

**THE
INDIAN PRINCES
IN COUNCIL**

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A RECORD OF THE CHANCELLORSHIP
OF HIS HIGHNESS
THE MAHARAJA OF PATIALA
1926-1931 and 1933-1936

BY

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Indian States and the Government of India

The Portuguese in Malabar

Federal India (jointly with
Colonel Sir Kailas Haksar)

WITH A FOREWORD BY

LT.-GENERAL HIS HIGHNESS
THE MAHARAJA OF BIKANER
G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O.

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FOREWORD

THE question of the position of Indian Princes in the polity of India and the Empire has to-day especial interest in view of the Constitutional Reforms. Mr. Panikkar's narrative of His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala's Chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes, therefore, appears at an opportune moment.

To some extent it may be said that the form in which that question was raised, and the federal proposals themselves, are the outcome of the activities of the Chamber of Princes, which—at least since 1922, when I was its Chancellor—had pressed for a careful examination and inquiry into the future position of the Indian States.

The Chamber of Princes was instituted, as Mr. Panikkar points out, as the result of the desire of the rulers of Indian States for an organization which would enable the Viceroy and the Princes to come together and to deliberate on matters relating to the Empire, India, and the States as a whole. That great and

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far-sighted Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, who found informal consultation with Princes valuable during the critical days of the Great War, was sympathetic towards this idea. The Princes' Conference came into existence in 1916 and continued to meet every year till the Chamber of Princes was formally inaugurated in 1921.

As Honorary General Secretary to the Princes' Conference from 1916 to 1921, and as the first Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes from 1921 to 1926, it fell to my lot to shoulder the responsibility of organizing and conducting, on behalf of the Princes and States, the work of the Conference and the Chamber.

Throughout this period of ten years His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala was closely associated with me as a valued colleague in much important duty, including that of working out a preliminary scheme while on a small Committee of Princes assisted by some Ministers, and, at a later stage, the formulation, in collaboration with the officers of the Government of India, of the final proposals relating to the establishment of the Chamber, its constitution, rules, and regulations, its functions and

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composition, and other allied matters; and on various important Conferences and Committees, and especially the present Princes' Standing Committee.

When, in 1926, I decided to relinquish the Chancellorship, it was my privilege to propose at an informal meeting of the Princes the name of His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala as my successor; and he subsequently bore the burden and responsibilities of that difficult, and at times unenviable, office for a total period of some eight and a half years.

Notwithstanding occasional differences of opinion—trivial or important—which are inevitable in public affairs, I am happy to feel that our official relations to-day are marked by the most cordial co-operation and consultations, and that the friendship which began some thirty-four years ago has been further strengthened and cemented.

I also had the pleasure of enjoying the personal friendship of the Maharaja of Patiala's revered father; and His present Highness has for a great many years extended to me the privilege of an elder brother.

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I am thus in a position to speak from considerable first-hand knowledge of His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala's great work—both inside and outside the Chamber of Princes—and of his personal contribution to the problems which faced the Princes during one of the most important junctures in the modern history of the Indian States.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I write this Foreword.

On questions such as those dealt with in this book there is bound to be divergence of views; and it should not be considered that I subscribe to all that Mr. Panikkar has written in graphically describing the work with which he has, in no inconsiderable degree, been associated. Those who read *The Indian Princes in Council* will find that it is a useful contribution to the political history of the India of recent times.

GANGA SINGH,
Maharaja of Bikaner

BIKANER,
August 1936.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF introduction setting forth the conditions and circumstances immediately preceding the Chancellorship of the Maharaja of Patiala is perhaps necessary as an historical background for a correct appreciation of the work done by His Highness as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes.

The Conferences of 1913 and 1914, convened by Lord Hardinge to ascertain the views of the Ruling Princes on special subjects touching their Order, were the first and tentative attempts towards a collective organization of Princes. The experience gained and the benefits which resulted from these meetings gave rise to a general desire that such conferences should be held annually. Lord Hardinge, who, like his predecessor Lord Minto, appreciated the value of the co-operation of Princes in matters of all-India or Imperial concern and was fully alive to the strength that the British Government would derive from the collective support of the Princes,

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naturally welcomed the suggestion of an annual gathering of Princes. A Conference of Ruling Princes for the discussion of general questions affecting the States and British India was summoned by him annually in conformity with this wise policy, which was followed also by his successor, Lord Chelmsford. H.H. the Maharaja-dhiraj of Patiala was associated with these annual conferences from their inception. He took a prominent part in the discussions and was from the beginning an accepted leader of opinion in the princely circles. When Mr. Montagu came out to India in 1918, the Maharaja, who had already achieved an outstanding position among the Princes, was, along with His Highness of Bikaner and the late Maharaja Scindia, prominently associated with all the important discussions of the time. In fact, it was at His Highness's invitation and at Patiala itself that the momentous meeting of Princes and Ministers in 1918 took place, at which the views of the Princes with regard to constitutional reforms and their claims in regard to their States were first formulated.

At this meeting, besides Their Highnesses of Bikaner, Alwar, and Patiala and Ministers

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like Sir M. Visvesvarayya, Col. (now Sir) Kailas Haksar, and Sir Manubhai Mehta, there were also present British-Indian statesmen of the repute of Lord Sinha, the Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, and Sir Ali Imam. The question of the relations of the States with the Government of India was thoroughly discussed, and the drafts prepared at the earlier meetings held at Bikaner and Alwar were further revised. The final views of the Princes emerging from these discussions were embodied in a memorandum, and the Conference also drew up a draft scheme for establishing improved relations between the Government and the Indian States. This scheme was informally handed over to the Government of India during the discussions on constitutional reform.

In April 1918 the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms was published. Chapter X of the Report, which dealt with proposals relating to Indian States, was discussed by the Princes at their Conference in January 1919, when various Sub-Committees were appointed to examine the recommendations

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of the Report. H.H. the Maharaja of Patiala was a member of all the important Sub-Committees and his work in this connexion was much appreciated by his brother Princes. As an outcome of these deliberations a comprehensive scheme was embodied in a series of resolutions recommending the creation of a permanent Council of Princes, the appointment of a Standing Committee, the acceptance of the principle of Commissions of Inquiry (and a defined procedure in connexion therewith), and the establishment of direct relations between the Government of India and the important States in the Provinces. These resolutions were forwarded by the Government of India, along with their own recommendations, to the Secretary-of-State in May 1919. The decisions arrived at by the Government were communicated to the Conference by the Viceroy in November 1919, when the Princes were informed of the intention of the Government to call into being a permanent Chamber of Princes, and they were invited to undertake the task of formulating their proposals in that behalf. They were also informed of the decision of the Government of India and His

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Majesty's Government to adopt their proposals regarding the appointment of a Standing Committee.

The Chamber was formally inaugurated in February 1921 by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught on behalf of His Imperial Majesty. From the time of its establishment the Maharaja of Patiala was a member of the Standing Committee of the Chamber and was elected to that body every year. Besides serving on the Standing Committee His Highness also worked on the Committees relating to riparian rights and to the question of the honours, dignities, and ceremonies of the Princes. Besides, on the different Ministers' Committees which prepared the material for the Princes, a representative of His Highness's Government was always given a place. In 1924 the Maharaja was nominated as the Officiating Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in place of H.H. the Maharaja of Bikaner, when the latter went to Geneva to attend the League of Nations Assembly as a member of the Indian Delegation.

A detailed account of the work done by the Chamber from 1921 to 1926 is not germane

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to this narrative. But here it may be stated that besides its ordinary routine work the Chamber during this period was occupied mostly with the task of perfecting its constitution. Many of the questions left over from the Codification Committee were also taken up, and where final resolutions were not reached much spade-work was done enabling the States to understand their exact position in regard to many of the vital administrative problems, where political practice had grown up in a manner detrimental to their interests.

The Chamber, though active in these directions, was more interested in the vital question of the States' future position. The actual experience of the working of the recommendations contained in the Joint Report, which were in a measure the counterpart of the liberalization of government in British India, proved unsatisfactory in many directions. An instance in point is the recommendation in regard to the Court of Arbitration. This had been duly accepted by the Government of India by their resolution in the Foreign and Political Department No. 427-R dated the 29th of October 1920, but it

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was, as the Butler Committee put it, 'unfortunately never acted upon'. The working of the Montagu-Chelmsford Act also aroused apprehensions, as in the economic and fiscal sphere the Government of India came practically to be dominated by British-Indian interests, and even in the political sphere the Paramount Power became apparently less able to give protection to the States against movements directed against them from British India.

From the very beginning the Indian Legislature began to press for a widening of the Act and for a further measure of reforms. The Princes, while not desiring to stand in the way of British-Indian reforms, desired to safeguard their own position. Though this was the predominant motive in their mind and they made no secret of their opinion that this was the one question that they desired to be discussed, the machinery of the Chamber afforded no opportunity for its consideration. Realizing the vital importance of this question in 1922, the Maharaja of Bikaner, then Chancellor, put forward a proposal for an informal Round Table Conference of the Princes with the Viceroy and his

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advisers; and again in 1924, after consulting his colleagues, he approached H.E. the Viceroy with a definite request for the appointment of a committee to inquire into this question. But Lord Reading considered that no useful purpose would be served either by a Round Table Conference or by a committee, and in spite of persistent efforts it was not possible to achieve anything in this connexion. It was at this juncture that the Maharaja of Patiala was elected Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, and we shall see in the next chapter what steps he took and what results he obtained on this most important question.

It may perhaps be useful at this stage to mention briefly in the following pages the arrangement that was adopted. The Maharaja of Patiala's actual Chancellorship extended to over eight years, without counting the periods during which he only officiated. For the purpose of this narrative the period has not been taken up year by year but treated as a whole. The Maharaja of Patiala held the office from 1926 to 1936 with an interval of two years during which the late Maharaja Jam Sahib of Nawanagar and H.H.

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the Nawab of Bhopal were each Chancellor for a year. Thus the Patiala Chancellorship falls into well-defined periods: 1926 to 1931 and 1933 to 1936.

This procedure has been adopted to trace in an uninterrupted manner the development of the various activities of the Chamber. These activities have been varied and have covered a wide range of subjects. In their present treatment they have been classified under the following broad headings:

- (1) Maintenance of the rights and the privileges of the Princes.
- (2) Codification and simplification of the political practice.
- (3) The recognition and appreciation of the position and rights of the smaller States.
- (4) Indian States and the problem of British-Indian reforms.
- (5) Improvement of the working of the Constitution of the Chamber.
- (6) Safeguarding the States under Federation.

Some important documents of an historical character have also been added as appendixes.

APPENDIX I

AIDE-MÉMOIRE FOR THE VICEROY
(1927)

WE have been taking stock of our position in view of the approach of the Royal Commission upon Constitutional Reforms in British India. We do not venture to prophesy whether this Commission will be followed by a further instalment of Reforms; but it is a contingency which cannot be ignored. The result of our stock-taking has been an increased realization of the fact that our position, during the last twelve years of intensive development in British India, has been adversely affected to a degree not generally appreciated. It is true that the Princes' Conference or its successor, the Chamber of Princes, has been functioning through much of this period with the object of affording us an opportunity of maintaining and improving our position. Yet we are convinced that on the whole that position is marked by steady weakening in a variety of directions, both political and economic. We are therefore convinced of the

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necessity of an immediate investigation of the position prior to the appointment of the Royal Commission for British India. Such investigation could only be satisfactorily undertaken jointly by ourselves and our Ministers on the one hand, and on the other by impartial and independent men to be nominated by mutual consent of ourselves and the Government of India.

2. In general we desire that means should be devised for safeguarding our position in respect of—

- (a) the internal autonomy of our States, and
- (b) those vital interests, economic and fiscal, which in the past years have been adversely affected.

3. In particular we put forward the following requests:

1. *That the Government of India should admit the full consequences of the true legal position of the States by recognizing that the Governor-General-in-Council is not the final authority in regard to them.*

(EXPLANATION.)

The Government of India under the present constitution, is subject to the 'direction, control and superintendence of the Secretary of State',

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who, being an integral part of the Governance of India, is the final authority, subject to the British Parliament.

2. *That when, in consequence of further devolution of Power from England to India, either the functions and authority of the Secretary-of-State are curtailed, or the Government of India becomes responsible to the people of British India, the right of the States in the one case to appeal against the decisions of the Governor-General-in-Council, or in the other case to secure the impartial adjustment of conflicts of interest between themselves and British India, shall be safeguarded by the creation of statutory machinery competent to adjudicate between the parties.*

(EXPLANATION.)

A safeguarding provision should be included in the Government of India Act to be passed by Parliament, providing for the creation of machinery to adjudicate between the States and the future Government of India. This will entail the execution of a Covenant between the future Government of India and the States, which must be ratified by Parliament and further supplemented by suitable directions in the Instruments

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of Instruction to the Heads of the Central and Provincial Governments. Thus such covenants will be parts of the Indian Constitution and a permanent security to the States.

Provided that in cases involving the personal conduct of a Ruling Prince, the Crown alone could be appealed to by the successors of the present Government of India; for it is obvious that when the change in the powers of the Government of India, as set forth above, occurs, that Government could not act upon the basic formula which in such matters governs the rights of the Paramount Power to intervene.

3. That the recommendations contained in paragraph 302 of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report should be fully implemented.

(EXPLANATION.)

This paragraph and those referred to in it, namely 306 and 311, especially the latter, require the following ends to be definitely secured:

1. Drawing the necessary line of distinction.
2. The provision of means for joint deliberation on matters of common interest to British India and the States, so as to ensure the

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formulation of equitable decisions for India as a whole.

4. *That in order to define and secure the Political, Economic, Fiscal, and Financial interests of the States, a special Committee shall be appointed without delay, consisting of some such personnel as follows:*

- (a) An eminent Jurist.
- (b) A member of the Secretary-of-State's Council.
- (c) A Political Officer.
- (d) An Economist and Financier of European repute.
- (e) A Financier from British India.

N.B. All these must be selected with an eye to their inspiring confidence in the minds of the Indian States.

- (f) Some Ruling Princes.
- (g) Some Ministers of States.

This Committee, it is recommended, should be presided over by a distinguished statesman of the type of Lord Robert Cecil, or Lord Ronaldshay.

5. *That the terms of reference of the Committee should be framed upon the following lines:*

- (a) Assuming that an element of responsibility will be introduced in the Government of

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India under a future instalment of Constitutional Reforms; or the powers now exercised by the Secretary-of-State for India will be transferred to the Governor-General-in-Council, what would be the relations of the Indian States to:

- (1) His Majesty's Government,
- (2) The Government of India?

Whether there would be any, and, if so, what, changes in the relation of Indian States to the Governor-General-in-Council when the centre of responsibility is shifted from the Secretary-of-State to the Central authority in India?

- (b) What would be the authority competent to legislate on questions jointly affecting British India and the Indian States? And if the concurrence of the Indian States is regarded as essential for such legislation, what measure would be necessary to secure such assent?
- (c) If the Indian States are to have an effective voice in matters of common concern to the whole country, what measure in the way of joint deliberation or otherwise would be most effective to secure that end?

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- (d) What would be the machinery to rectify violations of Treaties and Engagements subsisting between the States and external authority?
- (e) Where the interpretation of Treaties and Engagements is affected by reference to the body of political usage and practice, what method should be adopted for assimilating with the Treaties and Engagements such practice and usage as are acceptable to the States, finally eliminating all unacceptable accretions which are fundamentally opposed to the spirit of those Treaties and Engagements?
- (f) If the Provincial Governments are to receive a larger measure of control over their own affairs, should not the autonomy of the States be correspondingly extended?
- (g) The desirability of instituting an independent Supreme Court of Appeal to take cognizance of and decide matters in issue between States *inter se* and between any Indian State and the Government of India or any Provincial Government. Matters not privately adjusted between the parties shall

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be referred to this Court at the option of either party and its decisions shall be binding on both parties.

- (h) What should be the constitution and functions of the future Political Department of the Government of India and of its officers accredited to the Courts of Indian States?
- (i) To inquire into and report on any disabilities and hardships imposed upon the subjects of Indian States by the financial and fiscal policy of British India, and to recommend the method of the removal of those hardships and disabilities.
- (j) To consider all burdens imposed on subjects of Indian States by the financial and fiscal policy of the British Indian Government, and to weigh the benefits received by such subjects in return, or denied to them, and to recommend measures which would restore the balance in equity and justice.
- (k) To consider any other matters relating to the interest, dignity, and privileges of the States.

APPENDIX II

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CHAN- CELLOR TO THE BUTLER COMMITTEE (1928)

SIR HARCOURT BUTLER, Members of the Indian States Committee: The protracted inquiry which has occupied you so long is now approaching its concluding stages; but before it terminates I am anxious to take advantage of your indulgence in order to give expression to some of the feelings which I know well are common to me and to my brother Princes. I will not detain you very long.

I am quite sure that from the commencement of your labours, Mr. Chairman, you and your colleagues shared with the Princes an anxiety to obtain as much information as possible bearing upon the problems which stand to be investigated. We acknowledge the courtesy with which you have afforded us the opportunity of collecting evidence in our endeavours to put forward a comprehensive case. We further acknowledge the patience which you have displayed in

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arranging for these protracted Sessions. We hope that we have shown that on our side neither energy nor expense has been spared in our endeavours to provide you with all the assistance in our power. But there was one factor over which neither you nor we could exercise complete control; and that is the factor of time. You, Sir Harcourt, possess a profound knowledge of the essential elements of the problems which you and your colleagues are investigating; but I may perhaps venture to question whether at the commencement of this inquiry, you had formed an estimate, any more accurate than that which we ourselves had formed, as to the time really requisite for the preparation of our case. We Princes have done our best; our Counsel, our Special Organization and our Ministers have laboured devotedly. But the fact remains that the time at your disposal and at ours has been all too short to enable us to do even the barest justice to the case which we desire to put before you. This shortness of time has been responsible for certain defects, to which I would briefly draw your attention. In the first place, it has handicapped the Members of the Chamber. Had

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more time been available, there can be little doubt but that the States who have authorized us to speak for them would be even more numerous than they are to-day. By way of illustration, I may mention the fact that even since your Committee commenced its Sessions in London, four more States have joined us—Cooch Behar, Bhawalpur, Dewas Junior, and Tehri Garhwal; and I think that if there had been sufficient opportunity for me and my colleagues of the Standing Committee to explain more fully to our brother Princes the aims and objects of our activities, we should have been able to appear before you with the declaration that the Princes of India spoke with a unanimous voice. If this consequence of the shortage of time has operated to handicap us, there is a further consequence which, if I may say so, has operated to handicap the Committee also, and that is the visible marks of haste which are so apparent in the evidence which we have placed before you. I do not here refer merely to certain minor misprints and misplacements in the printed volumes. In my opinion, considering the short time at their disposal, the printers have worked something very like a miracle; and

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I do not think that these small deficiencies are likely seriously to impede the work of the Committee. I refer to more serious considerations. In the first place, the quantity of the evidence which we have placed before you would have been very largely augmented, had it been possible to spend a larger amount of time in its collection. It may perhaps surprise the Committee to learn that almost one-fourth of the States who are associated with the Standing Committee have found themselves unable to submit evidence in the detailed form upon which our Counsel has rightly insisted. This, of course, does not mean that these twenty States have got no cases. In reality, they possess many important ones. But in the time at their disposal, some of the States whose archives are not systematically arranged, have found it impossible to search out all the documents necessary for the proper establishment of the contentions they desire to put forward. Not only has the quantity of the evidence thus been diminished by the shortage of time; but in some respects its quality has also been affected. Our Counsel has already explained to you that the selection of evidence

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presented to you is merely representative. The task of selection would, I think, have been greatly facilitated had all the States which have joined us been able to submit their cases in the form which Counsel required. For we should then have been able to select as illustrations under every head a variety of instances fully illustrative of all the hardships from which the States are now suffering. Under many of the heads this has been done, but it will not have escaped the notice of the Committee that certain of the illustrations are of a kind which may appear, on superficial examination, somewhat trivial. I and my brother Princes feel the utmost confidence that the particular nature of these cases will not cause the Committee to overlook the fact that they frequently represent small examples of the violation of great principles. But it would have been more satisfactory, both to the Committee and to ourselves, if examples of these violations could have been in every case important of themselves, instead of merely important from their implication. There is no doubt that we could have put forward under a variety of heads better and more striking

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CHANCELLOR

examples, had we been in a position to devote a longer time to the task of collection. Finally, having collected the evidence in an imperfect manner, we were also compelled to deal with it in a fashion far more summary than its importance demanded. I have been interested to learn that if we had entrusted the preparation of the presentation of our evidence to one of the most prominent firms of London solicitors, they would have required nearly twelve months, and a special staff, in order to deal satisfactorily with these four volumes which have been put into your hands. Had time been available, we should not have dreamed of asking you to consider the evidence in this comparatively undigested form. Our Counsel would have been able to reduce the case to a series of general propositions, illustrated by particular examples. Thus the value of the evidence would have been easier to estimate; and its total effect would have been more obvious. I fear, therefore, that we have to convey to you, Sir Harcourt, and to your colleagues, our regretful apologies for the manner in which we have had, quite involuntarily, to add to your already burdensome labour. But I trust I have

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said enough for you to realize that we have done our best despite many handicaps. Not the least of these handicaps, to be entirely frank, is the long-cherished belief of the States that their rights were perfectly safe; and that in view of the frequent and authoritative declarations made by the highest personages regarding the sanctity of the Treaties, they could rest secure; only recently has it been borne in upon the States that if the Crown is to protect them in the enjoyment of their rights and their privileges, they must be in a position to bring to its notice, clearly and precisely, the exact content of these rights. The result has been that, in past years, the Indian States have never even contemplated that a time might come when it would be necessary, in the interests of the Crown as well as of themselves, that they should put forward a reasoned case as against some of the actions of the Government of India. Such a supposition did not enter into their calculations. Their archives have never been arranged in such fashion as to facilitate it. Hence, when the necessity arose, it found the States almost entirely unprepared.

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May I explain very briefly why we felt the need for the appointment of the present Committee? Our relationship with the Paramount Power goes back for a century and a quarter; and for roughly half that period, so far as my knowledge goes, it was never forgotten that the relationship of the States with the Crown was diplomatic; and that the rights and obligations of both parties, being enshrined in solemn documents, were entitled to the utmost respect. Official correspondence was still carried on in the language of the Mogul Court, courtesies were exchanged strictly in accordance with tradition, and every respect was shown to the position of the Princes as parties in contractual relations with the British. Where it became necessary, in pursuit of either political or humanitarian considerations, to enlist the co-operation of the States in matters affecting their own internal affairs, the process employed was invariably diplomatic in form. The abolition of slavery, suttee, and infanticide was obtained in such fashion and no other.

But when the British became paramount over the whole of India, their representatives turned

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naturally to the development of that portion of the country for whose administration they were directly responsible. Their desire to do their best for the great charge communicated to them, naturally led them to set a high value upon the virtues of efficiency and the methods of standardization. They began to conceive far-reaching policies for the benefit of British India; and the application of these policies came in time to embrace even the territories for whose admission Britain was not responsible. But almost up to the last decade of the nineteenth century, though pressure was unquestionably exerted upon the States in order to obtain from them agreements whose object was the enhancement of British-Indian revenues, the arrangements in connexion with salt, opium, railways, and the like were still concluded, in the letter but not in the spirit, with the consent of the States. The almost irresistible process which was making towards economic and even political unity throughout India, regardless of the privileged position in which the States stood towards the Paramount Power, was reinforced by internal developments in British India. The spread of Western Education,

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which Britain to her credit has always encouraged, led to a demand for the admission of British Indians to the Councils of their Government. In larger and larger measures the British principle of associating the governed with the Government, has been applied; with the natural result that the interests of British India and of its people came to bulk more and more largely in the estimation of the Government of India. If we consider the length of the period which has elapsed since the Mutiny, and the powerful operation of these forces, economic and political, which I have briefly mentioned, we shall not be surprised at the development of a position in which the Indian States find themselves to-day. For our own part, we are convinced that this position accords ill either with the treaty rights of the States, or with those interests which the British power has from time to time pledged itself to respect. The economic interests of the States, and the prosperity of the States' peoples, have unquestionably suffered; and we hope that we have brought to the notice of the Committee sufficient evidence to show upon how solid a basis our contentions rest. I could, if necessary,

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quote the words of British Officials of the highest rank in further support of the States' contention that the present position is unsatisfactory and calls for redress and for amendment.

We ourselves have for long been only too clearly aware of this. We knew we were in the position of allies. We had no doubt that our treaty rights were being infringed in a variety of directions. But until we took the unprecedented step of obtaining the best legal advice available, as we are not lawyers, we were working to some extent in the dark. The legal position has now been fully cleared up, for the first time, I believe, since the Indian States came into relations with Britain. The names of the Counsel who have subscribed to the legal opinion we have placed in your hands, carry an authority which cannot be questioned. I am informed that in accordance with the great tradition of the English Bar the opinion is a wholly impartial one; that our leading counsel, like his distinguished colleagues, was only concerned in the opinion to elucidate the legal position, whether it made for us or against us. The result you know. What we now seek is an official and effective recognition of the

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true position, that consent is the basis of our relationship with the Crown. Once this has been admitted, we Princes are prepared to negotiate with His Majesty's Government as to the machinery which will be necessary to ensure the preservation of our own rights as well as to promote the progress and prosperity of India as a whole. You will find us ready to co-operate with you in every reasonable way. But we do ask you to recognize the essential basis of our rights.

There is, however, one observation upon which I should like to lay great emphasis. I want to dissipate the impression that the Princes are plaintiffs, in a case where the Government of India are defendants. This is not so. The position as I see it is that the Indian States are doing their best to assist the Crown to establish a position which shall be satisfactory to both parties. If I may venture to say so, we are all sitting together as colleagues; and our one aim is to see that the true spirit of the relationship between the Indian States and the Paramount Power is in the first place elucidated and in the second place respected. If we have placed before you instances which seem to us to argue dis-

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regard of the States' rights and interests, it is only because we who wear the shoe may be expected to judge more particularly as to where that shoe pinches. We are not treating you as a criminal court and arraigning the Government of India before you; we are only doing our best to place before you the manner in which, as it seems to us, the present political system fails to secure the due discharge of those mutual rights and obligations which together constitute the bond between the States and the Crown. We feel that, unless we elaborate before you both the variety and the extent of those encroachments upon the rights of the States which the existing system has made possible, you as a Committee would scarcely be in a position to judge as to the extent to which the system requires rectification.

I should like, if you will allow me, to speak with the utmost frankness and to express, as perhaps only an Indian Prince can, some of the ways in which I and my colleagues conceive that the present system does lasting injury to the relationship, of which we are so proud, between ourselves and the Crown. The first point to which I should like to draw the attention of you,

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Sir Harcourt, and of your colleagues, is the peculiar position in which those servants of the Crown, whose function was originally that of diplomatic agents, now find themselves placed. The Political Officer accredited to the Court of an Indian State is invested with an artificial authority which can be used, and is occasionally used, in a fashion which must necessarily reduce for the subjects of that State the effectiveness of the Ruler and of his administration. The Political Officer has come to be regarded, not merely as a representative, for diplomatic purposes, of the Paramount power, but as constituting in himself the embodiment of paramountcy. The use which he makes of his position is, in general, a matter of the personal equation. The Indian Princes acknowledge, and gladly acknowledge, that in the person of the Political Officers accredited to them, they have on occasion found their best, their wisest, and their most sympathetic friends. But at the same time we cannot ignore the fact that the position in which the Political Officer is placed enables him at any time to interpose his authority between the Ruler of a State and that Ruler's subjects. Where

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such interposition takes place, the results are disastrous. If once it is recognized that the Political Officer is willing to receive and to countenance complaints against the Ruler and his administration, then immediately such an Officer becomes the refuge of all who are discontented and all who desire to evade the responsibilities which they owe to the State. The Ruler and his administration are regarded as under the orders of the Political Officer. Not only does their prestige suffer, but their sense of responsibility is gravely affected, and their power for good unduly lowered and diminished. There is another side to this question. If the authority of the Political Officer is interposed between that of the Ruler and the Ruler's subjects, there is an inevitable tendency for the Ruler to conclude that his security and his reputation depend more directly upon the goodwill of the Political Officer than upon the happiness and the contentment of the people of the State. Such a state of affairs is disastrous. According to the ideas of Indian kingship, Ruler and people must ever remain face to face; so that while the subjects do not evade their obligations

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to the Ruler, the Ruler is equally unable to escape the duties which he owes to his subjects. Where an alien authority in the shape of a Political Officer intrudes itself between Ruler and ruled, the sense of responsibility of the Rulers is naturally weakened; the obligations owed by the ruled are transferred to an alien power.

The Princes of India frankly recognize the right of the Crown under the treaty relationship to assert its authority for the correction of gross injustice or flagrant misrule. But we are clearly of the opinion that such an obligation does not confer a right upon the agents of the Government of India to interfere at their own discretion with the internal administrations of the States. We realize that the British Officer, when accredited to the Court of an Indian State, may be expected to display a zeal for the introduction of administrative methods to which his own training has accustomed him. We realize that he may be expected to believe that the standards of administration appropriate for British India are equally applicable to the Indian States, whatever may be their individual stages of development. But we most earnestly desire to suggest

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that these natural tendencies should be restrained by the consideration that Western institutions, Western standards, and Western customs, are not necessarily suitable to polities where Ruler and ruled who are of one race, and who thoroughly understand one another, are still closely bound together by the ties of traditional sentiment. In this respect, we frankly look for help to the Crown. We hope that it will bring to the notice of its Political Officers that the ancient customs and the long-standing traditions of the Indian States have an intrinsic value of their own, and a part to play even in the world of to-day; that they do not depend for their survival upon the half-contemptuous toleration of the British Government. We would also earnestly ask that same Government, in the interests of relations which exist between the Indian States and the Paramount Power, to discard some of those notions of prestige which have already wrought such grave harm. We Princes of India are only too ready to co-operate with the Government of British India in the pursuit of aims which will redound to the advantage of the country as a whole. We would only ask that

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our co-operation should be invited; that the reasons underlying Government policy should be explained to us; and that where action on our part is desired, we should be satisfied of the necessity of the measure in question. I would ask the Committee to believe that it is in no spirit of fault-finding that I say that the present conditions are far different from those which I had indicated. Too often, when we Princes have to transact business with the representatives of the Government of India, we feel we are meeting men who are rigidly bound by certain instructions from which they cannot depart. We feel that their minds are already made up; that the issues under discussion are prejudged, and that their one aim and object is to induce us by any possible manner of means to acquiesce in views which have already been formulated. I would respectfully maintain that in such circumstances as these justice and equity cannot flourish. If we are to co-operate wholeheartedly with the Government of India and with its Officers, we must do so in a spirit of give and take. The intercourse between us must be of a kind which exists between persons who desire to reach an equi-

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table decision after frank and free discussion. We cannot be expected to open our hearts in the presence of Officials who treat their own opinions and their own judgements as the epitome of wisdom, and who regard honest differences from their point of view as partaking of the nature of personal affronts. We earnestly hope that as the result of the representations we are making before the Committee, the Paramount Power will not only admit, but will impress upon its representatives, the position which we regard as fundamental: namely, that the States have a perfect right, outside the limits of the paramountcy agreement, to decline propositions of which they do not approve; and that it is not correct for every servant of the Government of India to look upon himself as the representative of a power which has the right, as well as the physical force, to impose its will upon the States in every particular.

We Indian Princes feel that if we are to discharge our obligations to the Crown, we must be placed in a position in which we can do our duty. We feel that through the operation of the existing political system, we have lost initiative and

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sense of responsibility. Whatever may have been the ideas underlying that system, its practical effect has been to keep us in leading-strings. But we feel that unless we are allowed to buy our experience, no matter at what cost, unless we are brought face to face with the consequences of our own actions so far as our subjects are concerned, we can never fully rise to the responsibilities of the position in which we have been placed by Providence, in appealing to a Committee composed of Englishmen. I think it is hardly necessary for me to justify a desire which I know is shared by my brother Princes, that in the sphere of sovereignty which remains to us, however great or small that may be, we should in truth be masters. But such an aspiration is all too frequently misunderstood. When some of us stand firm upon our rights as we conceive them to be, when we attempt, as loyal friends and allies of the Crown, to establish firmly our authority within our States, we are forthwith accused of cherishing ridiculous aspirations towards complete independence, and of manifesting a spirit of hostility to Britain. No assurances of mine, I feel confident, are necessary to demon-

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strate to such a Committee as this, the irresponsible, the wholly untrue, character of these suggestions. But the mere fact that they can be made, and are made, in the case of those of us who take our responsibilities, both to the Paramount Power and to our own people, most seriously, is surely an indication that something is wrong. What that something is we look to the Committee to discover. But for our own part we believe that it arises primarily from the fact that no definite and separate machinery has ever been set up to preserve and safeguard the spirit of the relationship between the Indian States and the Crown. The Political Department, whose services to the States we all of us frankly recognize, is after all but one branch of the Government of India. And if the Government of India is committed by its position to take a predominantly British-Indian view, then the Political Department, as a part of that Government, has to act under the orders which it receives. If the Government of India, in the discharge of its responsibilities towards British India, concentrates its attention primarily upon the development of British-Indian resources, and

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upon schemes for the progress of British India, it is only natural that the rights of the States and of their subjects should fall into a secondary place.

Inevitably, in such conditions as these, the interests of the States are subordinated to those of British India; and the Political Department, despite the best efforts of many admirable officers, tends to become merely the instrument by which this subordination is enforced. I desire to make plain, once and for all, the attitude of myself and my colleagues towards the whole of this vital inquiry. We are profoundly loyal to the person of His Majesty the King-Emperor; we are equally loyal to the obligations imposed upon us by our Agreements with the Paramount Power. We admit the rights which that Power is entitled to claim under the Agreements; we look to it to see that our own rights are equally secure. We have not the slightest wish to go outside the Empire. We only desire that the true spirit of the relationship between ourselves and Britain shall be respected. We have nothing but the friendliest feelings towards that Department of the Government of India which is primarily

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concerned with the transaction of our day-to-day business; we desire only that it should be placed in a position in which it is free to respect, and to mould its conduct in accordance with, the treaty relations. Incidentally, we have no hostility towards British India, and we do not desire to oppose its aspirations. We recognize that the question of political advance in that part of the country is a matter for settlement between British India and Great Britain. But our basic attitude can be summarized in a single sentence. We want to maintain our link with Britain. We believe that our relations are, and have always been, with Britain, and it is to the spirit of these relations that we desire to remain as true in the future as we have done in the past. We hope that there is nothing unreasonable in this desire. We feel that we are appealing to a power which has manifested so great a regard for the sanctity of solemn pledges that it entered the greatest war in history in defence of its plighted honour. We believe, and firmly believe, that the ties of obligation existing between Great Britain and ourselves are no less sacred than those which exist between Great Britain and Belgium.

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May I close upon a note of personal appeal? I would beg of you, Sir Harcourt, and members of the Indian States Committee, when you are drafting your Report, to remember the manner in which the Indian Princes stood firm by Britain in 1857 and in 1914. As we have stood by you in the past, so we will stand by you in the future. We are putting forward no claim, we are raising no contention which we do not regard as fully justified by agreements which your Sovereigns have declared to be sacred and sacrosanct. We trust to you to see that this great opportunity is not lost. We have exposed to you, as frankly as we were able, what we regard as being the defects of the existing system by which our relations with the Crown are conducted. We have demonstrated to you our difficulties; we have shown you something of our grievances. We believe that wisdom and policy will alike dictate that steps should be taken to confirm and strengthen our devotion to the King-Emperor and to the British connexion, by vindicating our claim to those privileges which have been guaranteed to us, and by securing to the people of our States that treatment to which they are in all

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equity entitled. Finally, I would beg of you to remember that at a time when a large section of politically minded British India was boycotting the Simon Commission, because the method laid down for the inquiry was not pleasing to it, we Princes have from the very beginning co-operated whole-heartedly with you. What the Simon Commission will recommend for British India I do not know. But I respectfully submit that it would be the part of statesmanship for Britain to consider carefully the respective claims of those who have chosen the path of boycott and of those who have co-operated. I trust it will never be said that the people of British India obtained justice from Britain by boycotting the Simon Commission, while the Princes, people and States of Indian India were penalized, were disappointed of their rights, and were sent empty away, when they had co-operated to the utmost of their capacity in the work of the Indian States Committee.

APPENDIX III

NOTE ON THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS

AT the first Round Table Conference, and particularly in the meetings of the Federal Structure Committee, it was repeatedly made clear, on behalf of that section of the Indian States' Delegation which represented the overwhelming majority of the States participating in the Chamber of Princes, that

- (1) less than 125 seats in the Upper House for the Indian States would create great difficulties in providing for the due and adequate representation of the various States, and particularly of the 109 States which, in their own right, are at present Members of the Chamber of Princes; and
- (2) however intrinsically sound the scheme of Federation and the provisions relating thereto might otherwise be, the question of the adequate representation of the States and the allocation of seats *inter se* would be one of the most important factors which would, in itself, determine the decision of the Princes whether to federate or not.

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2. These important considerations have since also been reiterated in the Chamber of Princes, and on other occasions, on behalf of the States as a body, as well as by some important Rulers individually; and they were also stressed at the third Round Table Conference by Sir Manubhai Mehta and Nawab Sir Liaquat Hyat Khan, who were among the representatives of the Chamber of Princes and the Princes' Standing Committee. It had, however, been made clear all along that should any generally accepted scheme be evolved, by the British Government or any one else, the Princes would doubtless be prepared to consider it, on its merits, in a constructive spirit with an open mind, provided that the rights and interests of the States, big and small, were properly safeguarded, and their due and adequate representation secured to them.

3. The original discussions at the Federal Structure Committee of the first Round Table Conference were on the assumption that the Upper House would be a very small body in which the States would probably have not more than 50 seats allotted to them, in any case much less than 80. In the proposals emanating from

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the Second Round Table Conference the number of States' seats was raised to 80. In view of its having been pointed out all along that even 80 seats were wholly inadequate for the purpose of providing due and adequate representation for such a large number of States, big and small, it is at least gratifying to see that the States' quota has now been raised to 100 in the White Paper. But, as even the number of 100 seats is 25 less than what was consistently pressed for on behalf of the States generally as the minimum necessary for providing for the equitable and reasonable representation of all the interests concerned, some of the difficulties anticipated still remain, even though the increase from something like 50 to 100 seats for the States has certainly improved matters.

4. Unfortunately the increase of 20 seats has been more than absorbed by the proposal to give larger representation to Hyderabad, the remaining four 21 gun States, the 19 gun States, and a selected number of the 17 gun States.

5. It would therefore be idle to disguise the fact that these tentative proposals of His Majesty's Government have caused profound disappoint-

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ment, anxiety, and alarm generally amongst the great majority of the 109 States which are members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right, including also some of the important States. And it would indeed be no exaggeration to state that, so far as the States as a whole are concerned, the very scheme of Federation is likely to be seriously jeopardized on account of the various classifications, differences, and invidious distinctions involved in the proposed allocation of seats which, it will be apparent, reflect on the izzat, dignity, and importance *inter se* of even the larger and important States.

6. The strength and the volume of the feeling amongst the great majority of the Sovereign States on a question like this, which so vitally affects their izzat and status, as well as their Sovereignty and interests, have not been fully appreciated. A feeling exists among many States that it seems to have been assumed that, with the adhesion of a few of the larger States, the remaining States, both important and small, would, willingly or unwillingly, have come into the Federation.

14. Nothing has created more bitterness and

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resentment amongst the Princes and States generally, than the attempts which have been made of late to belittle the importance of other States by suggestions that the Indian States are, or should be, grouped or graded into various classes or categories, which would derogate from their legitimate position and due importance and detract from their relative dignity and izzat, and automatically involve a stigma of inferiority of rank and status. Whilst, of course, there must, in the very nature of things, be, comparatively speaking, larger and smaller and more important and less important States, all having their relative seniority and juniority even amongst States in the same group of salutes, the only two well-known and accepted broad categories into which the Indian States have so far been divided for the purpose of comparison, without detracting in any way from their sovereign status, are the larger or more important States and the smaller States. These are the two classifications which have generally been applied to the Indian States, as, for instance, when the membership of the Chamber of Princes was under discussion just before its inauguration some 12 or 14 years ago.

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Even in Europe, with a variety of States, the division ordinarily heard of is:

- (1) the bigger States or Powers, and
- (2) the small States.

A perusal of the proposed grouping of the States under six different categories will naturally be taken by the States generally as reviving the state of affairs which existed in Kathiawar, where the States were grouped under seven different classes, for the discontinuance of which invidious distinctions it is believed H.E. Lord Willingdon was personally responsible when he was Governor of Bombay.

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17. Even though salutes serve to some extent as a useful guide in certain directions, it will be generally agreed, for reasons which will be obvious, that they cannot be taken as the sole or infallible test, since there are glaring anomalies in the existing table of salutes which have been publicly and officially admitted. Speaking on a somewhat similar question of the qualifying tests for membership of the Chamber of Princes, then about to be inaugurated, and when the constitution of that body was under discussion,

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the Viceroy (Lord Chelmsford), in his speech at the Princes' Conference on the 20th January 1919, said that Mr. Montagu, the then Secretary-of-State for India, and he were of the opinion that

'the whole question of salutes needed most careful investigation in view of the anomalies which appear to exist, and they held, therefore, that it would be unwise to base upon the salute list, as it stood, any fundamental distinctions between the more important States and the remainder'.

Again, at the next Princes' Conference on the 3rd November 1919, the Viceroy referred to the same question in the following words:

'Your Highnesses will remember that in my last speech I said that Mr. Montagu and I felt that the whole question of salute needed most careful investigation in view of the anomalies which appeared to exist. If the principle which I now advocate is to be adopted as the basis of classification it will be additionally desirable that this investigation should be undertaken at an early date, in order that anomalies, whether already existing, or likely to ensue, from the institution of the dividing line, should be corrected wherever possible. My Government are ready to give their earnest consideration to this matter, and will make

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the necessary recommendations to the Secretary-of-State for submission to His Imperial Majesty in due course.'

18. Further, if the scheme of representation were to be based chiefly or exclusively on salutes, the question would also arise as to what would happen if, as is to be hoped, with a view to removing these admitted anomalies, or in the ordinary course otherwise, the salutes of any or a certain number of States were to be raised after the Federation and after the States' seats had been definitely allocated. As regards the Lower House, a provision is to be found in at least some Constitutions for the periodical revision, after each census, of the seats allotted to the States on the population basis. But since the States are represented in the Upper Chamber as sovereign States and Governments, it is scarcely conceivable that there will be a re-allocation of seats, some of which, then, would doubtless be at the expense of other States who may not have received an increase in salutes, for the benefit of those States whose salutes may hereafter be increased.

Viewed from all standpoints, and irrespective altogether of any personal considerations for the

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smaller or the larger States, it would appear that some more clearly defined principles and tests will have to be applied if plural representation is given effect to. From the very beginning the majority of the States in the Chamber have emphasized, on the basis of principles accepted in most federal constitutions, that there should be equality of representation for federal units as sovereign States and Governments in the Upper House. The question was one of principle; and a reasonable compromise on the basis of equity and justice had never been ruled out. If, however, for the purpose of determining the extent of representation, the rank and importance of States as indicated by permanent dynastic salutes and other important factors are to be taken into consideration, then the scheme which minimizes divergence of representation and, at the same time, provides each State with an effective voice in the Upper Chamber, is doubtless more likely to find acceptance among the vast majority of the States, than the one which gives, even to some of the senior 13 and 11 gun States, only alternative representation, say one such opportunity in 21 or about 28 years.

APPENDIX IV

SPEECH IN THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES (*January 1935*)

THE Resolution which I now rise to move is, undoubtedly, the most important one on the agenda. It is the result of our discussions and deliberations in the Standing Committee and in the informal Conference of Princes, and I trust it will be carried unanimously. All that the Resolution purports to do is to reaffirm the willingness of the Princes and States of India to enter a Federation with British India under the aegis of the Crown, if the safeguards for their internal sovereignty and autonomy and other conditions are fully provided in the Constitution, and the scheme itself is acceptable to the other parties concerned. This has been our position from the beginning. This Chamber has, during the past four years in its annual sessions, reiterated that view without modification or variation.

While the position of the Princes remains therefore unchanged, the question whether the

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conditions which they laid down from the beginning have been satisfactorily met can only be decided after the Bill has been carefully scrutinized by experts. The Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report no doubt elaborates the scheme in many of its details, but until we are able to study the actual clauses of the Bill and the detailed provisions regarding many matters in which we are interested, it will, I hope, be appreciated that the Princes will not be able to decide definitely the question of their accession to Federation. But I may say here that, on a first examination, we are advised that some important questions like the financial conditions precedent to a federation, specially in regard to direct taxation, and the content of federal subjects, are left vague and undefined. In certain matters the powers of the Federation have been enlarged, as, for example, in the jurisdiction of the Federal Court. Subjects which had never been discussed with us have, in some cases, been added to the Federal list. On many points further elucidation seems to be necessary, as the recommendations of the Report seem ambiguous and capable of different inter-

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pretations. Besides, the Treaties of accessions, which will be the instruments binding the States, remain yet to be negotiated. It is essential that this supremely important document should be drawn up in consultation with the Princes and not as a unilateral agreement.

Resolutions of this Chamber during the last four years have again and again affirmed the desire of the Princes that a satisfactory determination of their rights and status should precede any invitation to the Princes to join a Federation. In view of the special powers vested in the Governor-General and Viceroy to protect the rights of the Princes, it seems essential that these rights should be authoritatively determined. In my speech at the first Round Table Conference I made this point unequivocally clear. It is true that this is a matter that the Joint Parliamentary Committee could not have discussed in their Report, but that does not make a negotiated settlement of this important question any the less imperative. With the inherent rights of the States remaining as undefined as they are to-day, it is difficult for the Princes to consider any scheme of political

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reform. That was, and remains, one of our essential conditions, as explained to the Government of India and His Majesty's Government. We have not yet been informed what their views are on this matter; nor have we been invited to enter into further negotiations.

I desire also to emphasize one important point which I am glad to notice neither the Government of India nor His Majesty's advisers in England have overlooked. The Representatives of the Princes have, from the beginning, laid it down as a condition that, even if the Federal scheme is constitutionally unobjectionable, each State must have the absolute and unqualified freedom of choice to accede to, or to stand out of, the Federation. The choice must remain with each Ruler to decide whether his State should agree to join an All India Constitution. Let us not forget that the change that is suggested, whether beneficial or otherwise, is of a most momentous character. It would undoubtedly involve a fundamental change in our relations with British India. From politically separate entities in all matters, the States under a federation will become politically united with

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British India in certain specified matters. Common institutions, common policies, common responsibilities will arise which in the Federal field will unite the States and British India into one whole. No one would deny that these are fundamental changes at which the most courageous and stout-hearted champions of the proposals may feel legitimate qualms, while others, to whom Federation was no more than an idea, will undoubtedly feel alarm and anxiety.

Nor can it be forgotten that Federation, in however modified a form, would involve vague and indefinite responsibilities for the future, from which the Princes, in their present position of isolated sovereignty, are practically immune. Even the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee does not conceal that fact. No constitution, however rigidly defined, can finally limit the liabilities of its constituent units in regard to defence and finance—the two most vital aspects of a Government. Who is there who would deny that in a federal constitution to which the States are parties, the constituent units, in future, will have to face liabilities and responsibilities which cannot now be estimated?

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Nor are we entitled to forget that this Government of a united India, once established, will grow and continue to grow in a manner which we cannot foresee now. No institution devised by man develops exactly as its originator intends; least of all a constitution which vests great power and gives legal, executive, and judicial authority, no doubt in specified matters, over a whole country. Unforeseen conditions develop; circumstances not contemplated at the present time come into being, and the Federal Government may be forced, even if it were unwilling, to expand its function and even its scope. We have the example of the United States, and even of Imperial Germany, to show that even when a State's rights were rigorously and almost religiously safeguarded in the Constitution, the Central Governments have inevitably encroached on the powers of the constituent units.

Your Excellency, Your Highnesses. Do not think that I am arguing against a Federal Constitution. All that I desire to point out is the momentous character of the issue before the Princes. It is easy for people unconnected with

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the States to say 'Why do not the Princes declare their final intention?' It is easy for them to say that the Princes are vacillating, hesitant, and doubtful. If I may respectfully say so, the issue is not so simple as others imagine. We have a heavy and tremendous responsibility placed on us. We have to consider the sacred trust handed over to us by our ancestors; we have to think of the generations to come, and see that it is not said of us that we lightly signed away our States, prerogatives, and privileges which the courage, foresight, and wisdom of our forefathers had bequeathed to us. Equally, we have to take into consideration the conditions of the present day, and to safeguard ourselves against the wholly untrue accusation that we are less patriotic than our brethren in British India. We realize that the spirit of isolation can no longer be maintained; that institutions have to be devised for closer co-operation between the two Indias, that in matters of common concern it is in our interests to associate ourselves with British India. It is, therefore, no easy matter for us to come to a wise conclusion on a question so complicated, so fundamentally different from

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all other questions with which we had to deal as Rulers, so vitally affecting our States, ourselves, and our dynasties. May I, therefore, emphasize again that the discretion of each State in this matter remains totally unfettered?

The circumstances under which some of us agreed to consider a Federal proposal, as providing a suitable scheme of co-operation between British India and the States, are indeed well known. It was not from any desire on our part to hinder British India in the realization of its legitimate aspirations, but rather to help India in her constitutional progress and political development, without sacrificing our own sovereignty and internal autonomy; but to-day responsible men in British India, men who I know bear no ill will towards the States, have not hesitated to say frankly that in the present scheme of things, Indian States have become a positive hindrance rather than help to British India. I would not have taken such an expression of views, from however eminent a quarter, seriously but for the fact that it seems to be widely held in all sections of political opinion in British India. And if that is the view of men of

moderation in the country, it is a matter for Your Highnesses seriously to consider whether we should put ourselves in the position in which practically every important body of opinion in British India considers us unwelcome partners, and looks upon our entry into Federation with suspicion. The benefits of a Federal scheme to the Indian States are, in any case, not so overwhelming that, whatever the opinion of British India, it would be in our interest to join in. On the other hand, if, as it would seem, the invitation of British India, which we willingly accepted, does not stand, and the benefits to the States are not obvious, the Princes for their part should be prepared to say, that while they are willing, as they have always been, to enter into a Federation, they would be equally prepared to stand out of a Federal scheme if British India is not anxious to have it. In view of the accusation that is being levelled against the States, I think it is necessary that our views should be clearly and unequivocally stated on this issue.

The changing attitude of British India towards the States—the accumulated evidence of which is known to all of you—has been of service to us.

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In some ways it has been a source of enlightenment to us. It has enlightened us about the motives which animate even the most friendly among them to accept the idea of our association with them. They have made no secret of those motives. Those of the Indian politicians who desire our entry into the Federation, do so in the hope that in the near future we will be forced by circumstances to introduce in our States democratic forms of government. We are thankful that our friends in British India should have given us a clear indication of their views. While we can assure them that the Princes of India have always been willing to do whatever is best for their people, and will always be ready to accommodate themselves and their constitutions to the spirit of the time, we must frankly say that if British India is hoping to compel us to wear on our healthy body-politic the Nessus shirt of a discredited political theory, they are living in a world of unreality. It is well to clear all misconceptions. If the Princes decide to enter the Federation, they will do so with their eyes open, with the firm determination to cultivate feelings of friendship

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with British India, and co-operate with them in all matters concerning the welfare of this great country. But they will under no circumstances permit the utilization of the constitution for interference between themselves and their people. It must be clearly understood that the Princes will accept no constitution which would even by implication vest in any authority except themselves the right to decide their relations with their own people, the right to modify or alter their own politics, their right to live in the manner they and their people choose.

If, however, the critics of the States have in their mind the belief that they could assume political power in India, without taking into consideration the claims of the States and the just rights of the Princes, I would in all friendliness but with all firmness say that such a course would never be acceptable to the States. The sovereign rights, prerogatives, and privileges of the States are inherent in them and are guaranteed by solemn treaties. The Crown is under the most sacred obligation to keep them inviolate and inviolable, and there is no authority which can in any manner and at any time

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encroach upon them or question their validity. The idea that the States and their Rulers are an anachronism in the political life of India to-day, that they are merely apocryphal passages in the history of India, interpolated by a Machiavellian hand, which could be torn away without affecting the whole, is so utterly un-historical as to require no comment. If British India desires to go forward without the association of the States, we shall have no complaint. The States of India stand by their own internal strength, by the loyalty of their people to their Rulers, by the bond of affection and attachment which unites the Princes and their people. They are rooted in age-long history, and I have the faith in me that, Federation or no Federation, the States of India will exist as integral parts in the polity of this great country, so long as the Rulers are true to their tradition of *Raj Dharma* and to their trust.

Your Highnesses, I confess I am an optimist. I have firm faith in the future of our States and of our Order. If British India is prepared for a Federal constitution, and that constitution assures us our rights of internal sovereignty, does

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not weaken the ties that bind us to our people and the Crown, secures to us our essential terms, and does not impose unbearable burdens on our finance, we shall, as we have always said, join it. But let me say it most emphatically, we are not enamoured of a Federal constitution as such; we have never approached H.M. Government and requested them to devise a Federal constitution in order to safeguard our future. If the Crown and British India, as the other parties to the constitutional development of India, desire the establishment of a Federal constitution, we for our part will be prepared to consider it sympathetically and with every desire not to stand in the way of the attainment by India of its status.

Do not let me be misunderstood. I have never hesitated to express my fervent desire that this great motherland of ours should occupy a most honoured place in the British Commonwealth of Nations, knowing full well that the greatness of India is also the greatness of her Princes. Patriotism is not the monopoly of any group, and the Indian Princes are no less patriotic than the rest of India's sons. Our desire that

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India should advance along right lines has been expressed authoritatively on every suitable occasion. But the States have also their future to consider, and I shall not be a party, and I am sure none of Your Highnesses will be, to any scheme of advance which denies to the States of India their rights and authority. The history of India and the tradition that our ancestors have bequeathed us, entitle us to hope that if we face with courage and wisdom the issues before us, we shall triumph over this crisis as we have triumphed over others in the past. It is for that wisdom and courage that I pray, and I beseech Your Highnesses, whatever decision you take, to be true to your trust.