

INDIAN STATES & BRITISH INDIA
THEIR FUTURE RELATIONS

INDIAN STATES & BRITISH INDIA : THEIR FUTURE RELATIONS

WITH TEN APPENDICES CONTAINING MANY DOCUMENTS,
TWO TABLES AND A MAP.

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD

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To
MY FATHER
WITH
AFFECTION & GRATITUDE.

FOREWORD.

It is quite natural that during the last two or three years the problem of the Indian States, especially in its relation to British India, should have come to the fore. The growing recognition of the importance and the complexity of the problem has resulted in the production of a number of books, by English and Indian authors, of varying merits. From the point of view of the political propagandist, the Indian States lend themselves easily as a material for the expression of wholly divergent views. There is a school of politicians in England who think and maintain that the problem is insoluble, and being insoluble it presents insurmountable difficulties in the way of British India achieving Dominion Status. There is another school in India which with equal facility holds that the Indian States are an anachronism and that the only way of mending them is by ending them. We have again a growing number of politicians who argue very strenuously that we of British India ought not to be so selfish as to try for our betterment and ignore the interests of our down-trodden brethren in Indian States. Some of them do not stop short of suggesting the adoption of coercive methods and as they themselves are unable to adopt such methods, they expect the British Government to put the necessary pressure. I do not take notice of the 'newspaper trial' of Indian princes, for the simple reason that such trials may be very good propaganda—but scarcely furnish an impartial or just or stable solution of the problem.' The Indian princes themselves have in recent years indulged at times in language not free from a considerable amount of ambiguity—witness, for instance, their repeated references to a Federation of States in India, on the federal system of Government for India. I very much doubt whether the full implications of such language are

always present to the minds of all those who use it to adorn their perorations.

Difficult no doubt as is the problem, it seems to me that if we approach it in a spirit of understanding and good-will, and sympathy for the rulers and their subjects we may hope to find some workable solution. We must have first a true perspective, and next a sense of the realities of the situation. The temptation to indulge in legal and constitutional theories, not wholly applicable to the facts as we find them is as great as the temptation on the other hand to take shelter behind the theories of the divine right of 'kings' and conceptions of Government wholly inconsistent with the spirit of the time. Much was expected of the Butler Committee—but frankly it has not advanced the problem in any appreciable degree towards its solution. 'Paramountcy is paramount' may be a very good epigram, possibly it is a good rendering of the Austinian theory of suzerainty—but it affords no answer to the interrogative spirit of Indian India or British India. A clearer vision is perhaps to be found in the historic announcement of Lord Irwin when he envisaged an India not divided into water tight compartments, but as a single entity, the component elements of which call for a harmonising process.

Professor Gurmukh Singh has in this book made an attempt to place before his readers, facts and figures and points of view which should enable each individual reader to form his own opinion. I can not say that he has no leanings and no views of his own; he was bound to have these like all authors—but I venture to think that if he has at places advocated certain views, he has on the whole shown considerable self-restraint and moderation. I can not say that I agree with everything that he says, for instance, when he says "there is no doubt of the fact that none of the Indian States possess in practice even an internal autonomy" it may be permissible to join issue with him, on the authority of Lord Findlay in the well

known case of Duff versus Kelantine Government. In theory they can claim to be and are internally sovereign and in practice many of them enjoy a large measure of autonomy which may at times be encroached upon—but which nevertheless survives such encroachments. The intervention of the paramount power can not constitutionally deprive them of their claim to internal sovereignty, it may at times be resented by the princes, it may at others be invoked or supported by their subjects or their British Indian critics. Under the present system the true limits of such intervention can only be prescribed by their internal growth and administration and constitutional readjustments. Again when he says that the ideal surely is that of a federation between British India and the Indian States, he will probably appeal to many people, but when he says that it is not possible to have a federation for a considerable time, one is tempted to ask what is to happen meanwhile. With one of his recommendations in his concluding chapter, viz., the establishment of a permanent Supreme Court, I for one cordially sympathise.

It is not my intention to write a review of the book or to dogmatise upon certain aspects of the problem. I simply content myself with an appreciation of his industry, ability and desire to present the problem in a spirit of helpfulness. The problem can no longer be approached in a spirit of carping criticism of the system that prevails in Indian India, nor in that of the 'touch-me-not' conservatism refusing to take note of the signs of times. The only true point of view is that which seeks to secure their individuality and autonomy and at the same time defines their true relation to a self-governing British India. This is more the work of a practical statesman than that of a theorist, and the merit of Mr. Gurmukh Singh's book to my mind is that it has not theorised as freely as some other books have in recent years.

ALLAHABAD,
17th, March, 1930.

T. B. SAPRU.

PREFACE.

During the last few years the subject of Indian States has suddenly become prominent and it is now universally recognised that the relations between British India and the Indian States need readjustment. His Excellency Lord Irwin has drawn prominent attention to the subject in his historic Pronouncement of October 31st, 1929. Except for the attempts made by Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer in his "Indian Constitutional Problems" and the authors of the Nehru Report, no one in British India, so far as I am aware, has made any serious or systematic effort to grapple with the problem. There are of course a few public men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir M. M. Visvesvaraya, the Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Srinivas Sastri, Diwan Bahadur M. Ram Chandra Rao and Mr. C. Y. Chintamani who have thought on the subject and have given occasional expression to their views. But otherwise the problem remains sadly neglected. The book of Mr. Panikkar "Indian States and the Government of India" avoids questions of future relations ; and the schemes put forward by the subjects of Indian States are not of practical nature, although I have derived help from the writings of Mr. Gundappa, Mr. Hosakoppa Krishna Rao, Sardar M. V. Kibe, Mr. Abhayanker and Mr. Pathak and from the publications of the Indian States Subjects Conference, the latest of which is the memorandum submitted by the Indian States' People to the Butler Committee. It is no doubt true that the Princes have spent enormous sums of money to prepare their case for the Indian States Committee. They have recently published through the Directorate of the Chamber's Special Organisation a book entitled "The British Crown and the Indian States" which embodies the standpoint from which the Princes look at the problem of relationship and contains the economic demands of the

States. The constitutional position taken up by the Princes has been presented before the Butler Committee by Sir Leslie Scott and four other British Counsels and it is stated in the "Joint Opinion" which is printed as an appendix to the Committee's Report. But "the British Crown and the Indian States" and the "Joint Opinion" are both in the nature of special pleadings and not the result of scientific or impartial enquiry.

The Butler Committee was appointed on the 16th December, 1927 "to report upon the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Indian States" and to recommend any adjustments that may be found necessary "in the financial and economic relations between British India and the Indian States." The Report of the Committee was published on the 16th April, 1929. It is not necessary to make any detailed reference to the recommendations contained in the Report here: They are fully discussed in the body of the book. It is sufficient to say that they have received a very mixed reception at the hands of the Princes and have met with severe criticism from the Indian nationalist press. To the scientific enquirer the main value of the Report lies in the fact that it states the British position connectedly, lucidly and with emphasis, otherwise it does not afford much light or guidance. On the whole, it appears to me that the Committee has not justified itself or the money that has been spent on it and for preparing cases and opinions that have been submitted to it. I feel that a report like the one issued by the Committee could easily have been produced by the Political Department without any special preparation or extra cost. However, I have carefully examined and discussed all the recommendations of the Committee before making my own suggestions.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to study the problem of future relations from the scientific but not merely academic point of view. On the other hand, every effort has been made to make the study

practical and realistic and the problem has been dealt with from the broadest standpoint possible. In the introduction I have mentioned the various facts—geographical, historical and others—a knowledge of which is, in my opinion, needed to tackle the problem of future relationship and I have made full use of the materials contained in such books as Sir William Lee-Warner's "The Native States of India," Mr. Panikkar's "An Introduction to the Study of the Relations of Indian States with the Government of India," Tupper's "Our Indian Protectorate," The Imperial Gazetteer Vol. IV., the Montague-Chelmsford Report, Aitchison's Collection of Treaties, Sanads, Engagements, etc., "The Indian States Register and Directory," etc. I have also attempted to state the present position of the relationship clearly and succinctly before discussing the problems of the future and making suggestions for their solution. Thus the book deals, not only with the future, but also the past and present relations between the Indian States and British India. In the appendices I have brought together all the relevant documents and other materials needed for forming right conclusions on the problem. Every effort has been made to make the study both brief and comprehensive, scientific and practical. The hope is expressed that it may prove helpful at the present juncture when the Round Table Conference is expected to meet shortly to deal with this problem along with other high matters of great importance to the future of this country.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru for contributing the Foreword, which greatly adds to the value of the book, more particularly because he wrote it in the midst of very heavy professional and public work and also of domestic distractions. I am also thankful to Principal A. B. Dhruva for reading portions of the book in manuscript and for general guidance and encouragement. I am indebted to my young friend and colleague Mr. Mukut Behari Lal for occasional help in proof

correction. There are others whose help I am not at liberty to acknowledge by name ; but I am deeply grateful to them.

The university is the home of free thought and it is the privilege of a professor to discuss even delicate questions with perfect candour and impartiality—openly, frankly, without bias and animus. I have attempted to carry out my task in this spirit. In the end, I wish to state clearly that the views expressed in the book are my own, individual views and that they are given here in my individual capacity ; and that the responsibility for whatever defects may be found is entirely mine.

GURMUKH N. SINGH.

BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY,
10th February, 1932.

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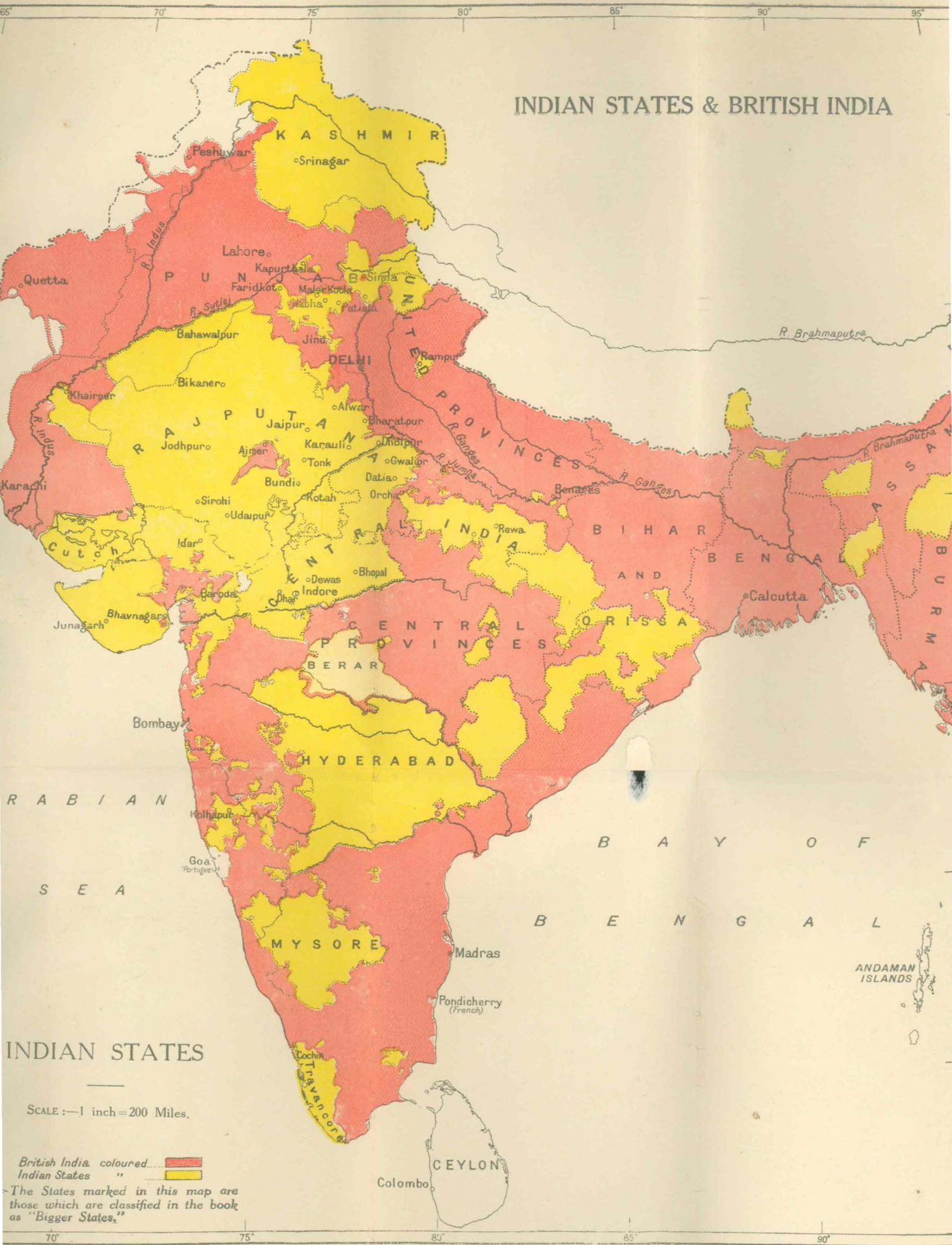
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& BRITISH INDIA

INDIAN STATES & BRITISH INDIA



INDIAN STATES

SCALE :—1 inch = 200 Miles.

British India coloured ■
Indian States " ■

The States marked in this map are those which are classified in the book as "Bigger States."