animals in fields have been liberalised.

Daspalla. - A scheme for the improvement of communications has been adopted.

Khandpara. - A new dispensary was opened on the State's western border and an Ayurvedic dispensary at headquarters.

Nilgiri. - Adult education in villages has been undertaken.

Pal-Lahara. - A law to regulate bonded labour has been promulgated. Time scales of pay and a Provident Fund for all State servants have



been introduced. A weaving colony has been established at headquarters in order to develop the hand-loom industry in the State, and an unjustifiable tax on weavers at Re.1/- per head has been abolished.

Sonepur. - The rules regarding conditions of service for State servants have been revised and a Service Board has been set up. State servants have been granted a Provident Fund.

Mayurbhanj. - The number of educational institutions has been increased by 27. An Assistant Superintendent of Education has been appointed. The number of night schools and Patasalas has also increased.

Bastar. - A regulation to prevent abuses in the bonded-labour system has been brought into force.

Kanker. - A Public Service Commission has been formed.

Korea. - The Rural Reconstruction Department has been strengthened. Two more dispensaries have been opened.

Nandgaon. - Free primary education has been introduced in all rural schools.

Raigarh. - The Halkabandi or Patwari system has been introduced.

General. - All the Chhattisgarh States have overhauled and improved the organisation, strength and pay of their police forces, several have introduced time-scales of pay, and all those under management have adopted the P. & T. Compilation of the F.R. and S.R. to regulate service conditions. Uniform Provident Fund rules have also been introduced.

Statement showing the progress in Schemes for the affiliation of smaller States with larger ones or with British India.

Ratanmal was absorbed in Baria State and Kadana in Sant.

Preliminary arrangements were made for the attachment of small talukas and estates in the Western India States Agency to Baroda and the larger Kathiawar States.

Statement of progress in Joint Administrative Schemes.

Central India.

Piploda, Jobat, Mathwar and Kathiwara - have joined the Malwa co-operative scheme and appointed the Malwa Chief Justice to sit alone as their High Court. They have also appointed the Malwa Police Advisor to supervise and reorganise their Police forces.

Piploda and Jobat have appointed a common District and Sessions Judge. In the Bundelkhand Agency, a number of States have appointed a retiring British Indian revenue officer to act as their joint Settlement Commissioner and draft standard Revenue and Tenancy Act and Revenue Manual. The petty States of Baraundha, Sohawal, Kothi, Jaso and the Chaubiana States on the one hand and Beri, Bihat, Naigawan-Rebai and the Hastbhaya States on the other, have been formed into two groups for the purposes of joint administration.

PUNJAB STATES.

Joint Judicial and Police Schemes for the Punjab Hill States were approved.

The Dujana State has been affiliated with Nabha for Judicial and Police purposes.

Nabha has also obtained the part-time services of the Chief Justice, Patiala, as their Judicial Committee.

#### KOLHAPUR AND THE DECCAN STATES.

The Sangli, Miraj Senior, Miraj Junior and Jamkhandi States have created a Joint Police Force.

#### EASTERN STATES.

A common High Court for the Chhattisgarh and Orissa States has been finally approved and a "States Regional Transport Board" representing Chhuikhadan, Bastar, Kanker, Nandgaon, Khairagarh and Kawardha States has been set up.

Report on the working of the Constitutional and Administrative Reforms introduced in the States.

#### CENTRAL INDIA.

Progress throughout the Bundelkhand Co-operative Group has been slow owing to internal dissensions and efforts made to persuade the two main groups, Orchha and Panna, to combine. The discontinuance of the formalities of interstatal extradition by certain States in the Bundelkhand Agency is an important step in the right direction and has eliminated much unnecessary work. The Police Training School is now well established.

The Malwa Co-operative Group appears to be progressing satisfactorily, as does the Dewas (Senior Branch) - Indore Scheme.

#### RAJPUTANA.

Jodhpur.- The proceedings of the Representative Advisory Assembly were marked by keen interest particularly in matters affecting the economic well-being of agriculturists. The Panchayats have exercised their functions with prudence and are appreciated by the villagers.

Sirohi. - The Abu Road Municipal Board came under the control of political agitators who thoroughly mismanaged the administration. The

Sirohi Town Board is working satisfactorily and public opinion is being educated in favour of village panchayats. The opening of new schools has been welcomed by the people and the grant of free admission, board and lodging to the sons of cultivators has created an interest in the education of rural children.

Alwar. - The Council system is working as satisfactorily as can be expected. On the one hand the Ministers are unwilling to be associated with unpopular measures, and on the other they are guided by the desire to anticipate the Maharaja's wishes.

Kishengarh. - The council system in this small State is not entirely satisfactory, since the State cannot afford Ministers worthy of the name, nor are the public sufficiently advanced to appreciate the benefits of the system. In the administrative field very little real advance has been achieved.

Shahpura. - There is a slow but gradual improvement in the qualifications of State officials.

Tonk. - The public are too backward to appreciate the benefits of the council system. The administration, however, has worked very smoothly and successfully.

Mewar. - Village panchayats are justifying the confidence reposed in them and the number of those possessing power to try criminal cases is rapidly on the increase. The reorganisation of the Thikana Courts and the introduction of the Civil and Criminal Procedure Code are already beginning to bear fruit, and the judicial work of the Thikanas is showing signs of improvement and public confidence in them is increasing. The stabilisation of the local currency has had a beneficial effect and the currency regulations are working smoothly.

Partabgarh. - The Gramya (village) Panchayats are functioning, but their progress is slow.

Bharatpur. - The High Court is working satisfactorily, and the State Representative Assembly is functioning well.

Kotah. - Although the young Ruler has worked hard as President, the Council has not yet been able to raise the general standard of the administration to the proper level for a State of this size.

#### WESTERN INDIA STATES.

Bhavnagar. - Owing to persistent lack of a quorum at meetings of the Bhavnagar City Municipality, the constitution of the municipality has been suspended and a small committee of non-officials has been appointed to carry on its functions.

Limbdi. - The reforms are now working smoothly.

#### BARODA AND THE GUJARAT STATES.

Progress in constitutional and administrative reforms has continued slowly and increasing activities in the field of social and economic legislation have been recorded. In Lunawada, the Executive Council System is working satisfactorily, while in Baroda the Legislative Council continues to work well.

#### MADRAS STATES.

Travancore. - Constitutional and administrative reforms continue to function with the same masterful and somewhat rigid control at the top.

Cochin. - The Legislative Council continued to press for more constitutional reforms or for a declaration of policy in favour of such.

Pudukkottai. - The Legislative Council continued to do useful work.

KOLAPUR AND THE DECCAN STATES.

The Legislative Assemblies established in some of the Deccan States appear to be working satisfactorily.

EASTERN STATES.

Bengal States. - In Mayurbhanj and Cooch-Bihar the constitutional reforms already introduced have been working satisfactorily and have satisfied local aspirations to a great extent.

Orissa States. - In a period of 12 months, 10 out of 23 States have made some form of constitutional progress and practically all of them now have some form either of local self-government or of an advisory type of institution. Public response to the creation of representative bodies is on the whole only limited, particularly among the aboriginals. Administrative reforms continue.

Chhattisgarh States. - The various reforms introduced are working smoothly and considerable administrative improvements have been effected.

## APPENDIX G

### THE CORFIELD/MOUNTBATTEN CONTROVERSY

Three incidents in particular illustrate the friction between the two men and deserve closer scrutiny.

Corfield has been quoted many times as saying that he found it almost impossible to acquaint Mountbatten with the decisions made at the residents' conference. "I was anxious to obtain as soon as possible some instructions on the points raised in these proceedings. Lord Mountbatten was too busy negotiating with the Congress and Muslim League leaders to give any attention to the States problem..."<sup>1</sup> In an early draft of his memoirs Corfield was more vehement about his difficulties with Mountbatten: "... he (Mountbatten) had no time to study them (the conclusions) and I could raise no interest in the problems involved. So I had to fall back on the constitutional control of the Secretary of State over the Crown Representative, and try to obtain decisions from the India Office."<sup>2</sup> This was somewhat toned down in the final version.<sup>3</sup> Whichever version is read, the meaning is the same. Mountbatten did receive a copy of the Conference Minutes<sup>4</sup> but he gave them scant time or attention.

It is at this point that matters became very confused, not only from the participants' point of view, but from that of some historians too.

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1 Mss. Eur. D850/4, p.7.

2 Mss. Eur. D850/6.

3 Corfield, op cit, p.152, 'I had been trying for weeks to have the proceedings of the Residents' Conference considered, but Lord Mountbatten and his Advisers had been understandably preoccupied with their plan for British India.'

4 R/3/1/136 :f80. Note by Scott, 25 April 1947, "Minutes sent directly to I.O. and H.E."

The argument hinges on Mountbatten's later treatment of both the Political Department and the states. In this respect the difference of opinion between Mountbatten and Corfield had previously turned on their different interpretations of Mountbatten's instructions about the states. Mountbatten took his stand on the letter of instruction of 18 March 1947 from Attlee and it is here that the controversy over Corfield's knowledge of such instructions most logically begins.

Moore states categorically that at the

mid-April Governor's Conference Mountbatten 'handed round' the text of Attlee's instructions to him and unveiled Plan Balkan: The latter provided for the States to become independent upon the transfer of power and to negotiate freely with any confederation of provinces that might emerge. 5

Moore takes issue with Corfield at this point, footnoting that although Corfield was present at the meeting he "later disclaimed any recollection of seeing Mountbatten's instructions...".<sup>6</sup> Hodson provides an addition to the problem. Attlee's instructions he says "were not, of course, made public, nor were they known to his official advisers on State affairs in Delhi."<sup>7</sup> Corfield would only then have seen them at the meeting discussed by Moore. What Corfield did say was that he "knew nothing of any special instruction to the Crown Representative from the Prime Minister".<sup>8</sup> Coen explains, however, that Corfield would have interpreted the Prime Minister's letter which gave

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5 Moore, Escape from Empire, p.295.

6 Ibid, n.18. Moore provides as his source a letter from Corfield cited in Coen, op cit, p.125.

7 Hodson, op cit, p235. Hodson does not deal with the Governor's Conference, so cannot underpin either Moore or Corfield from that angle.

8 Mss. Eur. D850. Corfield to Wakefield, undated.



Mountbatten the authority to "aid and assist the States in coming to fair and just arrangements with the leaders of British India.",<sup>9</sup> as telling Mountbatten "to see that arrangements were sealed, signed and delivered before Paramountcy lapsed."<sup>10</sup> That did not include pressure from Mountbatten on the states.<sup>11</sup> Another way of looking at it could also lead to the conclusion that Corfield would not have recognised Attlee's letter as giving Mountbatten any special instruction, despite Mountbatten's use of it in this way. Given this interpretation Corfield was correct in his assumption that the letter did not change anything, and his failure to remember 'special instructions' cannot be interpreted to mean he did not recollect ever having seen the letter, something he did not actually state. Both Coen and Moore are therefore incorrect in their assessments of the flaw in the Political Adviser's argument. It could more validly be said that Listowel's letter of 25 April<sup>12</sup> gave the Viceroy special instructions.

This is not the end of the matter. Moore's source for his latter assertion, that Plan Balkan was discussed at the Conference is incorrect.<sup>13</sup> The document he cites does indeed refer to both Attlee's letter and to Plan Balkan, but there is no mention of the discussion Moore cites, nor indeed in the paper Mountbatten 'unveiled' is there anything about independence for the states. All that appears is the

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9 TP, Vol.IX, p.973. Attlee to Mountbatten, 18 March 1947.

10 Coen,op cit, p.125.

11 Ibid.

12 See Chapter 6, p.227.

13 Moore, Escape from Empire, p.295, n.18, TP.x. 147.

short paragraph in the revised draft announcement prepared by Mountbatten's staff: "H.M.G. hopes that as soon as the intentions of the Provinces about the grouping becomes known it will be possible for arrangements to be negotiated by which the Indian States can take their appropriate place in the new India."<sup>14</sup> The discussion to which Moore refers took place on the second day of the Conference. Corfield stated that as the states were being given the choice of independence due to the lapse of paramountcy, the provinces should have the same option.<sup>15</sup>

Moore has equated this with the knowledge of Plan Balkan, which seems to be inaccurate, because there was nothing in the Plan handed round by Mountbatten about the states. Corfield's statement came from his knowledge of British policy, which had all along declared that the states would regain their sovereignty once paramountcy lapsed.<sup>16</sup> This had been allowed for in the Cabinet Mission Plan which still held good. Corfield therefore, did not know what Mountbatten's plans for the states were, at the Governor's Conference. Moore in fact goes on to say that the Plan Ismay took to London with him in May "reaffirmed (that) H.M.G.'s policy towards the States remained unchanged."<sup>17</sup>

There are two versions of Corfield's own trip to London, Corfield's and Mountbatten's. The conventional view is that Corfield, "having obtained all that he wanted from Lord Listowel, came back... And here

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14 TP, Vol.X, p.231, item C 5, 14 April 1947.

15 TP, Vol.X, p.273. Minutes of Second Day of First Governors' Conference, April 1947.

16 See Chapter 5, p.187.

17 Moore, Escape from Empire, p.295.

he made an error - though it was no doubt inadvertent. He did not tell the Viceroy of his negotiations in London or even inform him of his return."<sup>18</sup> Corfield's explanation was that he

arrived back in Delhi in the evening and learnt the next morning that Lord Mountbatten had already left for England. If the ADC who had met me on my return had told me of this early departure, there might have been an opportunity to keep the Viceroy in the picture about my discussions, though I doubt he would have spared the time from the major crisis in which he was involved. <sup>19</sup>

Mieville told Corfield that "the Viceroy was very angry that I had not been to see him as soon as I had returned ... I noticed ... that on his return Lord Mountbatten viewed me with some suspicion, though he never referred to any grounds for it."<sup>20</sup>

On Lord Mountbatten's side the account is rather different. To compound his inaccurate report, Moseley continues:

It was only when his plane was flying between Delhi and Karachi on its way to London that a member of the crew mentioned to the Viceroy that Sir Conrad Corfield had been a passenger on the journey the other way. He scribbled a message to V. P. Menon ... 'D'you know what that son-of-a-bitch Corfield has done? ... Sneaked back to India without telling me. I wonder what he's up to? <sup>21</sup>

Leaving aside the disparaging language, what emerges is the damaging implication that Corfield had returned to India, deliberately not informing the Viceroy. Corfield attempted to clarify the matter by writing to Lord Ismay, who was still in London. He related Mieville's message from Mountbatten, but he had had

no idea of course that His Excellency was not fully aware that I was returning with your concurrence. I presumed His

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18 Moseley, op cit, p.163.

19 Mss. Eur. D850/6.

20 Corfield, op cit, p.153.

21 Moseley, op cit, p.163.

Excellency would send for me if required though as you know I was not in on Cabinet discussion and had no background to communicate. Moreover Abell had confirmed that there was nothing I could usefully communicate. There was no urgency about informing His Excellency of my separate talks with Secretary of State and His Excellency was occupied with British Indian political leaders. In fact I tried to contact Mieville without success, but Staff were aware of my return and had informed Political Department. 22

Some light is thrown on the subject by this letter. Firstly Ismay knew of Corfield's intended return because it was he who informed Corfield that there was an available plane back. He replied to Corfield a few days later saying he had in fact explained the matter to Mountbatten "and emphasised that he had agreed to Sir C. Corfield's return ..."<sup>23</sup> It seemed that his telegram to Mountbatten on this had not reached him.<sup>24</sup> In fact the telegram had reached him, as confirmed by Brockman to Ismay: "I presume telegram referred to in the last sentence of your 6555 of 20th May is your 6306 of the 15th May, which you will note was seen and initialled by H.E."<sup>25</sup> Brockman's assumption was correct, and although this note was only given to Ismay on his return to India, it had some far reaching consequences. What was involved was that telegram 6555 was Ismay's reply to Corfield, while in telegram 6306 Ismay "had reported that 'Corfield has done his stuff' and that he (Ismay) had told him to return."<sup>26</sup> It was number 6306 that had been signed by the Viceroy, who in other words had been fully aware of Corfield's intended return and Ismay's permission. How

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22 TP, Vol.X, p.891. Corfield to Ismay, 18 May 1947.

23 TP, Vol.X, p.891, n.1.

24 Ibid.

25 TP, Vol.X, p.971. Brockman to Ismay, 23 May 1947.

26 Op cit, n.3.

then could Corfield be maligned for something that was in no way his doing? Mountbatten's comment to Menon was both uncalled for and needlessly suspicious. All that he could reasonably be upset about was the fact that he would have liked Corfield to have remained in London.

Corfield referred to this point in his letter to Ismay, expressing his ignorance of the fact that his presence had been required in the discussions of Plan Balkan, especially when the Viceroy's Private Secretary, Abell, had assured him that it was not. Furthermore, Mountbatten had been telegraphed about Corfield's discussion with the Secretary of State by R.M.J. Harris, the Private Secretary to the Secretary of State, on 15 May. He had told Mountbatten that Corfield had discussed the contraction of paramountcy with the Secretary of State and that he "felt the visit had been most timely and helpful."<sup>27</sup> Brockman had replied the same day: "H.E. is very glad to hear that Corfield's visit has been useful. He wished Corfield to remain in the United Kingdom until he arrives."<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately Brockman's telegram crossed with Ismay's of the same date, and Corfield left England without knowing that Mountbatten wanted him to stay. Brockman's note to Ismay explained this further: "H.E. was aware that Corfield might be returning, but he hoped that my 'most immediate' telegram would arrive in time to stop his departure."<sup>29</sup> Who then was to blame for the misunderstanding? Not Corfield, who had not been told that he should remain in London and had got full

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27 TP. Vol.X, p.840, n.1.

28 Ibid.

29 TP, Vol.X, p.971. Brockman to Ismay, 23 May 1947.

permission to leave; not Ismay, who had told Corfield he could go and had informed the Viceroy to that effect; and not Brockman whose instruction to Corfield had not arrived in time. That leaves Abell, who told Corfield he was not needed for the Cabinet discussions, and in that he was at cross-purposes with the Viceroy. Lastly, there was Mountbatten, who knew about Corfield's departure on 15 May while he was still in Delhi.<sup>30</sup> On 18 May Mountbatten left for England and he cabled Mieville, saying, "I may not require Corfield to return to London".<sup>31</sup> Mountbatten may have forgotten that he had seen Ismay's telegram reporting Corfield's return, busy as he was with British Indian affairs. Even so, he was informed of the discussions at the India Office and that the Political Adviser was on his way back. Corfield's actions were quite legitimate from start to finish, and the fact that Mountbatten disliked them had nothing to do with the facts

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30 Hodson, *op cit*, p.309. "On 14 May he (Mountbatten) flew to London, taking V.P. Menon with him." This is incorrect, on 14 May Mountbatten was still in Delhi, and on 17 May he had an interview with Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, at 6 p.m. (TP. Vol.X, p.872.) He only left India on 18 May.

31 TP. Vol.X, p.980. Mountbatten to Mieville, 18 May 1947.

of the matter.<sup>32</sup>

Corfield later explained: "I don't think he understood, and I did not explain, what the lapse of paramountcy would mean."<sup>33</sup>

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32 It is hoped that the careful explanation of Corfield's London visit will dispel any notions such as those held by L Collins and D Lappierre, Freedom at Midnight, pp.155-156, whose paragraphs on this matter may be literary but they are packed with exaggerations, half-truths and distortions. For example:

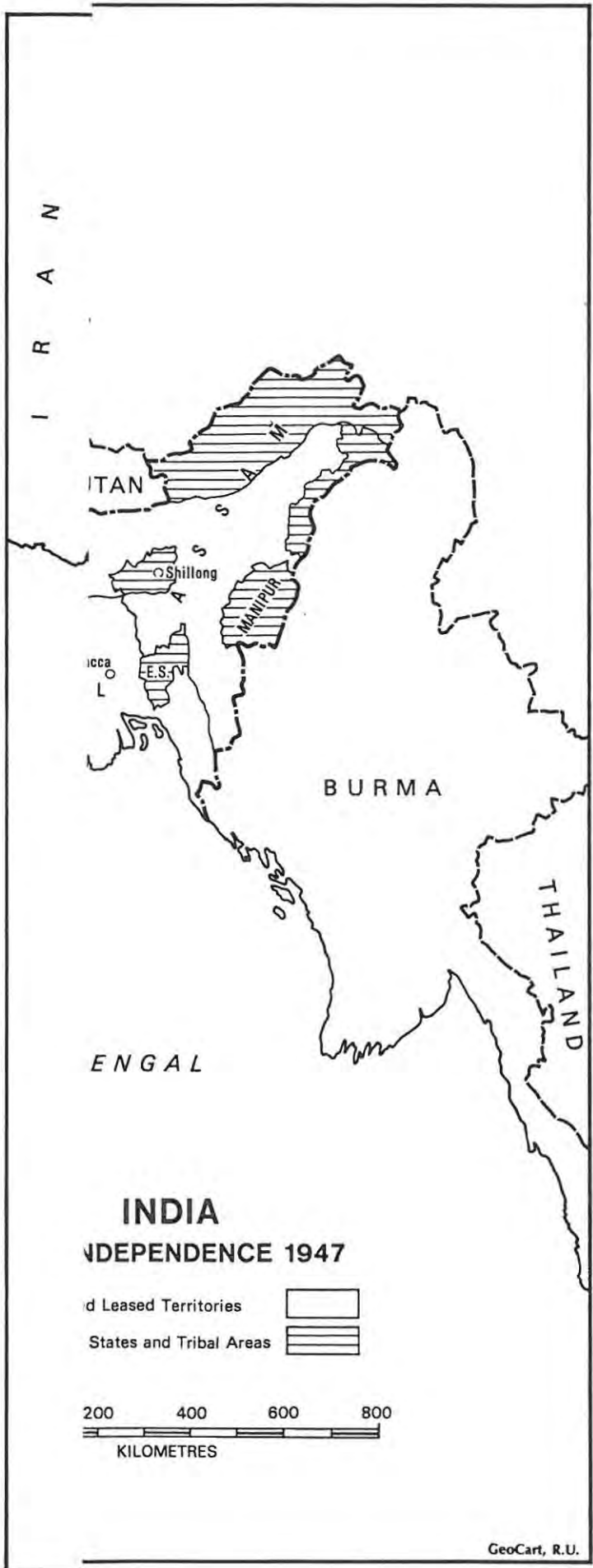
"He (Corfield) was in London without the Viceroy's knowledge or approval."

"His judgement of what was good for India was what was good for her princes. He loathed their enemies, Nehru and Congress, with a fervour at least equal to theirs."

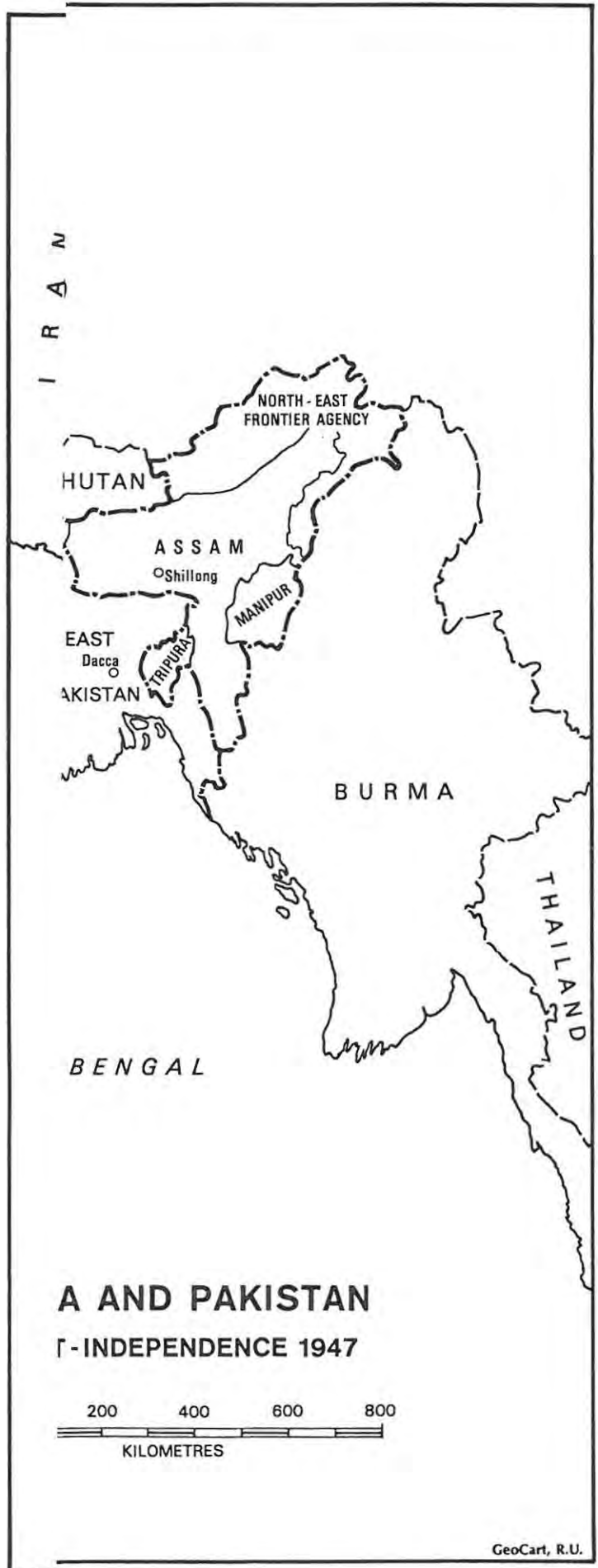
"Mountbatten had had little time to wrestle with the problem of Corfield and the princes. That had not disturbed Corfield ... Corfield had flown to London to obtain for his princes a better deal than he thought Mountbatten would be prepared to give them.."

"Corfield's interpretation was, in the strictest legal sense, right. Its practical consequences, however, would be appalling to contemplate. If the implications in Corfield's impassioned plea to the Secretary of State were realized, an independent India would be menaced with Balkanization on a scale that even Nehru had not contemplated ..."

33 Moseley, op cit, p.162.







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