CIRCULATED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA.

I circulate a summary of the conversations which have taken place with the Governor-General on the general political situation in India and the report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee and various other topics. I think it will be of assistance to my colleagues to have this document in their hands before hearing the statement which the Prime Minister is inviting Lord Reading to make to the Cabinet.

BIRKENHEAD.

27th June 1925.
Summary of Conferences between the Secretary of State and the Governor-General, held in the Council Room, India Office.

First Day. 1st May 1925.

Present:
The Rt. Hon. THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD.
The Rt. Hon. THE VISCOUNT PEELE, G.B.E.
The Rt. Hon. EARL WINTERTON, M.P.
Sir ARTHUR HIRTZEL, K.C.B.
Mr. V. DAWSON, C.I.E.

Subject:—The General Political Situation and the Reforms Enquiry Report.

The Secretary of State opened the proceedings by offering Lord Reading, on his own behalf and on behalf of the India Office and His Majesty’s Government, his congratulations on his return and expressed a hope that his visit would enable him to return to his arduous duties with renewed strength. He regarded the opportunities afforded by Lord Reading’s visit, apart from the advantages which it would give to His Majesty’s Government, as a valuable means of enabling the India Office to form a just appraisement of the great individual burdens and difficulties which, in a degree comparable to the case of no other statesman, confronted the Governor-General of India.

He then briefly indicated his idea of the general line which the discussions might profitably take. He suggested that, in the first place, it would be desirable that Lord Reading should sketch broadly and briefly an indication of his opinion as to the manner in which the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 are working out. Secondly, that he should express some general view as to the policy which the Government ought to adopt towards the question of the statutory date for the re-examination of the reforms. Discussions were, he thought, quite certain to arise before very long in both Houses of Parliament which would necessitate some statement of policy on this matter. Indeed, it had not been without difficulty that he himself and Lord Winterton had been able to secure postponement of such discussions, for which a wish had already been expressed in both Houses. He would welcome, therefore, any statement of a conclusion in this respect which Lord Reading might have to offer, whether the conclusion were complete or merely tentative. Thirdly, and arising out of the second topic, there came the question of the Muddiman Committee’s Report, and of the attitude to be adopted towards its recommendations. He had been at pains to study the recommendations of both the majority and minority, and also the opinions which they had had before them of the local Governments—opinions which, without any disparagement of the Report, seemed to him to be at least as important as the Report itself as a basis for decisions. The broad question which he thought must be raised at the outset on the Report was whether, if the Government decide not to anticipate the year 1929 as the date prescribed for a complete enquiry into, and possible revision of, the existing constitution, it was really worth while to introduce and agitate in Parliament the legislation which would be required to give effect to the majority’s recommendations; and connected with this was the question, what degree of importance is to be attached to the disparagement by the minority of those recommendations as being a useless tinkering with a radically unsound constitution, attempts to improve which, in the way suggested by the majority, would afford no satisfaction to any party in India. On the other hand, it had to be considered whether the acceptance and implementing of the majority’s recommendations might not be an advantageous step from the point of view of the Government of India and His Majesty’s Government with the object of lessening and smoothing the difficulties of administration—that is, whether the Report should not be accepted, not as a means of satisfying political aspirations, but of facilitating the task of government.

Before asking Lord Reading to open his statement, the Secretary of State asked whether Lord Peel or Lord Winterton had any further points to suggest.
LORD PEEL said that he thought that the scope indicated for discussion by the Secretary of State was sufficiently wide at this stage and he had no further suggestion.

LORD WINTERTON said that he wished merely to reinforce the Secretary of State's remarks as to the difficulties and disadvantages which might arise from promoting legislation with the object of giving effect to the Muddiman Committee's Report, since a Bill with this object must necessarily raise the entire question of the Indian constitution and its revision in the House of Commons, whatever efforts might be made to keep the discussion within the restricted scope of the Report.

LOUD READIKG, after thanking the Secretary of State for his welcome and for the invitation which he had given him to come to England and engage in these personal discussions, said that he wished to remark at the outset that his relations with the India Office, which had commenced two months before he went to India, had been completely satisfactory to himself. There were necessarily sometimes differences and discussions, and they had to refer some matters to the India Office which the Government of India might perhaps consider that they were themselves competent to deal with, their proposals sometimes meeting with criticism from the India Office. He recognised fully, however, that both the Government of India and the India Office were working with the same object in view, and he had no complaint to make of criticisms or differences of opinion in the process of arriving at that object. The Government of India and himself were, of course, responsible to Parliament, and they never questioned the right of the Secretary of State, as the representative of His Majesty's Government and Parliament, to criticise and advise the Government of India, and to exercise supervision and control as directed by the Government of India Act.

He thought that the time would come when some change would have to be made in the attitude of the India Office towards India, but that the time for limiting its activities was not yet. He did not desire to enlarge on this matter on the present occasion, and he only mentioned it in order to make clear his own estimate of the widespread complaint in India in non-official circles as to the supposed all-pervading influence and interference from Whitehall.

Agreeing with the general course of discussion proposed by the Secretary of State, he thought the best course would be to review very briefly the political history of India since the Reform movement came into operation, as this was necessary in order to place in proper perspective his conception of the existing political situation. In so doing, he proposed to confine himself in this connection to the constitutional aspect. It was difficult, in speaking of the political situation in India, entirely to disregard the possibility of trouble on the North-West Frontier and elsewhere on the borders, but other opportunities would present themselves for dealing more in detail with that matter.

Starting, therefore, from January 1921, when the Reformed Councils were inaugurated, the first thing to bear in mind was that the Reforms were launched at a time of great disturbance and trouble, the existence of which had coloured the entire situation throughout. There is little doubt that had the new constitution been started under conditions which were not dominated by the spirit of war nationalism, and the atmosphere arising from ideas of "self-determination," they would have entered on a different course.

The dominating factor in January 1921 was the results of the very significant Congress meeting which had been held at Nagpur at the close of the preceding year, when Gandhi had first obtained his tremendous hold through his policy of boycott. At that time India in general was smarting (he thought that was not too strong a word to use) from the effects of the Punjab disturbances and of the discussions of them in both Houses of Parliament. He was struck by the fact that every Indian who came to see him, both before he left for India and on his arrival, from the Princes downwards, complained bitterly, not of the Amritsar shooting incident, which many seemed to be prepared to let pass, but of General Dyer's "crawling order," which was taken as an intense racial humiliation. Into the mentality born of this feeling the Reforms were launched.

Further, at that moment the Mahommedans, representing some 70 millions of the whole population, were intensely angry, owing to the belief which had been sedulously fostered among them that His Majesty's Government were determined on a policy of bringing down the Moslems and of placing Christians in control of the Moslem population of the world.
This was the atmosphere which enabled Gandhi to take advantage of what were ordinarily described as the "Punjab grievances" and the "Khilafat question," and to throw a bridge to span the chasm which had separated Hindus and Mahommedans. The entente so produced was, it is true, only superficial, but at the time, and for some time after, it constituted, founded as it was on bitter conjoint opposition to the Government, a very formidable fact.

The bearing of these facts on the inauguration of the Reforms was that the first Councils were elected by a comparatively small part of the electorate, that only Liberals, otherwise called Moderates, stood as candidates for them, that, in substance, the Liberals were unopposed, as there were no parties beyond the two—those who were prepared to try and work the Reforms and those who would have nothing to do with them.

In spite of these difficulties the first Assembly, and on the whole the first Provincial Councils, were, in his view, moderately successful. The troubles with which they had to contend at the outset continued and increased during the three years of their life, and these consisted not merely in the results of Gandhi's non-co-operation agitation, but also in the universal lack of funds, the general aftermath of the war and the general conditions of war unrest. None the less, large amounts of new taxation were imposed, with the approval of the Legislature, necessitated by the annual deficits which amounted in five years to something in the neighbourhood of 100 crores. The Assembly pressed vigorously for retrenchment, pressure which resulted in the appointment of the Inchcape Committee. Generally speaking, much was accomplished in the face of much difficulty towards stabilising the administration.

In the third and last year of the first Councils arose the first necessity of using the Viceroy's powers of certification in order to meet a deficit in the Budget, namely, the certification of the salt tax. The necessity for this step, coming when it did, was exceedingly unfortunate, since it placed the Liberals, who were then about to appeal to their constituencies on a general election, in a very awkward position. The result was that the tax, though economically almost free from criticism and almost negligible in its incidence, became a political rallying flag.

He ought to mention that it was freely asserted that his action in certifying the salt tax had been on instructions received from the India Office. That assertion was untrue. It might have been the case that there would have been discussion between himself and the India Office had he stated his unwillingness to certify, but matters never arrived at that stage. The Government of India's Budget proposals involved reduction in numbers of British and Indian troops and retrenchment of military and other expenditure, which, with the increased salt tax, would balance the Budget. His Majesty's Government accepted these proposals, and he felt it incumbent upon him to insist upon the increase in the salt tax.

This brings the history to March 1923. A year previously Gandhi had been imprisoned and his active political influence was then necessarily largely curtailed. Towards the end of 1922 the events began which led to the emergence of the Swarajist Party. Mr. C. R. Das had before this been a force in politics in Bengal. It had been his intention to oppose Gandhi's non-co-operation policy at the Nagpur Conference of 1920 already referred to. But finding the atmosphere at Nagpur such as to make opposition entirely infructuous, he became a whole-hearted lieutenant and supporter of Gandhi in his campaign. Both he and the other leader of the Swarajist Party, Motilal Nehru, were barristers in large practice, Mr. Nehru with perhaps the largest practice in India, and both of them abandoned their practices in pursuance of the non-co-operation programme, thereby making a great appeal to the Indian population, amongst whom self-sacrifice is recognised and revered as perhaps it is nowhere else in the world. In addition to the influence thus gained, Mr. Das, who was eminent rather as an advocate than as a lawyer in Calcutta, possessed an immense power of appeal by speech to the public.

Shortly after Gandhi's imprisonment both Das and Nehru set out to convert Gandhi's millions of followers, from non-co-operation outside the Councils, to non co-operation within the Councils with a view to making their working impossible. The launching of this plan was strongly resented by Gandhi's followers, with the result that the Congress of 1923, which since 1920 had been entirely dominated by Gandhi, split into two parties, commonly called "Changers" and "No changers." There followed a period of intrigue, manœuvre and messages coming, or purporting to come, from Gandhi in jail, and the result of the struggle for supremacy was that Das and Nehru won the day, and Gandhi, in character an incomparably better man than either, lost his supremacy.
In October 1923 Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das issued their Manifesto embodying the aims and purposes of the Swaraj Party. The gist of it is well known, and was widespread and continuous obstruction with a view to wrecking the Reforms, their object being, ultimately, to smash the existing constitution and to substitute one of their own to be evolved by themselves and submitted for acceptance by Parliament by some form of round table conference. In the autumn of 1923 the party went to election for the second Assembly and Councils, and succeeded better than might have been expected, mainly owing to the advantage which they enjoyed of having at their back the very efficient organisation and plentiful funds of the Congress. Here, again, the elections were fought, not on any party issue, but simply as a contest between Swarajists and Liberals. Both were opposed to the Government, but the Swarajists, with their more vehement propaganda, were able to make the stronger appeal. Their chief successes were in Bengal and the Central Provinces. At the outset in the Legislative Assembly, though they were formidable as being the only disciplined and cohesive party, they were some way from being a majority. Shortly before the meeting of the new Assembly, however, they were able to secure the adherence of a block of advanced Liberals, some 18 in number, headed by Mr. Jinnah, who had described themselves as “Independents.” This coalition, to which they gave the name of the Nationalist Party, secured them in substance the majority of the Assembly, and from this time what may be called the second era of Reforms commenced, that is the opening of the present phase of the political situation.

The Government of India, with a Labour Government in office at home, were then faced with the question of the line of policy they were to pursue, confronted as they were for the first time with a hostile majority pledged to vote down every Government measure, and with no possibility of attracting votes to their side on any question which gave rise to what might be described as patriotic issues; and it must be remembered that even in the moderate first Assembly there had been active agitation from the time of its birth for a shortening of the initial 10 years probationary period. The first formal voicing of this desire was the carrying, in September 1921, some six months after the Assembly was inaugurated, of a resolution recommending that the enquiry intended for 1929 should be antedated—an event which gave rise to much misconception, the action of the official leader of the House in assisting the drafting of a form of motion which would give effect to what he understood to be the unanimous opinion of the non-official members having been misinterpreted as acceptance by the Government of India of the recommendation contained in it.

Long telegraphic discussions in February 1924 between the Government of India and the Secretary of State as to the policy to be adopted in dealing with a motion, of which notice had been given by the Swarajists, relating to the revision of the constitution, resulted ultimately in the appointment of the Muddiman Committee and in the settlement of the terms of reference to that body.

The Government of India had always thought that before an enquiry contemplated by section 84A of the Act was initiated it would be necessary to ascertain at an intermediate stage, by an intermediate enquiry, exactly how the existing constitution was working and whether any slight changes in it were desirable, and one of Lord Reading’s own objects in proposing the Muddiman Committee’s enquiry was not merely to ascertain remediable defects, but to meet the undoubted necessity to take some step in face of the Assembly’s demands and to gain some time.

Continuing his account of the Budget Session of 1924, Lord Reading referred to the Nationalist Party’s demonstration on the Budget and their ultimate rejection of the Finance Bill. The certification of this measure, which it was the object of the Nationalists to necessitate in order to secure a rallying cry against bureaucratic action, undoubtedly failed of its object. He regarded this, in fact, as the worst failure of the Swarajist policy and thought that it had much bearing on subsequent events. He observed further that the Swarajist policy of consistent obstruction had not been found practicable. For instance, they had found themselves compelled to support the Government on the Steel Protection Bill, on the separation of the Railway Budget from the general Budget, and in other matters. Finally, he attached much importance to the undoubted change which had come over the relations between the Swarajists on the one hand and the official members of the Assembly on the other during the short space of time, counted in actual sitting days of the Assembly, which has elapsed up to the present since the second Assembly came into being in January 1924. There had been during the whole of the last session, from January to March 1925, a partial
resumption of the orderly relations of parliamentary life and gradually a genuine friendly feeling had developed between the Swarajists and the Government representa­tives, and at times a desire was manifested even to find a way out of difficulties. This was a position which, nevertheless, he felt to be of some danger in certain respects, and this brought him to the immediate political situation.

During all the last session Mr. Jinnah had been anxious to obtain from Government some concession in order to enable him to construct a bridge whereby he might leave the Swarajists. Mr. Jinnah was eventually prepared to accept as sufficient for this purpose even the grant of a day for the discussion of the Muddiman Report. This request, for reasons known to the Secretary of State, had to be refused. But it must be noted that Mr. Jinnah did break away during the Budget discussions and said publicly that he recognised that he had made a mistake last year in furthering the policy of blind obstruction. This does not, of course, mean that Mr. Jinnah has completely detached himself from the Swarajists. It does mean, however, that he is satisfied that their tactics will not succeed and that he is anxious to find an alternative of his own.

Reverting for a moment to Hindu-Moslem communal differences, Lord Reading said that these had been a very important factor during the past three years and had given much trouble. He had already stated that the entente secured by Mr. Gandhi was superficial and short-lived. The position was now not free from apprehension regarding Hindu-Moslem obstacles. The Moslem grievance against the Government, connected with what was described as the Khilafat question, had now disappeared, but the Moslem in general ranged himself with those who demanded Swaraj. At the same time the Moslem was suspiciously watching the Hindu Swarajist in anxiety that Swaraj when achieved may mean substitution for the British Raj of a Hindu Raj, a substitution which he is not prepared to tolerate.

 Turning to the evidence laid before the Muddiman Committee, Lord Reading thought that, so far from proving that the system of 1919 had failed, it showed that it had worked better than might have been expected. He had always recognised that although that system might be open to criticism, it was not for the Government of India to criticise it, but to do their best to make it work to the fullest extent, and this was his general attitude in approaching the problem. He thought that the evidence shows, firstly, that all Governors had not worked the system of dyarchy in the provinces in the same way and perhaps not even in the same spirit, and secondly, that the difficulties felt had been rather difficulties created by the men themselves (mainly the Ministers) working the constitution than difficulties inherent in the system itself. It is true that few or none of the local Governments have been enthusiastic in its praise. Dyarchy had been described as a “creaking” and “cumbrous” machine, but it had been from the start recognised as being merely a transitional system, and he was satisfied that it had not been shown to have been unworkable or to have broken down.

On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a strong feeling against it in India. After giving a brief synopsis of the effects of the Majority and Minority Reports and quoting para. 203 of the latter, which represents the difference between the Government and the Liberals, he drew attention to the fact that side by side with this difference there is an equal, or even stronger, difference between the Liberals on the one hand and the Swarajists on the other.

On the whole Lord Reading regarded the enquiry as useful. It had shown some matters which require attention—none perhaps of great importance; possibly importance attached to the different method of working dyarchy in the different provinces, and the difference in the relations between different Governors and their Ministers. From the former he doubted whether any very valuable lesson could be learnt, except that it seems best that the system should be worked in the manner in which its authors intended. The main obstacle, in his view, to the smooth working of the Reforms has been the financial difficulty, that is, the lack of funds; and here since the Report was written there had been a change which, in his view, would prove of great importance, namely, the decision of the Government of India to remit provincial contributions to an extent which, with the remission to the Bengal Government, amounts approximately to one-third of the whole. As regards the 1919 constitution in general, the Government of India’s view was that the policy upon which they embarked in 1921—that is, the policy laid down, as they understood it, by Parliament in 1919—should be continued and should not be deflected by agitation. It had to be recognised, however, that adherence to this policy, or, indeed, any change short of fundamental revision, would
satisfy no body of opinion in India. The main direction towards which all politicians of all shades of opinion are tending is towards what is described as ‘provincial autonomy.’ He saw the gravest dangers in any move in this direction unless it were preceded by the most careful enquiry into its implications and necessities, and unless it were accompanied by stringent safeguards. He was impressed with the lack of clear thinking behind this demand. What is to be the position of the Central Government in relation to ‘autonomous’ provinces? In his view it must in no way be weakened. The introduction of provincial autonomy would necessitate actually strengthening the tie between the Central Government and provinces, since an India consisting of a number of uncorrelated provinces was, to him, an unthinkable proposition.

Again, provincial autonomy, in any sense, would involve, necessarily, the transfer of ‘law and order’ and ‘land revenue,’ a change which he himself and his Government were not, at this juncture, prepared to contemplate. He drew attention to the observations of the Minority Report on the subject of provincial autonomy as indicating that the necessity for careful enquiry into its implications upon the position of the Central Government had been recognised at all events by the authors of that document.

Second Day. 5th May.

Present: As on 1st May.

LORD READING, continuing his statement, said that on the last occasion he had reached the stage of indicating the existence of a general opinion in India that the dyarchical system must be brought to an end. It had to be remembered that the evidence given to this effect before the Committee was to some extent coloured or predetermined by the general press campaign, which had reiterated with recurring headlines as soon as the Committee began to sit the cry, ‘Dyarchy must go.’ The tendency to follow rather than to lead public opinion, even in the case of men holding such positions as that of Minister, and the inclination to say what public opinion is assumed to demand, is stronger in India than here. Similarly, after the publication of the Report, most of the Provincial Councils had passed resolutions expressing agreement with the recommendations of the minority and rejecting those of the majority. Too much importance must not be attached to these resolutions. There was practically no interchange of arguments in debate, and usually the Government took little or no part in them. The Central Government had had definitely to refuse to give a day for the discussion of the Report on the ground that they were not then in a position to express their own views, and that an ex parte debate would be infructuous, if not actually mischievous.

But however this may be, such opinion as has been expressed in the Provincial Councils is undoubtedly definitely against dyarchy and the majority’s recommendations.

The real issue, so far as he could estimate it amidst the confusion of Indian political thought, was the cleavage between the Swarajist and the Liberal, to which he had already referred. The Swarajist’s position is plain. He will have nothing to do with any constitution evolved by British administrators or the British Parliament and based on the British model. He wants a constitution framed by himself on his own lines, and consequently rejects any idea of a Royal Commission as the instrument of further progress, since such a Commission would, he presumes, merely produce further modifications based on British ideas. The Swarajist demands complete self-government of the kind which he describes as ‘Dominion status,’ that is, without control of any sort by the British Government or Parliament, controlled, it is true, by a Government of India, but by a Government of India responsible to an Indian Parliament. It was clear to him that this demand is one which it was impossible to consider, and he therefore passed it by without further comment.

The difference between the Swarajist and the Liberal was important, and he was not sure that it was not going to assume still greater importance in the near future. The Liberals, in whose ranks are to be found constitutional lawyers who were capable of holding their own with those of any other country, and who had made a profound study of constitutions on Western lines, were anxious to proceed on those lines.
Their aim was the abolition of dyarchy, the substitution for it of some form of "provincial autonomy," involving, however, complete control by the provinces over all provincial subjects and the introduction of the principle of responsibility in the Central Government. The Liberals take the view that autonomous provinces must be controlled by, and to that extent responsible to, a Central Government equally responsible to Indian opinion. This had always seemed to him to be logically the correct view. It was impossible for him to conceive of a workable system whereby a body constituted on lines similar to those of the present Government of India would be in a position to interfere with a Provincial Cabinet fully responsible to its own Provincial Legislature. The only limitation which the Liberals would permit upon dependence by the Central Executive upon the Central Legislature was in respect of defence, foreign relations and relations with Indian States. These matters they would be content to leave to the control of the Governor-General personally. As regards defence there was some difference of opinion, and the position was not very clear, but a considerable body of opinion would apparently allow a large part of the supply required for the Army to remain non-votable. Fifty crores had been suggested in the discussions as the appropriate figure for this purpose, the stipulation being that any expenditure required in excess of this figure should be subject to the vote and assent of the Assembly. It was clear to him that any Defence scheme of this kind would be unworkable, but he thought it right to mention it in order to avoid giving any inaccurate indication of the Liberal programme.

Answering the Secretary of State, Lord Reading agreed that the Liberal conception of "provincial autonomy," as he had understood and explained it, was wholly incompatible with central control which was bureaucratic in character. He explained that when he first went to India he found that discussions of the problem were proceeding on the assumption that for a time, at all events, provincial autonomy might be combined with the maintenance, without change or material change, of the Central Government. Of late, however, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others had realised the impossibility of this, and stress had been laid upon it by him and his colleagues in the Minority Report. Thus the Liberal position and attitude was more constitutional than that of the Swarajists and there could be no doubt that it had a large number of adherents amongst the intelligentsia of India.

Explaining parenthetically, in answer to the Secretary of State, the position of Mrs. Besant, Lord Reading stated that she had for some time stood rather by herself. She was well-meaning and had no desire to sever the British connection, but was obsessed with the idea of an Indian-devised constitution. Her draft Bill he thought rather a poor production. One had to remember in considering her position that her age was now about 77, that she had had in the past a position of considerable authority, that she was a person of some courage who had stood her ground after having refused to follow Gandhi in his non-co-operation campaign and thereby lost much of her popularity. The idea underlying her present Bill was by means of a national convention to get together all shades of opinion and interests with the object of hammering out a constitution in order to present something concrete and practical for discussion. She had lately resumed friendly relations with Gandhi and had quite recently been making great efforts to obtain approval to her draft Bill, her difficulty having been, however, to concentrate attention on this subject, which was apt to be overshadowed by the Hindu-Moslem and other difficulties.

Reverting to the position of the Liberals, he said that they had the advantage over their opponents the Swarajists—from our point of view—that they recognised the necessity for time and caution in political advance. They were prepared to accept a Royal Commission or any other form of enquiry with the object of ascertaining what steps must be passed through before India obtains complete self-government. But the important factor in their programme was that definite stages should be laid down whereby India may, as it were, advance automatically up the stairway leading to the portals of full self-government. Answering a question by the Secretary of State, Lord Reading said that Lord Birkenhead had correctly understood this demand as amounting to a predetermination of progress divorced from considerations of the sincerity or success of effort in working each preceding stage; it differed from the demand for Indianisation of the Army, which it is acknowledged must to a great extent depend upon capacity.

In considering these views of almost all articulate Indian political opinion, one had to remember on the other side the comparatively small extent of the electorates, both for the Provincial and Central Legislatures, amounting in all to rather less than
1,000,000 for the Assembly and to 7,414,000 for the Provincial Councils. It also had to be remembered that a large proportion of these voters were illiterate, and that for the people as a whole 90 per cent. was, perhaps, not too high. Again, it was difficult to be sure, in the conditions obtaining in India, that views widely or universally expressed are the real views of those who voice them, and he instanced from his own experience the extreme reluctance which obtains to state views or adopt a position publicly which are known to be unpopular. Further, it has to be remembered that large numbers of the population are quite unmoved by and uninterested in political and constitutional considerations.

None the less, there is the undoubted fact that the system so recently introduced is condemned by nearly all who have of late been discussing it. Apart from all considerations of the control of the British Government, the principal objections which have been alleged against the dyarchical system seem to him to have been the following:

(a) Ministers have complained that their powers are incomplete, that the Governor, not being a "constitutional Governor," can overrule them, and does in fact do so.

(b) The lack of funds for the development of the transferred subjects on lines of policy which would appeal to popular opinion.

(c) The control of finance for both sides of the Government by the Executive Council owing to the Finance Member being a member of that body.

(d) The inevitable overlapping of policy between the reserved and transferred spheres, with the consequence that, as he explained in detail by concrete examples, the Minister is apt to find that on any important question of policy in his Department which impinges upon general administration the Executive Council may have a determining voice and even force upon a Minister a plan of action to which he himself strongly objects, but which he is, none the less, precluded from opposing openly in debate or by vote. From this occasionally follows a tendency to regard the Minister as an invariable supporter of the Government, and, consequently, as a lost soul whose influence with his party or with the non-official members of the Council is thereupon diminished or lost.

(e) The alleged insufficient control exercisable by Ministers over the services who are the agents of their policy.

With regard to this last objection, the real difficulty lay in the fact that the official Secretaries with whom the Ministers had chiefly to work were usually better educated men and more experienced administrators than themselves. Consequently, when a Minister's proposals were criticised, as they were bound to be, by his Secretary and the Governor approved, as he might well do, the Secretary's view, the Minister, not unnaturally, felt jealous of service influence, and was inclined to feel that the criticism was based on the fact that the critic was a service man and that the scheme criticised was that of an Indian. He felt certain that there was no foundation for this feeling, but it was there. With almost negligible exceptions he was convinced that everyone, from the Governor downwards, in the official ranks had done their utmost to make the system a success.

Whatever, however, the truth of the result, in arriving at conclusions on the Muddiman Report, it was essential to bear in mind that there were these rooted objections to the present system, the strongest, he thought, being those relating to the services and to finance. On the other hand, in both these respects there had already been some change since the Committee was projected. He had already referred to the remission of provincial contributions which had been announced after the Committee had reported, and acceptance of the Lee Commission's proposals, the exact bearing of which could not be fully appreciated whilst the Committee was sitting, would undoubtedly give a larger measure of service control to Ministers.

It would, however, be a mistake to regard the Indian objection as being directed merely to dyarchy or even to the present form of constitution in general. Viewed in wider perspective, the real fact is that the Indian suspects that we do not intend to carry out promises that were made in the announcement of August 1917, and repeated in the preamble to the Act of 1919, of making the achievement of responsible self-government possible. On this point all Indians are full of suspicion, and this factor runs right through Indian politics.

Answering a question by Lord Winterton, Lord Reading said that Indians had undoubtedly considered the provision for possible "restriction" of the measure of
self-government contained in section 84A of the Act. In fact, considerable attention had been drawn to this by the mere change of Government in this country and by repeated references to this provision and to the necessity of considering acting upon it in certain sections of the English Press. This very fact had increased suspicion, which seemed to him greater now than it was a year ago, since there was now a greater disposition to think that the British Parliament might seize any opportunity to recall powers already granted or to go back upon promises previously made. He himself had always expressed, both publicly and privately, strong views upon this subject to the effect that the policy of 1919, whether the criticism of it was justified or not, was accepted by Parliament, proclaimed by the King-Emperor, and that if there was one thing upon which India might rely, it was a British Government's promise, the keeping of which had, he always thought, been one of the secrets of our success hitherto in administering India. He thought that on the whole the general opinion now was that no Government wished to go back on the Reforms scheme provided that India itself took no step which forced such action. But he would qualify this statement by referring again to the effect upon Indian politicians at the present moment of realising that the present Government, with its large majority and with its likelihood of tenure of power for the full normal period, was a factor to be reckoned with for some time; they were consequently less hopeful than they were, rightly or wrongly, a year ago of obtaining some substantial advance in the near future. For whatever the complexion of the Government in this country there were always present the suspicions and doubts to which he had referred as to whether the British nation intends to pursue the policy of 1919 to its ultimate goal, these suspicions being largely based upon the control of the services by the Secretary of State and the officering of the Army by the British.

Here one touches the life of the dissatisfaction with the present situation. The thoughtful Indian politician realises that even if an advance were to be made in 1929 there is no real prospect of self-government unless we are prepared to give effect to a scheme which will in a measurable period of time produce a wholly Indian-officered Army. The former tendency to look forward to the retention by an autonomous Indian Government of British officers in large numbers in its service has now begun to be regarded as impracticable, and consequently the agitation for Indianisation had undoubtedly become stronger than has always appeared on the surface. This important matter would come up for separate consideration during these conferences. He only alluded to it now in order to lay stress upon its importance, together with the service question, as a factor affecting the political situation. He agreed with the Indian politician in thinking that complete self-government is unrealisable without control of an Indian Army.

In addition to these two concomitant causes of discontent he would add a third, which, however, is in a somewhat different category, namely, the objection to foreign government as being a badge of racial inferiority. The signs of this inferiority were to be found mainly in the past in what the Indian considered as condescension and patronage shown towards him by the European and in the refusal to recognise the Indian as a social equal. The strength of the desire of all Indians for abolition of social inequality could not be over-emphasised. This sense of injured pride frequently finds expression in outbursts of racial antagonism, to which he will more particularly refer when dealing with the separate subject of Indians overseas.

He was now in a position to indicate the lines of the recommendations which he and his Government had to make. He was himself fully conscious of, and had much sympathy for, the national aspirations of the Indian. Remembering, however, the position in which we stand and speaking, he was convinced, in the best interests of India, he was not prepared at present to recommend any substantial constitutional advance. Nothing in his view had yet happened to justify curtailment of the 10-year probationary period, which had been determined upon after the fullest consideration. At the same time, though he was not prepared now to recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission, he would yet strongly urge that nothing be announced which would have the effect of barring the door to an earlier appointment of such a Commission than 1929 should circumstances make this necessary or desirable. It might perhaps be politically advantageous in this country to make a definite announcement of firm intention to abide by the date fixed in the Act, but he earnestly hoped that the Secretary of State and those whose opinions would prevail in this matter would not desire to make any such statement, the effect of which in India would, he thought, be mischievous and would inevitably result in strengthening the Swaraj Party and weakening the Liberals.
Third Day, 12th May.

Present:—As on 1st May.

Lord Reading, continuing his statement, said that at the conclusion of the last meeting he had been indicating the undesirability, in his view, of making any statement which would appear to bolt the door on the possibility of appointing a Commission before 1929, and, answering an enquiry by the Secretary of State, he agreed that what he meant was that even in the event of His Majesty's Government having made up their mind against ante-dating the Statutory Commission, it should not be stated that this conclusion had been arrived at, as being tactless and unnecessary to do so. What he pressed for was that nothing should be done to shut out from all hope, the Liberals or Moderates, or that section, however described, of Indian political opinion which has really been trying to work with us, though their views and ours may not always agree. At the risk of trespassing beyond his own sphere into that which belongs to His Majesty's Government, he ventured to suggest that it might be undesirable from the point of view of His Majesty's Government themselves that they should pledge themselves definitely four years in advance not to take a certain course of action. He could conceive of circumstances in which, from their own point of view, His Majesty's Government might find it desirable for various possible reasons to ante-date the Commission. Thus they might think it expedient to give the Commission some generous margin for preliminary inquiries before they approached their actual task. Although, as he had said, he could also conceive of a Parliamentary situation which might favour a definite statement that in no circumstances would an earlier date than December 1929 be considered as the time for setting up the Commission, yet he was convinced that, looking to the interests both of India and His Majesty's Government in India, the disadvantages of such a statement would greatly outweigh any possible advantages.

But although, since he had already stated that, in his opinion, the time had not come for any substantial constitutional advance, the policy to be announced must unfortunately be, in certain respects, a negative one, he did urge that we should do our utmost to put into operation the recommendations of the Muddiman Committee. He fully realised the difficulties, to which the Secretary of State and Lord Winterton had adverted at the opening of the discussions, which would be involved in promoting legislation on the basis of the Report in Parliament, but he pointed out that a large number of the recommendations could be effected by amendments of rules, and that some of the legislative proposals might, upon consideration, not be regarded as pressing—such, for instance, as the proposed exclusion of the High Courts' jurisdiction in regard to the conduct of business in the Councils, and the extension of the immunity of the Governor-General and other high officials from the jurisdiction of the Courts. The amendment of rules would itself, of course, give rise to debate, but he understood that the Secretary of State was quite prepared to meet such debate.

In answer to a question by the Secretary of State, Lord Reading explained that he was anxious to implement the recommendations of the Report, not merely because, having set up a Committee and received a majority report, the Government would tend to stultify itself if it proceeded to take no action upon that Report, and not merely because such inaction would place in a very awkward position the Indian members of the Committee who had signed the majority report—although both these considerations were, in his view, of importance—but also because he considered that it would definitely help to give the constitution a fresh start if the Committee's recommendations were acted upon.

But in advocating taking action at all events upon those recommendations which could be given effect to by changes in rules, he did not intend to recommend that a statement of intention to abstain from legislation should be made. He would much prefer, if immediate legislation were inexpedient or impossible, that it should be left fluid as a possibility. Indeed, he thought it quite possible that the Government of India might strongly advocate legislation for some particular recommendation or small group of recommendations, to which they attached importance, and he was anxious that if such a recommendation were received it should be considered on its merits.

This point was the subject of some further discussion, as the result of which it was agreed that the matter should be revived in more detail on a subsequent occasion.
on the basis of a classification which had already been made in a note prepared at the
India Office of those recommendations which require respectively amendment of the
Act and amendment of the rules.

Lord Reading then proceeded to indicate other factors which he regarded as
having an important bearing upon the political situation, and upon the general
atmosphere which must be considered in relation to the action to be taken with regard
to Reforms. He said that it would be necessary for him, when dealing with some of
these matters as separate subjects for discussion, subsequently to go into them in
greater detail. His remarks now were confined to indicating their bearing on the
general position.

First, as regards the Princes—and, in speaking of the Princes, he explained later
that throughout he had in mind the really important Chiefs, whose numbers might
perhaps be put at from 80 to 100. They were undoubtedly uneasy as to the future,
in view of possible constitutional changes. They were satisfied, as a whole, with
their position under their Treaties and Sanads, a position which, though never closely
defined, was well understood. He first explained the practice in the Government of
India of dealing with what are known there as political affairs, that is, the activities
of the Foreign and Political Department. Under the strict constitution of the
Government of India Act, the affairs of the Princes, like other matters, are the concern
of the Governor-General in Council; the practice had always been for the Governor-
General himself to keep in his own hands the Foreign and Political portfolio, a
practice which, undoubtedly, at times involved a serious addition to the Viceroy's
burden, but which by a hitherto well-recognised convention had enabled the Governor-
General personally to deal with all Indian State questions, and to refrain from
bringing any of them before the Council collectively for decision unless they were of
the highest importance. After having explained the procedure in detail, Lord
Reading said that the dislike of the Princes to having their affairs adjudicated upon
by an Executive Council, and particularly a Council which might contain a majority
of Indian members, explained their reluctance to contemplate a future in which they
were liable to be brought under the control of a responsible Indian Ministry and of a
Legislature able, as it is not now, to discuss and deal with the affairs of the Indian
States, consequences which appear to follow necessarily upon the setting up of
responsible Government. This was their great anxiety, and he had been asked, to
discuss it at an informal conference, a request which he had hitherto refused, owing to
the difficulty of distinguishing between a so-called informal conference, which with
the Princes tends to result in the circulation of definite written views and proposals,
and a formal conference committing those present to definite understandings and
requests for action.

But feeling these anxieties as to the possibilities of control by Indian Ministers
and to removal of the embargo which at present exists on the power of the Legislatures
to deal with Indian State matters, the Princes were inclined to press for a definite
change with a view to the future, but to be made now, whereby they would be placed
under the control, not of the Government of India collectively, but of the Governor-
General personally, as the King-Emperor's direct representative in India. Such a
change would not, however, in his view, end the matter. There is another fear that
Swaraj may mean the fomenting of an agitation amongst the subjects of the Princes
to claim self-government for themselves. Answering Lord Winterton, Lord Reading
said he thought it was difficult to define precisely the character of the Princes'
apprehensions, but, generally, it might be said to be a mixed fear of movement in
their own territories by political leaders, and also of the discussion of their own
affairs by democratic Assemblies. He felt that this apprehension had increased of
late, probably because the Princes thought it conceivable that the policy of the
Swarajists to force concession might succeed, in which case their own future became
a matter of immediate concern.

Proceeding to indicate other features having an important bearing on the
situation, he said that he thought that the three most important were the communal
differences, the Indianisation of the Army and the control of the Services, to the two
latter of which he had already referred, their importance lying in the fact that the
attainment of responsible self-government clearly presupposes a real and effective
beginning to solve the problem of supplying India with an Army and Executive
Services of her own and controlled by herself. Dealing first with the question of
Hindu-Moslem tension, he said that Indians themselves recognised that this is a very
grave problem. There had been numerous conferences of late to attempt to deal
with it which had all broken down, and the position during the last year had become more rather than less acute. The Mohammedan is now asking for more than before, because he has now begun to realise that Swaraj must necessarily mean for him Hindu domination, unless sufficient safeguards are devised for protection of minorities' interests. Hence it is that the Hindu-Moslem question is an all-pervading one. On the other hand, one of the great grounds for the suspicion of the British Government, to the existence of which he had already alluded, was the feeling, very generally expressed, that the fostering of differences between the two communities was a constant feature in the British Government's policy. Giving instances of the Mohammedan's demand for protection of his interests, Lord Reading referred to the steps which had recently been promised in connection with their representation in the Services, and explained how the enquiries made in that connection had shown the immense preponderance of the Hindu element in the Services even in the lowest ranks, a result of the 50 years' start which the Hindus had obtained over the Mohammedans in the race for education with a view to appointments. He also instanced the Kohat affair as an indication of the cleavage between the communities which exists even in the Central Legislature. He explained that in spite of the intense feeling to which the Kohat disturbances had given rise amongst the Hindus throughout the country, and despite the strong Hindu pressure which had been brought to bear upon the Government for a public enquiry, a request which he had refused on the ground that its only result must inevitably be to exacerbate feeling and to jeopardise the settlement which it was his one object to secure, yet when the question of enquiry was to be raised in the Assembly (where Hindus and Mohammedans are in the proportion of about two to one), and when strong pressure by debate would have had the appearance of putting the Hindu members right with their countrymen at large, the demand for a debate was ultimately not pressed because it was realised that a debate would inevitably let loose floods of pent-up animosity upon both sides, and would advertise, in the most patent way, to the world this essential disagreement. In short, there was little doubt that the communal question was the most important problem now vexing India. Its importance and difficulties lay largely in the fact that it was so deep-rooted in the feelings and outlook of the people themselves.

Referring next to the question of Indianisation of the Army, he said that this had had to be considered because it was involved in promises which had been made. He explained briefly the Scheme of 1922, which was estimated, if all went well, to produce in 30 years a completely Indian-officered Army. But he thought himself that this estimate was somewhat sanguine, and that the more likely period was 40 years. The Government of India had asked His Majesty's Government to allow them to set this scheme into operation. His Majesty's Government had objected to the scheme as a whole, but had agreed to its limited application to eight units. This limited scheme was now being tried. It was necessarily experimental and so far no very great progress had been made, though the time had not been sufficiently long to provide material for a reliable judgment. He explained briefly the reasons for this lack of success, which were chiefly that the elder men holding King's commissions were unwilling to be transferred to the eight units and could not well be forced to go, and they had therefore had to depend upon the new Indian recruits from Sandhurst, for whom provision for only 10 a year was so far made. Even amongst those there was no great enthusiasm, chiefly because there was a tendency to regard the eight units as something apart and of a rather different status from the rest of the Army. This was in fact the objection always taken to the scheme by the Indian politician, who stigmatises it as segregation. He also explained that there had been difficulty, even by the process of most rigorous selection, in which the Viceroy himself took his part, of finding sufficient suitable candidates for Sandhurst. Indians assured him that if proper means were adopted a superabundance of candidates for admission would present themselves. An enquiry had been proceeding to devise the best course to attract suitable entrants, and he was himself convinced that we too ought to do all we can to throw open wider the door of Sandhurst, and to take every step to facilitate a reasonable solution of this burning question.

To the question of the Services, which was familiar to the Secretary of State and would require separate discussion in connection with the Lee Report, he need make little reference beyond emphasising the great desire which exists in all quarters in India to get rid of the Secretary of State's control over the Services, and stating that this question has a real bearing on the Indian pressure for Swaraj. The Indian desire is based partly upon the desire to obtain for Indians themselves the positions
held by the Services, and partly upon resentment of alien control, which incidentally is felt to make the Civil Servant less amenable to his Indian superiors than he would otherwise be.

Summing up again his general position in view of all the various factors to which he had referred, he said he had already stated his view as to the immediate future. At the same time he urged that it was incumbent on His Majesty's Government to do everything that was possible to bring the Indian into better relations with the Government of India, and that though at this moment Government might not be prepared for any substantial advance, yet that they should do nothing nor appear to be thinking of doing anything which would detract from the value of promises already given. Promises had been made in the Preamble to the Act of 1919, and it had been stated again and again that the policy there indicated will ultimately lead, if Indians themselves co-operate and show trust, to responsible self-government. In his view we are solemnly bound by this promise, and pledged to do our utmost to carry it out. He found it impossible to contemplate the possibility of saying that the Reforms must be ended because there has been no co-operation, or of doing anything which would give the faintest colour to the suggestion that we are trying to bring Reforms to an end while professing to carry them out.

The serious dangers to be apprehended in the future would, in his view, take one or other of the following forms: firstly, constitutional agitation; secondly, violence in the nature of outrages or riots or attempts at revolution; or, thirdly, what has been described as mass civil disobedience. The first would not be likely to offer insuperable difficulties. As regards the immediate future, he himself foresaw no real likelihood of the second, because, as he had already indicated, organised violence simultaneously in different parts of India was scarcely likely to happen, particularly on a large scale. Mass civil disobedience had been already recognised by Messrs. Das and Nehru as their effective weapon, though they realised they were not in a position to set it going at the moment. He alluded to Gandhi's failure in this direction, which Gandhi himself had explained by saying that the people were not ready for it. He thought that civil disobedience on the scale contemplated by the politician was unlikely to eventuate except as the result either of great economic or industrial distress or of the creation by the Government of grievances sufficiently serious to unite all shades of opinion and parties into adopting it. He therefore urged that the guiding consideration of future policy must be to avoid action or speech which might have the effect of producing such unity. He thought that a statement that there was to be no immediate advance and no Royal Commission before 1929 would produce great disappointment and that the hope of some change probably largely explained Mr. C. R. Das recent more conciliatory attitude. Perhaps it was the result of his disappointment at the lack of results which had followed his successful efforts to paralyse the Ministry in Bengal.

Finally, he drew attention to the fact that, in the autumn of this year, there would be a general election in the Council of State and a year later in the Assembly. He doubted whether any very tangible change would result in the Council of State, though he was quite prepared to find the next Council less favourable than the present one to the Government. In the Assembly the danger was the return of a large body pledged to the same policy of a solid anti-Government stand. This would not, it is true, necessarily paralyse the Government, but it would undoubtedly make the constitution very difficult to work.

Having regard to all these elements he adhered to the view that he had already stated that our policy should be to continue to redress grievances, to avoid creating new ones, and to do nothing which would have the effect of uniting all opinion against us.

The Secretary of State thanked His Excellency for his very clear and helpful statement and indicated his intention to put certain questions on the next occasion (as would also, no doubt, other members of the Conference), and thereafter to give a short summary of the conclusions to which, in his view, discussions seemed to lead.
Fourth Day. 15th May.

Present: As on the 1st May, and Viscount Gage, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State.

Lord Reading, interposing before the observations which the Secretary of State had expressed his intention of making, said that after having read the summaries of the three preceding discussions he was anxious not to conclude his own statement on this branch of the discussions without making clear what had perhaps not been sufficiently emphasised in his previous remarks, that he adheres fully to the views expressed by his Government early in 1924 when they were discussing with the then Secretary of State the policy which should be adopted in meeting the new Assembly with its demand for revision of the constitution. Incidentally, he wished to point out that the appointment of the Muddiman Committee had at least had this result that the debate which was its origin had taken place in February 1924, we had now reached May 1925 with proposals based upon the results of the enquiry not yet formulated. The date for whatever effective action may be taken upon the new proposals must therefore be 1926, and he regarded gain of time as a gain of material importance. The difficulty has been to maintain a steady and gradual progress towards the "next stage," i.e., the Statutory Commission's enquiry, in the face of the universal Indian demand for speeding up the approach to it.

Reverting to the Government of India's policy as indicated in February 1924, he quoted the following passage from their telegram to the Secretary of State of the 7th of that month:—

"Should these proposals for advance within the Act be approved by Parliament, the Government of India will then be able to judge the advances which should then be made which would require amendment of the Act. We shall have then had more experience of the working of the Act and, we hope, of the benefits of goodwill and co-operation. If in the result we arrived at the conclusion that the Statutory Commission should then be appointed, we should be prepared to make this recommendation to His Majesty's Government notwithstanding that the full period of 10 years contemplated under the Act had not elapsed."

This part of the Government of India's recommendation had not been accepted by the Secretary of State, who thought that it would have committed them to an undesirable extent. Lord Reading wished to explain that in making this further proposal (which they had not pressed in view of the Secretary of State's reluctance), the Government of India had not intended that a statement to that effect should be made public at that time. Their desire was to formulate a policy which looked somewhat beyond the then immediate future. He still thought that a policy of the kind indicated would have been advantageous, and would not have involved any mischievous commitment to a forward step, since the suggestion for the possible ante-dating of the Statutory Commission had been made dependent upon the opinion of the Government of India and their experience of goodwill and co-operation.

His reason for making these observations was, as he had said, that after reading the summaries of his earlier remarks, he felt that attention had perhaps been too closely confined to the immediate future, and he did not wish to create the impression that he was not looking beyond the next 18 months or two years; he wished to look beyond that to 1929, and to the difficult period that would inevitably follow thereafter. Almost immediately after reaching India he would have to address the Chambers of the Indian Legislature on their reassembling after the present adjournment, and it would be impossible for him to avoid giving some indication of the line of policy which was likely to be pursued as a result of these discussions in London. Moreover, pledges had been definitely given to the Assembly on two occasions that facilities would be given for the discussion of the steps to be taken as the result of the Muddiman Committee's Report before final decisions by the Government of India and the Secretary of State had been arrived at or announced. He was very anxious to be in a position, if possible, to induce the Assembly and the Provincial Councils, on the basis of the Muddiman Report, to make a fresh start and inaugurate a new era. It is true that in such discussions as there had already been dyarchy had been condemned,
but changes had already taken place. The financial conditions were better and the provinces were on the point of acquiring greater control over their provincial services, factors to which he had already alluded, and which, in themselves, removed some of the main objections which had been taken to the working of dyarchy. He felt, therefore, that if we could induce a true spirit of goodwill and co-operation we should have taken a great step forward. At the same time he wished to explain that the Government of India had not yet finally accepted all the recommendations of the majority of the Muddiman Committee. They had decided in general terms to accept them, subject, however, to careful examination of each one upon its merits, and without any commitment to the actual terms of each.

Looking ahead, they were bound to envisage the position which might face them as the result of an announcement that only some (or even all) of the recommendations of the majority of the Muddiman Committee were to be acted upon, and that no material step forward was to be made. We could not entirely disregard the possibility that the Swarajists may be returned in an actual majority after the General Election of 1926, either to the Central Legislature or to several Provincial Councils, or both—though in this connection the very varying success of the Swarajists at the last provincial elections must not be overlooked, since it was only in two provinces that real difficulty had been experienced on their account. But assuming the result to be a party in increased strength, denying any interest in, or advantage to be derived from, a Statutory Commission, whether appointed in 1929 or before, and able to assert that announcements made had shown no change of heart on the part of the Government, and that so far from offers of co-operation which will be asserted to have been made being accepted, there had been an actual setback and a scotching of even the minority’s moderate recommendations for improving the situation—what is to be our attitude in face of the realisation of this assumption?

He was not prepared to say now exactly what course should be adopted, but he thought he should give the Secretary of State an indication of what was in his mind. He had carefully considered this matter, and shortly before coming to this country had taken counsel with the members of his Executive Council, thinking it probable that His Majesty’s Government would be likely to ask for some indication of how such a position should be met.

The most striking feature in his view in the Swarajists’ policy and that of Gandhi, Das and Nehru alike was that they had never yet defined what they meant by “Swaraj.” The reason for this, he had no doubt, was that their own ideas on the subject were vague and they were afraid of formulating any definite scheme for fear of causing differences amongst the various interests and various schools of Indian thought, the real crux of the matter being the safeguards to be provided for the interests of minorities. The question he had been considering was whether it would not be desirable to seek from India a statement of the main lines of the constitution which India herself desires, and which she herself would formulate as distinct from an “imposed” constitution, for, generally speaking, the constitution up to the present must be so described. He was inclined to think that it might be useful to initiate an enquiry of this character. He was not putting this forward now as a substantive proposal, because he was not yet certain about it, or that the conditions he required could be enforced. He had, however, suggested the idea for the consideration of his Council whom he had found unanimous in accepting it tentatively. It had been definitely decided to explore it in order to see whether a plan could be devised which would enable the proposal to be adopted with sufficient safety and certainty to be placed definitely before His Majesty’s Government. These enquiries were now going on and he did not know their progress. He doubted, therefore, whether he would be in a position to advise such a plan definitely while in this country.

The difficulty was that no such enquiry was in the least likely to be fruitful unless it were guided and to some extent even controlled by the Government. In the absence of such guidance and control the result would probably be, as it had so often been in the Congress, the presentation of apparent agreement in the shape of formulæ which would be an utterly untrue indication of real agreement, and would merely cover up private disagreement; nor without Government assistance would it be possible to get proper representation or any certainty that all the interests that should be represented were in fact represented. By “Government control” he meant at least the indication of the interests to be represented and possibly even the selection of suitable representatives.
The danger, however, would be that whatever care were taken to avoid it, Government participation would very probably result in the stigmatising of the enquiry as a Government enquiry. It would, therefore, be essential to stipulate that the Government would be in no way bound by any results of the Conference, and that its intervention would be directed merely towards attempting to secure that whatever views might emerge were really representative of Indian opinion. He had no idea of making the enquiry he had in mind into the "Round Table Conference" demanded by the Swarajists. His idea was essentially different. It was to make India formulate her own proposals, if agreement among Indians could be reached, and place them before the British people.

But he was not prepared to move until he was satisfied that these initial difficulties could be overcome. If they could, and eventually a report was received, it was essential that it should be departmentally examined, before it was presented for the investigation of the Statutory Commission, which would examine the proposals without in any way being bound by them. That Commission, in carrying out its statutory duties, would necessarily have to examine the demands and wishes of Indians themselves, and here they would have such demands, if the suggestion came to fruition, in a definite form. He felt that some such method was the only available means of ascertaining the views of India on the basic subject of Indian disagreement, namely, the protection required in the future constitution for the various minorities, and of discovering whether substantial agreement among them could be reached.

The Swarajists may succeed in breaking down the present system, or the constitution may be rendered unworkable by active opposition or failure to cooperate. He felt strongly, however, that the withdrawal of the Reform should not be due to the initiative of the Government. If they fail it must be because India has made them fail, because India has rejected them. Notwithstanding discouragement we should do all we can, with prudent regard to our responsibilities to the Indian peoples and to Parliament, to help India forward if she is willing to do her part, to progressive development towards responsible self-government within the Empire, that is to carry out faithfully and loyally the promises we have made to India.

This concluded his main statement on this part of the discussion.

The Secretary of State said that it had been his intention on the termination of Lord Reading's statement to summarise the conclusions to which it seemed to him to lead. What Lord Reading had added to-day, however, was an addition of great importance, which seemed to him to place the former discussions in a somewhat different perspective. He preferred, therefore, to wait until he had seen in print the summary of to-day's statement in order to correlate it with what had preceded, and he thought his best course would be to interpose thereafter a further discussion on this matter between the discussions of the various separate subjects which was to come later.

Lord Peel said that he felt much the same, the earlier discussions having now been placed somewhat out of focus by Lord Reading's statement to-day.

The Secretary of State said, however, that there was one point he would like to put to Lord Reading, namely, whether he was correct in understanding from what he had said that the demand of the Liberals for "Provincial autonomy," involving, as Lord Reading had said it must do, the transfer of "law and order," was not as impracticable as the demands of the Swarajists, and that it was consequently impossible for practical purposes to distinguish between the two parties.

Lord Reading replied that he could not agree with this conclusion. There was a clear difference between the Swarajists and the Liberals: the former would have nothing to do either with the present constitution or with any future constitution which was the outcome of a Statutory or Royal Commission, and consequently had refused all co-operation with the Muddiman Committee. The Liberals, on the other hand, had been trying to work the constitution and had associated themselves with the Muddiman Inquiry. At present the difference between the Liberals and ourselves was largely as to the pace at which the next substantial advance should be reached. He doubted whether there was, in fact, any step in the way of important advance which would not involve the transfer of "law and order" and "land revenue"; he was not prepared to say that he could not contemplate a time in the future when this might safely take place, provided that the Legislatures are honestly and sincerely doing their part, and the necessary safeguards are provided.
The Secretary of State did not dispute this last proposition, granted the fulfilment of the condition stated, but said that it seemed to him that this would be a change of conditions which would alter the whole situation. What he had meant was that, so far as he could gather, the claim of the Liberals is incompatible with practical possibilities so long as the present temper lasts.

Lord Reading said that there were some grounds for hope that the present temper might not last, and in any event he thought we should not, at present, assume that there was no such hope. He agreed that the Liberals had, no less than the Swarajists, condemned dyarchy, but since they had done so, much had happened, and he was not sure that their attitude might not be somewhat modified. In any event it must not be assumed that they would refuse to attempt to work the system, because their proposals were not accepted. Moreover, the Liberals do not demand provincial autonomy forthwith. What they want is a Royal Commission to enquire into its possibilities and implications, for they admit that all the implications have not been considered and thought out.

The Secretary of State explained that all he had meant was that, in the existing circumstances of India, it was as impossible for us to consider what the Liberals want as it is to consider what the Swarajists want.

Lord Reading questioned this. The real demand was for the early appointment of a Royal Commission. He did not, as he had said, recommend compliance with this demand. It was now 1925 and would be 1926 before the Muddiman proposals became effective, leaving only three years before the statutory date, 1929. What he was anxious to do was to bridge this gap, and to prevent the Liberals and other Indian politicians from joining the Swarajists' demand for an Indian-framed constitution immediately.

Answering a question by Lord Peel as to whether the Liberals were in his view strong enough to stand apart from the Swarajists and to take a line of their own, Lord Reading said that the Liberals had hitherto stood apart from the Swarajists, but he much doubted whether they could acquire sufficient strength at the next election to break the Swarajists. They lacked organisation and the popular appeal which the Swarajists were able to make. On the other hand, they do represent the more responsible section of opinion and contain in their ranks a number of the ablest men. To this extent, however, he agreed with the Secretary of State that if the question is whether he was prepared to accept now what the Liberals want, the answer is "No," because they wish to go much too fast. They and we alike envisage a further enquiry but we differ from them in thinking that they are demanding too soon.

Answering a question by Lord Winterton as to whether, in his view, the Liberals realised the improbability that an impartial Commission, on the evidence available, would recommend an immediate advance to provincial autonomy, and whether they would be likely to accept this position, Lord Reading said that undoubtedly they would continue to agitate, their position being very much like that of a progressive party in our own Parliamentary system.

Fifth Day. 19th May.

Present: As on 15th May.

The Secretary of State said that he had intended to-day to make his observations upon the conclusions to which Lord Reading's general statement had led. He had not, however, had an opportunity as he had wished of studying in print the summary of the whole of Lord Reading's statement. As he wished his own statement to be of a considered and somewhat formal character, he thought it best to reserve it until a later date, which it was subsequently settled should be the third meeting from the present, that is after the interposition of two meetings for the discussion of the question of Indianisation of the Army.

At the Secretary of State's request, Lord Reading then proceeded to indicate his views on the relative urgency and importance of the various proposals made in the
The Muddiman Committee's Report as classified in the India Office Note under the respective headings of those requiring legislation and those requiring amendment of the Rules.

Dealing first with those involving amendment of the Act, Lord Reading said that none of them, except, perhaps, Nos. (ii) and (iv), which were the most important, could be said to be of such outstanding importance or urgency as, taken by themselves, to make legislation imperative. The adoption of several of them, and notably of Nos. (viii) and (ix), would undoubtedly tend to convenience, and the cumulative effect was such as to strengthen his contention that it was at least desirable to make the changes which the majority of the Muddiman Committee recommended. He was merely expressing tentative views, as the recommendations had not yet been considered by his Government in detail.

The same seemed to him to apply to the proposals for amendment of the Rules, though, as he had said before, the Government of India as a body had not yet discussed either these or the legislative proposals in detail. Dealing particularly with the proposals for transfer of further subjects, he said that the most important subject involved was Forests, upon which it was essential, as indeed the Committee themselves had recommended, that the views of the local Governments should be considered. He thought, in fact, that we were actually pledged more or less to carry out these recommendations unless there were a very strong case made against them, since the Committee had been distinctly charged to consider whether any advance was "desirable or feasible" and had stated their opinion that advance of this kind was, in fact, feasible and desirable.

The Secretary of State agreed that there was no doubt a commitment to take some action upon the Report, and the only question was how far this could be done without giving rise to Parliamentary difficulties here. He wished, however, to raise a somewhat larger question of procedure, which he might describe as the tactical aspect. The Government of India had definitely promised, no doubt inevitably, that the proposals as set out in the Muddiman Report should be discussed in the Assembly before decisions upon them were taken. The position thus created seemed to him to indicate the possibility of a deadlock, since it appeared to be the case that the Governor-General could make no statement to the Assembly until the Secretary of State had arrived at his decisions, while the Secretary of State, on the other hand, could make no announcement of his decisions until the Assembly had had the opportunity of discussing them.

Lord Reading said that this difficulty of procedure was inherent in the situation and was one which was constantly facing them. The position of the Assembly had to be considered, since it was open to it to assert, quite rightly, that it had been created for the purpose of discussing and influencing the Government's policy, whereas, if decisions on questions of policy were taken, so to speak, behind its back and announced ex post facto, the Assembly naturally tended to ask what was the good of its existence. On the other hand, the constitutional position to which the Government of India always endeavoured to conform themselves was that it was not open to them to announce changes of policy on matters of importance unless their decisions had already been agreed with His Majesty's Government.

The Secretary of State said that he quite recognised these difficulties and had been wondering whether, supposing that occasion arose for himself or Lord Winterton to make announcements in Parliament before Lord Reading had addressed the Assembly, these announcements might not be made somewhat on the following lines:—

"The Muddiman Committee Report deals with a number of important matters and contains a number of recommendations. These recommendations have been discussed with the Governor-General with the result that we are in substantial agreement with him as to the action which should be taken upon them. Parliament in due course would be informed of, or consulted upon, this action. Meanwhile the Government of India had necessarily promised that the Legislative Assembly in India should have the full opportunity which it has not yet had of debating and indicating their views upon the proposals which we intend to make to Parliament. These proposals can therefore only be indicated at the present stage in a purely tentative form and subject to the reservation that they may undergo some change before they are definitely decided upon or placed before Parliament for sanction."
LORD READING said that he agreed that a statement on those lines would probably best meet the difficulty. He observed that much the same situation had arisen with regard to the proposals of the Lee Commission and that the procedure then adopted had been for the Government of India, after they had agreed generally with the Secretary of State that the Commission's recommendations should be accepted, to place before the Assembly, for its concurrence in the form of a Resolution, a motion, the adoption of which would have recorded the concurrence of the Assembly in the policy proposed. He was inclined to think that the same course would prove the most convenient in connection with the Muddiman Report, though in all probability the result of such a motion would be, as in the case of the Lee Report that the Assembly would carry an amendment which would have the effect of expressing their disapproval of the Majority Report as a whole, and that there would consequently be no detailed discussion of the specific proposals in that Report.

Before concluding the discussion, the Secretary of State said that he wished the legislative proposals to which His Excellency had attached importance to be examined in the Office with a view to ascertaining whether it would be possible to include them in a small Bill of such a nature as to avoid controversial questions outside the scope of the particular amendments included in the Bill.

Ninth Day. 5th June.

Present:
The Rt. Hon. THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD.
The Rt. Hon. EARL WINTERTON, M.P.
Sir ARTHUR HIRTZEL, K.C.B.
Viscount GAGE, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State.
Mr. R. B. EWANK, C.I.E.
Mr. V. DAWSON, C.I.E.

The SECRETARY OF STATE said—

Your Excellency has very succinctly covered in your general observations a wide and important field of policy; and in dealing with more particular problems you have greatly added to my own information, and even, I believe, to that of this Office. On all grounds, therefore, I think it fortunate that you found it possible to undertake so long a journey for the purpose of these discussions.

I have the good fortune to find myself, I believe, in agreement with all your substantial conclusions; and therefore I can deal with the matter with more brevity than might otherwise have been attainable.

In a very early period of your observations you indicated that, in your view, "the time would come when some change would have to be made in the attitude of the India Office towards India, but that the time for limiting its activities was not yet." The great work of Lord Curzon, which has just appeared, may serve as a reminder that Your Excellency is by no means the first Viceroy who has held this view; and that I am not the first Secretary of State who has, with the greatest good feeling, resisted it. This question is, indeed, only part of an infinitely larger
problem about which I have some observations to make, namely, the extension now, and hereafter, of responsible government to India. It is, of course, obvious that if such an extension was wise and practicable, and was, in fact, carried out in practice, the whole character of this Office would undergo profound modifications. It would in fact decline, in practical working, to the kind of functions which are discharged by the Colonial Office in dealing with the great self-governing Dominions. But as long as the present constitution of India endures, as long as the Secretary of State is responsible to Parliament and to the Cabinet for the government of India, I cannot very easily envisage any considerable alteration in his powers and duties. The problem, therefore, which we have to solve is a single one, for it colours and influences almost every matter of important policy which presents itself for discussion between us.

That problem is, what is the next step after the Montagu-Chelmsford Act, and when is that step, if we can agree upon it, to be taken? Everything else is of secondary importance. I mention only to dismiss it, the question of the Muddiman Report. Your Excellency has frankly indicated that one of the objects of setting up this Committee was to play for time. That object has been attained. There remains the decision, what steps ought to be taken upon the Report? After hearing Your Excellency's views, and the admirable analysis with which you favoured us of the different recommendations made both by the Majority and the Minority, I am still of opinion that it is very desirable to avoid legislation in the matter. My advice would be, therefore, that we should confine our attention to those recommendations of the Majority which do not require an Act of Parliament. Legislation would involve us in both Houses of Parliament—certainly in the Commons—in interminable discussions of general political conditions in India. Neither the programme of the Government, nor considerations of political expediency, make such a prospect attractive; and there is, after all, less difficulty in dealing with the Report in the manner proposed, inasmuch as the Swarajists decline to have anything whatever to do with the enquiry; whereas the Moderates, who constitute the Minority, plainly declare that the recommendations of the Majority are so contemptible that it is a matter of indifference to them whether they are carried out or not. We must, I think, support with composure any censure upon our refusal to carry out those of the Committee's recommendations which would require an Act of Parliament. And surely the answer is a good one. It is, in fact:—"We appointed a Committee to enquire into these matters. The Swarajist, complaining of its limited reference, boycotted it completely. More moderate Indian elements consented to serve on it. But even these profess themselves to be indifferent whether or not the recommendations are carried out. Where is the grievance? We are merely omitting to do something which you say is not worth doing."

I come now to the infinitely larger question, already indicated, which naturally played so large a part in Your Excellency's observations.

Before we can answer the question already proposed by me, namely, what is to be the next step? we must logically reach a conclusion as to how far the present constitution has succeeded or failed. Here the Muddiman Report and Your Excellency's own observations present us with valuable material for forming a judgment. I was never myself an admirer of the constitution; and I confess I never dared to hope that it would work smoothly and efficiently. I recognise, therefore, very readily, that it has in practice, taking India as a whole, worked far better than I expected. Only in two important districts can it be pronounced a complete failure. Elsewhere it has in the main been administered with varying degrees of success. But even here two qualifications present themselves. The first is that the highly skilled Indian civil servants who have had to deal with the matter, would hardly fail to make any constitution function which was committed to their experienced hands. The second is that in more districts than one a diarchical constitution paradoxically enough has only succeeded by the extirpation of the diarchical conception. In other words, Governors have arbitrarily ignored the statutory separation of subjects; and have dealt with them in a joint session with the result that non-transferred subjects have been pronounced upon by those who under the constitution were excluded from any such function. I hesitate to offer dogmatic advice upon a problem so disputable, and one with which Your Excellency is so much more familiar than myself. But we must after all take the responsibility of forming a view. And my present impression is that, in a matter so difficult, it would be injudicious to apply pressure upon individual Governors, some of them very experienced administrators, who have
reacted in the face of local political conditions of which they are likely to be the best judges.

In spite of the criticisms I have made, no small measure of success has been attained.

We must none the less carefully preserve a sense of proportion. We must not allow ourselves to be unduly influenced by those who are most articulate and shrill. We must above all maintain a numerical perspective before we acclaim unduly the dawn of Indian democracy. Of all the hundreds of millions for whom we are responsible in India, I understand from Your Excellency that on a liberal estimate six million voted at the last election. Of these you make it plain that the great majority were grossly illiterate, even in a system where the standard of literacy is incredibly low. I have read, for instance, somewhere that very many of the voters were unable to attain to a designation by name of the candidate who commanded their political admiration; and were consequently driven to signify their preference on the ballot paper by using the name of some favourite animal.

It seems, therefore, to me fundamental that we should realise always that our responsibility is not to a very audible few who have imbied Western education after a somewhat heady fashion; but that it is to the diverse creeds and nations who constitute this infinitely various continent.

And here I am anxious to recognise most fully a pregnant observation which fell from Your Excellency to the effect that the Viceroy lives in a very different atmosphere to that in which the Secretary of State discharges his duty. Of course he does. The Viceroy and his Ministers are engaged in a task of extraordinary delicacy and complexity. They have been presented with a constitution, of which they were not the framers, and told to make it work. Your Ministers are assailed by a constant chorus of criticism and often of vituperation, never relieved even by one grudging word of appreciation. Where everyone is always criticising them the tendency to meet such criticism by some harmless and reasonable concession is almost irresistible; and so a spirit of accommodation is induced which is, on the whole, not only inevitable but advantageous. For such a tendency may helpfully react against any excessive assertion of the point of view held by many people in this country to which I have next to direct Your Excellency's attention.

Many of those who knew India best had grave doubts of the wisdom, and still more of the timeliness, of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. They were conceived, as you have yourself very forcibly pointed out, in the almost forgotten atmosphere of self-determination. Many persons most competent to form a judgment were strongly of opinion that we were administering a strong Western medicine to an extremely unsuitable Eastern patient. But nevertheless the risk was run. An attempt was made upon a scale which must, in any event, be pronounced anxious, and which many have condemned as extremely rash. It may be stated in general language that the opportunity was afforded to Indians to deal effectively with many large and important subjects concerning the destinies of their peoples. It might surely have been hoped that those who in an ill-starred phrase were once described as "politically minded" would have recognised, and gratefully availed themselves of, that which was offered. They did not do so. We were first confronted by the immense influence of the Mahatma, preaching non-co-operation. The visionary conceptions of Gandhi, and incidentally his incarceration, deprived him of influence. His place was taken by Das and Nehru. Their outlook and their practice deviated greatly from his. But in the main essential they did not differ. In the first place they determined to wreck the constitution from without; and it was only when this attempt failed that they substituted for it an attempt to wreck it from within. Their attitude from day to day may undergo some slight modification. Their professions became noticeably more pacific in proportion as the failure of a bellicose policy becomes apparent. But it nevertheless remains broadly true that the largest political party in India offers us no gratitude for our constitution; is desirous of wrecking it; will accept no amendment of it at our hands; and demands the right to frame in India an Indian national constitution for themselves.

I do not deal at any length with the position of the Liberals, although I note with interest the important distinction which Your Excellency draws between their attitude and that of the Swarajists. But we are concerned surely in this matter with purely practical considerations. And I am not aware of any prominent leader of so-called Liberal thought in India who would be content with anything less than
provincial autonomy. You yourself pointed out that provincial autonomy involves control over law and order; and would necessarily require a system of responsible government at the centre. Such claims seem to me not to be very distinguishable in substance from those of the Swarajists; and to belong to a future incredibly remote. We ought, therefore, in my judgment, when dealing with the Liberal Party, to treat them with extreme civility and encouragement; to note in their favour that their methods, unlike those of the Swarajists, are neither irreconcilable nor unconstitutional; but never to encourage them in hopes which have not at the moment, or in any foreseeable future, the slightest prospect of fulfilment.

Your Excellency made some illuminating observations upon the communal differences which are vital even to an elementary comprehension of Indian conditions; but which are so often overlooked in this country. I see no signs that these differences are being composed. Indeed, it appears to me that after all the congresses, and all the gropings after unity, there is at this moment a greater antagonism and bitterness of view than there has been for some years. The feuds between Moslem and Hindu constitute a permanent static circumstance in the life of India which dominates, and must always profoundly influence, every problem of Indian government. To me, indeed, it seems hardly less ridiculous to ask for responsible or Dominion government for a community which embraces not only the vast Hindu population, but 70 million Moslems, than it would be to talk of giving such a constitution to a Europe which included Soviet Russia and Parliamentary England.

In the light of these observations, I approach more directly the consideration of the course which we may most prudently adopt. The decision in my view is not a difficult one. The wisdom of Parliament when it designed this constitution provided for its reconsideration at an indicated period. A Commission was to be set up in the year 1929. It is reasonable to suppose that the Legislature contemplated an honest attempt to work the new constitution; but apprehended even in that event that imperfect imagination, or fallible draughtsmanship, would disclose in the working of the constitution blemishes grave enough to require revision at the hands of a body so authoritative as a Royal Commission. And equally, as the preamble shows, Parliament was prepared at the end of ten years, assisted by the experience which it seemed likely that ten years would afford, to consider impartially either the extension or the restriction of the powers conceded.

Can anyone suggest that anything which has happened since the Act was passed affords the slightest warrant for accelerating the statutory period of revision? The treatment which the constitution has received would rather, on the contrary, if we had the constitutional power, seem to warrant an attempt to postpone it. Such a course is not possible; but I am most strongly of opinion, and upon this point I gather that I am fortified by Your Excellency’s greater experience, that no casewhatever can be made out for acceleration.

You made an interesting suggestion, to which I am bound to give the highest importance, that, if it were the decision of the Government to adhere to the statutory date of revision, no plain and absolute declaration in that sense should be made either by yourself in India or by myself in Parliament. In a matter which is mainly tactical—and in which the difficulties are yours and not mine—I should be very slow to place myself in opposition to your views; and I have discussed with you a formula upon which I think we can reach agreement, in which the decision of the Government on this matter might conveniently be announced.

There are many general matters upon which I cannot touch in a statement so brief; but I certainly ought not to omit a word of congratulation to Your Excellency upon the great success which has so far attended your policy in Bengal. I was, I frankly admit, impressed by an observation which fell from Your Excellency after I had stated my views upon the further Indianisation of the Army, to the effect that you feared that your successors would have a difficult task before them. Lord Curzon’s memorable volumes serve as a vivid and arresting reminder of the many difficulties and crises through which your predecessors have won their way. I cannot doubt that your successors will realise that the basic conditions of our responsibility in India have not greatly varied throughout the centuries, if they are mercilessly and coolly analysed, and that they will meet the difficulties which I, like yourself, foresee, with the mingled patience and resolution which Your Excellency has never failed to exhibit through the difficult and critical years in which the greatest responsibility of all has been yours.
In conclusion the Secretary of State explained that the reason why he had not referred in the statement which he had just read to the suggestion made by Lord Reading on the 15th May that an attempt should be made to seek from India a statement of the main lines of the constitution which India herself desires was that, as Lord Reading himself had said, his suggestion had been put forward by him only tentatively and without having arrived at any clear conclusions as to its feasibility. The Secretary of State had, however, given considerable thought to the suggestion and could feel little doubt in his own mind that there was a grave risk of such a projected conference, if left to Indians themselves, resulting in a few vague formulae alleged to represent general opinion, the promulgation of which might prove a great embarrassment and might well lead the Press and other organs in this country to urge upon the basis of their acceleration of the progress towards responsible government. Similarly, if representatives of the Government of India were associated with the enquiry, whatever safeguards might be attempted, a conference containing such representatives would almost inevitably be misrepresented as a Round-Table conference in which representatives of the Government were participating in an endeavour to formulate a new constitution. Such a position, for the reasons already indicated in his statement, the Secretary of State was not prepared to contemplate. Consequently his feeling was with regard to this suggestion that it had little to recommend it, and that it would almost inevitably involve grave and prohibitive disadvantages.

Lord Reading said that he would reserve his observations on the statement which the Secretary of State had just made, and which demanded careful study, particularly since it seemed to him not wholly to accord with the views that he himself had expressed. As regards the suggestion he had made on 15th May, he explained that the reason which led him to mention it at all was that he felt it incumbent upon him in the course of these discussions to disclose to the Secretary of State everything which had been in his mind in this connection. His position with regard to it, therefore, was merely that he had been considering this suggestion as a possible course for the future, that it was still being explored in India, and that unless and until it became clear as the result of this examination that the serious difficulties which he fully admitted might be inherent in it could be surmounted, he was not in a position to advance it as a definite proposal. He had himself pointed out objections of a weighty character which had suggested themselves to him at the outset, and he gathered from the Secretary of State's observations to-day that he also had been impressed by them. Lord Reading thought it undesirable to proceed further at this moment with the discussion on this subject.

The Secretary of State said that he quite understood Lord Reading's position, and that if further enquiries should lead him after consideration to advance a proposal of this kind definitely, then this discussion would be of use, and would not prevent his doing so. And in answer to a further observation by Lord Reading that he was somewhat surprised at the Secretary of State's decision now indicated to avoid legislation in consequence of the Muddiman Committee's Report, the Secretary of State said that he wished to make it clear that the statement that he had made did not purport, and was not intended, to convey decisions, but merely his own impressions. He had discussed this large question with none of his colleagues, and had merely wished to indicate as concisely and precisely as possible the directions in which his own mind was moving.

In the course of a brief discussion as to the further subjects to be considered, Lord Reading mentioned the question of Indians overseas, which was a very important and burning question, which might result in strong pressure being put upon him to take retaliatory measures against certain of the Dominions. The Secretary of State explained the difficulties which confronted him in attempting to raise here the Indian difficulties on this matter, and suggested that the best course would be for him to raise it in the Cabinet when Lord Reading makes his statement there, thereby giving him the opportunity to explain the position to the Cabinet.
LORD WINTERTON said that he had some observations which he wished to make in confirmation of those of the Secretary of State, with particular reference to the point of view likely to be taken in the House of Commons. Addressing the Secretary of State, he said:

I am glad of the opportunity which you have afforded me to state to you and His Excellency my views on the main problem which confronts you both in India, especially in relation to its effect upon opinion in the House of Commons.

Except for the period of eight months last year, when the Labour Government was in office, I have occupied my present post for over three years; while I came to it without any first-hand knowledge of India, I had by travel and residence in the Near East, in peace and war, acquired at least an insight into those differences of race, creed and mentality among Asiatics themselves on the one hand, and between Asiatics and Europeans on the other, which form the real and common difficulty throughout Asia.

I can, for example, appreciate the sensitiveness of Indians in their relations with Europeans, to which His Excellency referred in one of his earlier statements: I know how often, sometimes quite unwittingly, individuals of the British race offend Asiatics by some small act of conduct; I am aware that not only Indians, but most Asiatics, are deeply suspicious of our good intentions; both alike, the sensitiveness and the suspicion, seem to me to be caused by the completely different and indeed, in some respects, irreconcilable code of morals and ethics which, broadly speaking, divide Asia and Europe, and that despite the fact that the religion upon which our civilisation is based came from the East.

I do not, however, wish to take up your time with a discussion of these considerations, but to address myself to the attitude of the House of Commons towards Indian affairs.

There has never been, as I indicated on a previous occasion, any great enthusiasm for the Government of India (1919) Act in the House of Commons, but with few exceptions there has been, in all parties, a loyal determination to aid its working. I know of no question of prime importance which has in the last three years been as completely removed from party controversy, not even our relationship with foreign countries; there is no section of opinion in the House, of any weight in numbers and authority, which favours breaking the pledge of 1917, or withdrawing the Act in favour of a more restrictive system. Equally there is no section, of importance, which believes in an acceleration of self-government greater than that contemplated by the House itself when it passed the 1919 Act.

Three years ago there was grave disquiet in the House of Commons at the position of affairs in India; to-day there is far more confidence that the authority of the State can be maintained. Praise or blame in such a connection may seem imperious, but I am sure this restoration of confidence is largely due to the handling of the situation by Government in India. If this confidence continues, it should do much to produce a fresh flow of much needed recruits for the Indian Services; but a single false step might destroy it.

Apart from this, any advance at the moment beyond that already foreshadowed as a result of the acceptance of the Lee Commission Report would be in my opinion, having regard to the composition of the present House of Commons, an act of political madness. For what would the average back-bench Conservative say, and indeed be entitled to say? "You ask me to do something which even a Socialist Government dared not do; you wish to conciliate a few thousand Indian politicians who notoriously will not be conciliated by anything which circumstances will permit.
you to do. We have by our attitude in the House loyally observed the pledge of 1917 inscribed in the Act, though it was a pledge given without any real authority from our Party, many of whose most active members were otherwise engaged in the trenches at the time. What evidence is there that Indians as a whole have kept their side of the bargain? That is no reason for breaking our word and we do not intend to do so, but it is equally no reason for being better than it. Where is the urgency? Are not law and order infinitely more respected in India than they were five years ago despite the fact that the extremist leaders at the time threatened revolution in a few months if Swaraj were not conceded? If, on the other hand, you base your policy of a fresh immediate advance, not on the necessity of concessions before they are wrong from you, but on a greater measure of success in Indian constitutional self-development than was anticipated in 1919, where is the evidence of it?

It is because I believe those contentions to be unanswerable that I, some time ago, came independently to the same conclusions as those which you, Secretary of State, have reached.

In conclusion, I would like to make one observation of a different character. I have already referred to my experiences in the East; in the course of them I have fought both on the side of and against the Mohammedians; I have, in Arabia, travelled alone with men of that creed, many miles from any other European, have shared their hardships and eaten out of the same dish. I know something of that unquestioning and uncompromising Deistic faith, with its contempt and hatred, as fierce and fiery as the desert sun in which it was born, for polytheism and the worship of animals and idols. Recently I have, for my own instruction, been reading a number of standard works in the India Office Library on the Hindu religion and its many sects. Among them was Lord Ronaldshay's book The Heart of Aryavarta. Written by a man who has devoted intensive study to the subject, it purports to be, as I understand it, an interpretation of the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of Hindu India, especially in Bengal, which may be considered, I suppose, the very kernel of Hinduism, religious and political.

I can conceive of nothing more utterly alien to everything which Mahomet taught about this world and the next and in which the millions who share his faith believe to-day, not as a theory, but as an all-embracing rule of conduct in life; those of us who have heard in war the most menacing and at the same time most thrilling of all battle-cries “Ya Allah ilia Allah” can never forget the lesson it teaches to any British Government, which is, that the sword of Islam, while it sometimes rests in its scabbard for long periods, is always ready to be used against the infidel; and that an infidel is none the less an infidel because he has the same colour of skin, life in the same village, and is perhaps even of the same race as the follower of the Prophet.

It must, I suppose, be difficult to discuss this question frankly, freely, in all its implications, in India to-day, even in the most confidential sittings of the Governor-General’s Council, because of the Indian membership, necessary and proper as that membership is. But to us, sitting here in conclave and discussion, this great volcanic rift, ever ready to burst into flame, which stretches across India, must, I submit, present a very prominent, if not the most prominent, feature in the political landscape.

LORD READING, referring to the statement made by the Secretary of State on the 5th June, said that he was much indebted to him for the appreciation which he had shown of such services as he had been able to render to India, and he wished especially to thank him for his reference to the work of the Governor-General’s Executive Council, because of the Indian membership, necessary and proper as that membership is. But to us, sitting here in conclave and discussion, this great volcanic rift, ever ready to burst into flame, which stretches across India, must, I submit, present a very prominent, if not the most prominent, feature in the political landscape.
As regards the India Office (though in making these observations he did not wish to be understood to be qualifying anything which he himself had previously said or which the Secretary of State had said on this matter), he did think that the goal to be aimed at was without question that interference by the India Office in purely Indian affairs should be exceptional, especially when the Government of India found itself in accord with its Legislature. He quite recognised the difficulty of predicating of any given matter that it was of "purely Indian concern," and he did not dwell on this point because, so far as he understood, this had indeed been the policy and tendency pursued for some time by the India Office. On the other hand he fully recognised the advantages which constantly flowed from consultation between the Government of India and this Office, and that the result of this consultation was often to modify advantageously the views or proposals which the Government of India had originally put forward.

The Secretary of State observed that it was certainly true to say that, speaking generally, this Office would always far rather abstain from interference than insist on views opposed to those of the Government of India.

Lord Reading, continuing, said that as they were approaching the end of these conferences he was becoming more and more impressed with the advantages which had resulted from his visit to this country, and from the opportunities which he had thereby gained of putting his own views before the Secretary of State and securing by question and answer that those views, and also those expressed by the Secretary of State, were mutually understood. He regarded these opportunities which were now available as of great consequence to India as a part of the Empire, and to the holder of the office of Viceroy, whoever he might be.

Referring more particularly to the Secretary of State's statement of the 5th June, Lord Reading said that he could count himself fortunate not merely in the sense which he had explained, but the more so since the careful consideration which he had given to the Secretary of State's observations had convinced him that they were in agreement on the substantial conclusions to which he (Lord Reading) had come. It seemed to him that on the wider question of policy there was practically no difference between them—and the statement which he had just heard from Lord Winterton seemed to him to confirm this position from the House of Commons point of view—that is to say, that they were all agreed, though perhaps they had arrived at the position from somewhat different angles, that there is no case at present for acceleration of the stages laid down for the advance towards self-government in India. This aspect of the matter, therefore, he found it unnecessary to discuss any further.

He did desire, however, to refer to the Secretary of State's provisional observations with regard to the Majority recommendations of the Muddiman Committee. He understood that the Secretary of State's position was that he was prepared to give effect to the recommendations of the Report in so far as this could be done by amendment of Statutory Rules, but that he thought it desirable, if possible, to avoid legislation on the subject. This observation was of great importance from his point of view, and he was in hopes that the Secretary of State would take fully into account the considerations he had to urge about it. He was too conscious of the importance of any advice to His Majesty's Government which the Secretary of State might think fit to tender to omit to explain more fully his point of view on the one matter on which, perhaps, he and the Secretary of State were not in complete accord.

While he was glad to learn that the Secretary of State was in accord with the policy advocated by the Committee to the extent shown by the quotation he had just made, he felt it very difficult himself, for practical purposes, to draw a distinction between the two categories of recommendations, namely, those which could be effected by a change of rules and those which required a change in the Act. He quite recognised that some, and perhaps a large proportion, of those recommendations which would require legislation could, without inconvenience, be postponed, and in so far as postponement was possible he was fully prepared to fall in with it, recognising as he did that the Secretary of State and His Majesty's Government alone were in a position to judge of the tactical possibilities of promoting legislation. He was not concerned, that is, with the actual moment when such legislation should be introduced.

What did concern him was that, having appointed this Committee, containing, as it did, leading members of his Government, and having received from it a report upon which all the Government members of the Committee were agreed, it seemed to him almost impossible to define their policy towards the Report on a basis of the means of giving effect to them, namely, by legislation as opposed to rules. He was not, as he
had previously explained, in the absence of the considered views of his Government, at this moment in a position to say definitely which recommendations ought to be carried out at an early stage and which might without inconvenience be postponed; but in the absence of the views of his Government he had done his best to estimate the relative importance of the various recommendations, and he was inclined to the opinion that the three important recommendations which would necessitate legislation are:—

1. The proposed provision for a minimum salary for Ministers, with suitable arrangements for passing formal votes of censure upon them

2. The somewhat similar recommendations relating to the appointment and salaries of Council Secretaries

3. The recommendation relating to the powers of the Courts to interfere in advance with the action of Presidents in bringing business before the Councils.

The point to which he wished to draw attention in making these observations was that almost immediately on his return to India it would be essential for him to make a statement—which had, indeed, already been promised—to the Legislature, which statement must necessarily include some intimation as to the Government's intentions with regard to the Muddiman Report in order that the Legislature might be placed in the position in which it had been promised it would be placed to debate these intentions. In estimating the Government's policy he thought that difficulties of legislation in Parliament would have no bearing whatever upon Indian opinion, and he suggested that if he could show necessity for legislation by Parliament it would follow that a convenient opportunity would have to be found for it. What he was anxious to be in a position to say was that it was their intention substantially to carry into effect the recommendations of the Majority Report, without committing themselves in this statement to precise acceptance of every detail of these recommendations in the form in which they stand in the Report. It seemed to him, so far as he could judge from the state of Parliamentary business, that in any case legislation here would be impossible until next session, so that if he made such a statement there appeared to be no necessity for him to make any reservation as to the time when the necessary legislation would be promoted.

His real anxiety was in respect of the sphere of Ministers, since he felt that their difficulties in the immediate future would come in the main in the provinces, and that the difficulties there would centre round the Ministers and their salaries, as it had already done in Bengal and the Central Provinces. He thought there could be no doubt that the policy of the Act postulated that the administration of transferred subjects should be by Ministers, and that its framers assumed that Ministers would be forthcoming who would be entitled to salary. The difficulty was that no provision had been made in the Act to secure the fulfilment of this assumption. He explained, in some detail, the history of the difficulties which had arisen in Bengal and the Central Provinces, and the bearing upon them of the Committee's recommendation which he had enumerated as the first of the three he had just mentioned. He felt sure that, had the terms of the Act been such as were recommended by the Committee in this respect, the occurrence of the present situation in Bengal and the Central Provinces would, in all probability, have been prevented or at least modified. Taking this, therefore, as only one instance, he thought it would explain his difficulty in accepting a decision that some recommendations of the Majority Committee would be carried out, but that this particular one, involving, as it did, Parliamentary legislation, should be omitted; hence the anxiety which he had felt at the Secretary of State's indication that he was inclined to advise that legislation should be avoided. He hoped that he had made it clear that what, in his view, was urgent was the announcement of policy. He was much less concerned as to the actual date when effect would be given to this policy. He explained in this connection that he thought it improbable that the Government of India would forward their recommendations upon the Report until after his return, when he had been able to report to his colleagues the result of these discussions. He agreed that the interval between his arrival and the statement which he would have to make would necessarily be very short, and would consequently leave but little time for consideration of the official proposals by the Secretary of State, and that consequently it would be wise to telegraph to Lord Lytton urging him that meanwhile all possible progress should be made in formulating the Government of India's views, so that they might be ready for despatch by telegram as soon as possible after his (Lord Reading's) arrival.
The Secretary of State said that he thought a further explanation of the intentions underlying his statement on the 5th June would largely meet Lord Reading's point. He might explain, in the first place, that he had thought it judicious not to discuss with his own Council here the Muddiman Committee's Report until he and Lord Reading had arrived at general agreement with regard to it. Secondly, there were some matters in the Report, such as the proposed further transfer of subjects and notably of the subject of Forests, which were undoubtedly the subject of difference of view amongst persons qualified to hold an opinion. His own observations as to avoidance of legislation had been due to the fact that, as he had understood Lord Reading during earlier discussions, he had not himself emphasised the necessity for accepting any of the recommendations which involved legislation, and he had taken him to be acquiescing in the view that procedure by rule would sufficiently meet the necessities of the case. But His Majesty's Government were, after all, a Government with duties and obligations as such, and with power to carry out their duties, and if the position was that the objects which require legislation must be attained, then certainly legislation must be considered. He would suggest, therefore, that the question might be dealt with on some such lines as these: —

"Speaking generally, effect will be given to the recommendations of the Majority of the Muddiman Committee. Much can be done in this direction by amendment of rules. Other recommendations will necessitate Parliamentary legislation, and a convenient opportunity will be sought for the promotion of such legislation."

It was true that he was anxious to avoid a general discussion in both Houses of Parliament upon the whole of the Indian constitution, and the desire he had expressed to avoid legislation if possible was due to the fact that it would obviously be difficult to prevent a Bill giving ground for discussions of this character. Much, however, could no doubt be done to minimise these possibilities by careful definition of the title of the Bill. But even if by no device could such a debate be avoided, he wished it to be understood that he was fully prepared to face debates if only he were satisfied that real interests of India would be served by the promotion and passage of the legislation concerning them.

Lord Winterton, in answer to a question by the Secretary of State, said he entirely concurred in his views as now expressed.

Lord Reading said that these observations of the Secretary of State entirely satisfied him and removed most of the difficulties which he had felt from his study of the Secretary of State's earlier statement.

He next referred to the Secretary of State's remarks in his statement of the 5th June that some Governors had "arbitrarily ignored the statutory separation of subjects," but that none the less "it would be injudicious to apply pressure upon individual Governors" in order to secure that they worked the Act in a particular way. He gave instances of the truth of the first of these remarks. He said that he thought that on the whole those Governors who had attempted to ignore the provisions of the Act had subsequently found it necessary or desirable to change their course. While fully agreeing with the Secretary of State as to the undesirability of applying pressure in this connection, he was inclined to think that recognition should be given to the desirability of endeavouring to work the constitution in the manner intended by its framers and by Parliament.

The Secretary of State explained that what he had meant by the observations to which Lord Reading had called attention was that, without doubt, difficulties had presented themselves and would continue to present themselves in working the dyarchical constitution, which, after all, was in the nature of an experiment. And he thought that if any province should evolve, on the basis of the Act, a workable method of government which, though it might not be strict dyarchy, yet would be a working system of government, the experience thereby gained might prove useful, and he referred, in support of this view, to the manner in which the British constitution itself had been gradually developed by experiment and convention.

Lord Reading said that he recognised the force of the Secretary of State's point, and the undesirability of attempting to insist too rigidly on uniform methods throughout India. He instanced the proposals for ensuring the collective and joint responsibility of Ministers, and explained why, in general, he thought there was so doubt that this was the ideal to be aimed at in preference to a system whereby the
Governor deals with his Ministers independently as though they were in water-tight compartments. At the same time there would be obvious difficulties in such a Province as the Punjab, with its present state of communal feeling and with two Ministers, one of whom is necessarily a Hindu and the other a Mahommedan, in insisting on joint and collective action in all cases by those two Ministers.

He next referred to the Secretary of State's observations about the proposed transfer of Forests, and emphasised the difficulty that there would obviously be in ignoring the precedent afforded by Bombay and Burma, where, so far as he was aware, transfer of the subject had resulted, to say the least, in no untoward consequences. He pointed out that the Muddiman Committee had merely recommended that the transfer of this subject should be effected unless the local Government could make out a convincing case against it. No doubt there would be a tendency in certain quarters, both official and political, to criticise a further transfer of subjects on the ground that no good would thereby be done and little or no satisfaction created.

It was no doubt true that political circles would not be satisfied by the transfer of any or all of the subjects proposed, but this led him to some observations he wished to make upon the Secretary of State's statement that he was unable to draw any real distinction between the demands of the Swarajists and those of the Liberals from the point of view of practical politics, though he had not ignored the differences between the methods which they advocated. The Secretary of State had said that the Liberals, who were parties to the Minority Report, would be content with nothing less than provincial autonomy and consequently that he had found difficulty in regarding their aims as essentially different from those of the Swarajists. Lord Reading agreed that the ultimate aim of the Liberals, for which no doubt they would continue to press, is provincial autonomy, but although they may not have been enthusiastic in their support of the Majority's Report, they have none the less favoured the adoption of its recommendations, though their real object is an earlier enquiry.

His chief concern was to emphasise to the Secretary of State the great importance which he attached to keeping the Liberals and the Moderates from concerted action with the Swarajists. As he had said on an earlier occasion, there is a grave danger of concerted action between all shades of political opinion in India against us. The only means of preventing this, in his view, was to give the Liberals some platform from which they could make a definite appeal to the electorate as against the Swarajists in the general elections which are due for the Council of State this year and for the Assembly next year. The Liberals or Moderates, however described, do represent the party which is really striving to work the Reforms so as to keep India within the Empire. Some lip-service had been paid by the Swarajists and the Congress to this aim of self-government within the Empire. He had no confidence whatever in these professions from that quarter, and it must be recognised that there is a strong movement on the part of the Swarajists to bring the Moderates, the Liberals, and indeed all parties, back to the Congress under the same roof and the same flag. He described briefly the history of the Congress and its capture by Gandhi as the mainspring and headquarters of the non-co-operation movement, whereby it had ceased to be a place of assembly to which politicians of all shades consorted to discuss public matters, and to come to conclusions upon them. He further explained how, on the incarceration of Gandhi, Das and Nehru had set to work to keep the Congress for the Swarajists, how they had succeeded, and how, recently, after a great struggle with Gandhi, they were now attempting to draw in Liberals into the Congress fold. He further explained the difficulties with which the Swarajists themselves are now confronted, and which had led to the recent action of Mr. Das, who was now finding some difficulty in maintaining his position. The choice which seemed to be facing him was either to associate definitely with the revolutionaries or to come over to the Liberals, and he appeared to be now trying to adopt a middle platform in order to attract the Liberals. These were the considerations which led him strongly to urge that it was most important to do everything possible to keep the Liberals from joining forces with the Swarajists, and to avoid by all reasonable means estranging them.
SECRET.

Summary of Conferences between the Secretary of State and the Governor-General, held in the Council Room, India Office.

Sixth Day. 22nd May 1925.

Present:
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Birkenhead.
His Excellency The Earl of Reading, G.C.B., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., G.C.V.O.
The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Peel, G.B.E.
The Rt. Hon. Earl Winterton, M.P.
Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B.
Mr. S. K. Brown, C.V.O.

Subject:—Indianisation of the Army.

Lord Reading opened by referring to the suspicions entertained by Indians of British bona fides in regard to the Reforms. They say that self-government has been promised while no period has been named within which it is to be fulfilled; but that full self-government is impossible unless it includes control of the Army. Lord Reading doubted whether reference to a Dominion Army was advisable; the term “Dominion” has not been used authoritatively in connection with the Reforms, and might be misleading. At any rate, he regarded it as axiomatic that responsible self-government would be impossible without complete control of the Army, manned and equipped as now to deal with external aggression and to preserve internal security. The Indian argument was that if a period of 15, 20, 25 years had to be contemplated for the attainment of responsible self-government, and if the introduction of effective measures of Indianisation of the Army were delayed towards the end of that period, and would in themselves occupy perhaps another 30 or conceivably 40 years, the final goal could not be reached within two generations. All that was asked by the Indian was a definite scheme of Indianisation to be instituted without delay and to be allowed to develop. In the absence of such a scheme Indians would continue to suspect that the British Government intended to retain control of the Army in British hands with the effect of indefinitely postponing responsible self-government.

Lord Reading did not himself wish at the present stage to press forward any complete programme of Indianisation. A plan had been proposed by the Government of India in 1922 and rejected by His Majesty’s Government; he did not wish to urge it again on this occasion. But he desired to recall the history of the matter because he was anxious to direct the Secretary of State’s mind to the political atmosphere which prevailed in India. So far, the Government of India had not succeeded in obtaining consent to any of the schemes put forward, with the exception of that relating to the grant of artillery to Native States; although as a result of the discussion of the proposals made in 1922 there emerged the existing scheme of Indianising eight units of the Indian Army. The only opening now available to Indians was that provided in the scheme. It was difficult to say so soon how far it might have succeeded; but it is generally regarded in India as not satisfactory. It is judged on the whole to exclude the Indian officer from fair opportunities and to place him in an isolated and indeed inferior position. Be this as it may, the scheme as it stands cannot provide for the absorption of more than some 8 to 10 Indian officers a year as they pass out of Sandhurst.

The Secretary of State asked who was Secretary of State at the time. It was explained that the discussion was initiated during Mr. Montagu’s tenure, and the final decision reached during that of Lord Peel.

Lord Reading dwelt on the great difficulty of appreciating in this country the political atmosphere which prevailed in India. The Secretary of State said that the general impression he had received was that the Government of India spent all their time in an atmosphere of controversy and of criticism directed against the sincerity of British intentions. The attitude of the Indian towards the Army was an illustration. The atmosphere in this country was wholly different.
Lord Reading proceeded by recalling that the number of Indian candidates admitted annually to Sandhurst—10—originally represented, though it may be as a matter of coincidence, about 20 per cent. of the total admissions of officers to the Indian Army. The latest phase of the history of the subject was that the Government of India, desiring to deal fairly and justly with the demands constantly pressed upon them by Indians, and on the other hand to have due regard to their responsibility to Parliament, had concluded that more Indian cadets should be admitted to Sandhurst. He mentioned that if, as might be estimated, some 3,500 Indian officers would eventually be required if complete Indian control of the Army were realised, an output of 10 officers a year, if restricted to that figure, would, of course, be wholly disproportionate. The Government of India, however, made only what they regarded as a modest proposal that the number should be increased now to 16, which, as a matter of fact, would approximate to 20 per cent. of the present total admissions to commissioned rank in the Indian Army. Their proposal had not yet been rejected, or at least they had not yet been informed of its rejection. Meanwhile further proposals had come under consideration. The first was the possibility of establishing an Indian Sandhurst. The College at Dehra Dun, started about 2½ years ago, was doing well. It contained some 70 boys and promised to expand; but it was a school and not therefore comparable to an institution such as Sandhurst. The Secretary of State asked what type of boy went to Dehra Dun. Lord Reading said that the College included boys of all types and in fact castes, and that they appeared to work well together. Asked further by the Secretary of State, he said that for special reasons which could be explained Ruling Princes did not send their sons to the College. Continuing, Lord Reading explained that when he said that all types were represented, it should be understood that this was subject to the ability of parents to afford the cost of education at Dehra Dun. In many cases Indian officers of the old stamp were unable to send their sons there. Dehra Dun had supplied the pick of the candidates who applied for admission to Sandhurst; indeed he had found it possible to detect the Dehra Dun candidates at first sight among the rest from the smartness of their bearing. Candidates, however, came from all parts of India. Local Governments sent up their recommendations, and a careful selection was made with a view to sending to Sandhurst only the best. It is true that those selected did not always succeed in completing the course at Sandhurst and obtaining commissions. But on the whole it might be said that many of the candidates promised well. Despite this, the Government of India were still restricted to the limit of 10. They now asked after full consideration for the limit to be extended to 16. Lord Reading was aware of the arguments against an increase, as for instance those developed in the draft Despatch prepared but not yet sent in reply to the Government of India’s Despatch, which he had had the opportunity of reading. There was, for example, the difficulty of disposing of the additional six officers. An alternative scheme, which he understood had been suggested by General Cobbe, had just been put forward. Lord Reading having received it only two days before, expressed no opinion as to its merits; but apparently it might suffice to meet this difficulty. There might again be other ways of circumventing it.

Lord Reading said that what he wished to impress on the Secretary of State was that the draft Despatch should be held up. The Government of India had just appointed a Committee to enquire into the practicability of establishing an Indian Sandhurst. The history of the case was that a suggestion of this kind was made in a resolution debated in the Legislative Assembly in March 1921 and carried without opposition of the Government of India. His Government had naturally been pressed ever since to state what steps were contemplated to give effect to the resolution, and the pressure had culminated in a Motion in the early part of this year to determine what steps should be taken to establish an Indian Sandhurst. The Government of India, after full discussion among themselves, decided that a Committee could reasonably be appointed to enquire whether such a measure was workable. In the late Lord Rawlinson’s opinion it was possible that the Government of India had been somewhat hasty in 1921 in concurred in the resolution without being fully alive to the difficulties and complications of the subject; and he therefore thought it opportune that the matter should be brought under the review of a Committee. The substantial difference between the proposals of the Government of India and those of the supporters of the Motion in the Assembly was that the latter wished, as stated, to take it for granted that the establishment of an Indian Sandhurst was desirable and practicable, and also to attach to the Committee’s terms of reference an instruction to report on methods of accelerating Indianisation. The Government of India, on the
other hand, did not wish to go further than ask the Committee to report whether an Indian Sandhurst was practicable; and they in their turn desired that the Committee should investigate a means of raising the general standard of candidates for admissions.

Lord Reading pointed out that the important term of reference is the first. The Committee would have to meet at a very early date, and one of the first factors to be taken into their consideration must be the number of Indian officers to be admitted to the Army in the future. If, for instance, the number were to be limited to 10 or 20 a year, it would probably be uneconomical to establish an Indian Sandhurst; if, on the other hand, 40 or 50 admissions might be contemplated, the proposal would be worth pursuing. This did not imply that the Government of India wished to express views as to the number to be contemplated in the future; but the point could not be left out of account by the Committee. Lord Reading was anxious not to be obliged to inform the Committee that His Majesty's Government had definitely decided against any increase of the limit of 10. He would urge rather that His Majesty's Government should be content to await the Committee's report in the first instance; otherwise he feared there would be an encouragement to Indians to believe that no proposal for a further advance with the Army had any chance of success. The opinion was already prevalent that since Indian officers are not admitted to the Artillery, the Engineers, or the Royal Air Force, all of which would ultimately be essential components of a self-contained Indian Army under Indian control, no progress can be hoped for. The Government of India is therefore already in a very difficult position, particularly vis-à-vis the Indian members of his Executive Council, of whom one at any rate, and perhaps two, are gravely exercised on this particular matter.

In reply to the Secretary of State, Lord Reading said that the promise to appoint a Committee was given in February 1925; the Secretary of State had been notified in advance and had raised no objection.

The Secretary of State said he thought he could relieve Lord Reading's anxiety in regard to the draft Despatch at once. It had only been prepared because the Secretary of State had received a Despatch from the Government of India to which presumably some reply had to be sent. He himself was quite ready to substitute for that draft a different reply stating that in view of the appointment of the Committee by the Government of India, he would await its report. Lord Reading said that such an arrangement would be the best that he could hope for in present circumstances.

Some discussion followed as to the position that might be created if the Committee entered upon its enquiry without further indication of the views of His Majesty's Government. Sir Arthur Hirtzel, in reply to the Secretary of State, said that if the Committee was to report on methods of training Indians for the Army, it was important for them to know what kind of Army was in question. Was it, for instance, to be limited, as now, to the eight units? Lord Reading said that if that was so the enquiry could do little good. At this point, at the Secretary of State's request, he read the terms of reference which have been settled:—

"That a Committee including Indian members of the Legislature should be appointed to investigate and report: (a) by what means it is possible to improve upon the present supply of Indian candidates for the King's commission, both in regard to number and quality; (b) whether it is not desirable and practicable to establish a Military College in India to train Indian officers for the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army; (c) if the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, how soon should the scheme be initiated, and what steps should be taken to carry it out; (d) whether if a Military College is established in India, it should supersede or be supplemented by Sandhurst and Woolwich as far as the training of Indian officers is concerned."
His Majesty's Government. Lord Peel suggested that if the Committee were to recommend the establishment of an Indian Sandhurst on the hypothesis of a certain number of annual admissions, possibly largely in excess of that now sanctioned, the onus of rejecting their recommendation because the present number could not be exceeded would be held to rest with the Government of India.

The Secretary of State thought it was now possible to draw two conclusions: first, that the Government are in any case committed to the appointment of the Committee; secondly, that although the reference is limited and the Committee might say that they could not discuss the establishment of an Indian Sandhurst until they knew whether the number of admissions to be sanctioned would make it worth while, they might nevertheless arrive at conditional conclusions based on alternative hypotheses of what the sanctioned number might be. In that event His Majesty's Government could not resist conclusions framed on such a basis. Lord Winterton thought that there might be even some difficulty unless His Majesty's Government and the Government of India had reached an understanding on the main question of the number of admissions.

The Secretary of State, recapitulating, said that he himself would feel no difficulty in withholding the draft Despatch in accordance with the suggestion that had already been made. Lord Reading, agreeing with this, said that he wished to let the proposals made by the Government of India in their Despatch stand.

The Secretary of State said that if this procedure were agreed to the point now under discussion would be disposed of. Lord Reading agreed. His general idea was that Indianisation could not profitably be discussed further at the present juncture. For instance, a new Commander-in-Chief had been appointed with whom he had had no opportunity of consulting. Moreover, new matter had been put before him in the shape of General Cobbe's scheme which would require full consideration and ought properly to be examined by the Commander-in-Chief and the military authorities in India. As, therefore, he himself did not wish to press any scheme upon His Majesty's Government, the need for any further discussion, as, for instance, with the War Office, appeared to have lapsed.

The Secretary of State said that he was quite prepared to abandon discussion as the Viceroy proposed, and would therefore cancel the arrangements made to confer with the War Office representatives. He thought, however, that it would be helpful to make a few general remarks concerning the present attitude of the Government and of Parliament on the state of affairs in India. In the first place, the assurance of Parliamentary responsibility, which was advisably inserted in the Preamble to the Government of India Act of 1919, was generally held, even in the minds of those who doubted whether Indians would be capable of governing themselves, to be an adequate safeguard. It now appears to be argued in India that British statesmen are insincere in their intentions because they refrain from assigning a period for the attainment of self-government in India. He himself could hardly contemplate remaining a member of any Government which chose to take so dangerous a course without waiting for and testing the proofs of India's progress. Applying this criterion to the question of the Army, the British Government had, in his opinion, gone as far as he was prepared to go. If His Majesty's Government should decide to go further still, it would have to be on the responsibility, not of himself as Secretary of State, but of the Cabinet. The present moment was very dangerous for any such experiment. The British garrison in India was small and isolated, the general feeling of the inhabitants towards it was one of dislike. Circumstances could be foreseen which would make it thoroughly dangerous if any sweeping advance in Indianisation were effected. His own view of the prevalent political atmosphere in this country, profoundly different as it is from that in India, was that there is a general feeling that the moment is not ripe for any large movement of advance. He was referring, not to relatively minor matters such as an increase in the number of Indian cadets, or even to the establishment of an Indian Sandhurst, but to wider schemes, such as that proposed by the Government of India in 1922, which would stand little chance of acceptance in any responsible quarter here. The Secretary of State added that he would like it understood that, although his personal views were as he had stated, he never failed to represent the Government of India's case to the Cabinet to the utmost of his ability.

Lord Peel said that he also was very conscious of the great divergence between the feeling of the Cabinet and the point of view which the Viceroy used to represent.
to him as Secretary of State. He himself was in a completely isolated position when in turn he advocated the Government of India's case before the Cabinet. Even more marked was the divergence between the Indian and the British view generally. The Indian thought that the Preamble to the Act represented a rigid compact; that it implied no question of proving his success, but merely that after some fixed time, which British statesmen had omitted to specify, India would become self-governing. He had been impressed by the paradox that whereas the Preamble lays emphasis on the co-operation of Indians, the party in India which sought to dominate the political situation took the name of "non-co-operators" at the time when they were presumably demonstrating their fitness for self-government.

Lord Winterton, speaking of the attitude of the House of Commons, recalled that in 1919 the Government of India Bill met with support from only three Conservative members on the back benches, Mr. Ormsby-Gore, the late Sir Thomas Bennett and himself. He had been profoundly impressed by the intensity of feeling in the House at the time of the Amritsar debate. It was not by any means directed against Indians. It represented a deep anxiety which asked whether, after all, India was not being lost to the British people. The Secretary of State mentioned that the same attitude was reflected in the House of Lords debate. Lord Winterton went on to say that later, on joining the Government as Under Secretary, he found very little support among members of the Government party, either Coalition or later Conservative, for the Act. The attitude today, however, was far more reassured. But if acceleration of progress on any large scale were suggested, the suspicion and fear of the earlier days would come back.

Lord Reading said he merely wished to add that he did not urge any proposal for advance. He and his Government had agreed that, save in regard to the Muddiman recommendations, no advance on the side of civil administration could at present be suggested, and they recognised that they could not press for substantial advance on the military side. He wished to avoid initiating any discussion which might appear to take the shape of pressing at this moment the proposals of 1922.

The attitude in this country as it had been described by the Secretary of State, Lord Peel and Lord Winterton, would make the Government of India's position one of extraordinary difficulty. That was inevitable, and he did not wish to be thought to complain. It would be realised, however, that they had been continually carrying on as best they could with a majority against them in their Legislature, and under constant pressure from every quarter.

The Secretary of State observed that that fact showed the dexterity with which the Viceroy had succeeded in handling the situation. The Government of India, under the strain which Lord Reading had described, had been obliged to mark time for the last three or four years, and yet the situation had markedly improved within that period. This could only be attributed to the ability of those in charge of the Government of India.

The Secretary of State said that he would like at some time to discuss with the military authorities the possibility of a wider use of the Air arm in India with a view to Army reductions. Lord Reading doubted whether the Air arm could be entrusted with internal security duties, and also whether, even if it could, it would be desirable to reduce the number of British troops at this moment. The Secretary of State said that he had asked Sir Hugh Trenchard, who had recently visited Iraq, to supply him with a memorandum on present conditions there; and it was agreed that the memorandum should be considered by the Secretary of State and Lord Reading on its receipt.

It was arranged to hold further conferences on Tuesday, the 26th May to discuss Aden, Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier; on Thursday, the 28th May, to discuss the question of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; and on Friday to discuss the Public Services Commission and the agricultural and economic enquiry.
Aden.—The Secretary of State stated the questions that arose, and pointed out that commercial and strategical developments in recent years had made Aden increasingly a point of interest to the Empire as a whole rather than to India in particular.

Lord Reading said that he recognised the desirability, from the Imperial point of view, of keeping the military control of Aden in the hands of His Majesty's Government. The Government of India also did not wish to have anything to do with political relations with the rest of Arabia. Lord Reading summarised the discussions of the last few years as to the possible transfer of Aden to His Majesty's Government and the division of expenditure between Indian and Imperial revenues, and said that complete severance from India was, in his opinion, now entirely out of the question. There was no chance of Indian political opinion agreeing to this, now that so much bitter feeling had been roused over the general question of the treatment of Indians in British territories overseas.

The Secretary of State agreed that there could be no question of severing Aden entirely from India without the assent of the Indian Legislature.

Lord Reading explained that, having regard to these considerations, the best solution, in the view of the Government of India, would be for India to retain control of the local civil administration of the settlement only, and for all military and political control to rest in His Majesty's Government. A single officer, they now suggested, should be in charge of the whole administration, and responsible to the two Governments respectively in their respective spheres of control. After some discussion of financial arrangements, Lord Reading said he felt confident that the Government of India would accept an arrangement under which Indian revenues would pay one-third of the total cost of Aden, subject to a maximum of 150,000/. a year, this payment to cover all Indian responsibilities in respect of Aden and Arabia generally.

The questions having been raised whether the local civil administration of Aden might not be put entirely under the Government of Bombay, or as an alternative directly under the Government of India, Lord Reading expressed the view that the ultimate control of the Government of India must remain; but that on the other hand the commercial and other connections with Bombay made it desirable to keep the immediate control, as now, in the hands of the Government of Bombay, subject to control by the Government of India.

Sir Arthur Hirtzel mentioned a suggestion made by General Scott that the Resident should be a civil officer (of the Political Department) with a Brigade Commander under him.

The North-West Frontier.—Lord Reading said that there were two aspects of the frontier question that he wished to mention:

(1) Relations with the tribes.—After referring to the fact that the position in regard to the tribes depended very largely on relations with Afghanistan, Lord Reading said that at the moment there was no question of serious importance
requiring consideration. The Government of India did not wish to suggest any
departure from the policy laid down for Waziristan, but proposed to continue with it.
The situation had improved markedly in the last four years, though it could not yet
be said to be stabilised, and Lord Reading considered the garrison at Razmak to be
of great value. There was no question therefore to be discussed under this head.
Lord Reading referred, however, to suggestions put forward from time to time for the
re-occupation of Wana. He said that he was, personally, entirely opposed to this.
Wana had been occupied for some years, at great expense, but had been merely a
beleaguered enclosure, and would be so again.

The Secretary of State said that he hoped the Indian military authorities
would consider the possibility of further substitution of aeroplanes for military forces,
on the lines adopted in Iraq.

(2) Constitutional question in regard to the North-West Frontier Province.—
Lord Reading referred to past discussions, and to the Report of the recent Committee
of Enquiry. There was from time to time agitation for the creation of a Legislative
Council for the North-West Frontier Province. The Government of India had,
however, felt that the time had not yet come to speak with any certainty on the
questions raised by the Committee's Report, except that they had definitely decided
against the reamalgamation of the province with the Punjab.

Lord Reading expressed the view that, unless developments in the province
made the question of a Council acute, it would be better to leave it alone for the
present, and that it would be a suitable subject of enquiry for the Statutory
Commission of 1929. He considered it significant that four successive Chief
Commissioners originally favouring a Legislative or Advisory Council for the
province had, after experience, changed their views.

Report of Committee on Territorial and Auxiliary Forces.—Lord Reading
remarked that there were some aspects of this which would require attention—
notably the Committee's recommendation that there should be an Officers' Training
Corps at every University. This would probably necessitate provision for adequate
control of weapons and ammunition. He thought this could be managed, but he did
not think that the Government of India would support this recommendation unless
they were thoroughly satisfied on the point.

Reference was also made to the question of the admission of Indians to Officers'
Training Corps at British Universities. His Excellency thought that this could
probably be shelved if the Committee's scheme for Indian Universities were
successfully carried out, and in the meantime he did not desire that the Government
of India's despatch should be answered.

Eighth Day. 29th May.

Present:
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Birkenhead.
His Excellency The Earl of Reading, G.C.B., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E.,
G.C.V.O.
The Rt. Hon. Earl Winterton, M.P.
Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B.
Mr. L. D. Wakely, C.B.

Indian States.—Lord Reading said that the one outstanding question of great
importance, but one that he did not think really ripe for discussion yet, was that of
the future relations of the Rulers of the Indian States to the Government of India
and the British Government. The question was greatly concerning some Rulers—
particularly the Maharajas of Bikaner and Alwar and the Jam Sahib, who to a large
extent dominated the Chamber of Princes.

Lord Reading said incidentally that he did not feel too happy about the future
of the Chamber of Princes. The most important Rulers did not attend, and what
was done in the Chamber did not in any way bind them. While, therefore, the
Chamber of Princes must be borne in mind in connection with future arrangements,
it could not be regarded as a very secure foundation upon which to build.
LORD READING said that he understood that the Maharaja of Bikaner wished to raise in the Chamber in the near future one or two important questions. One might be that of the participation of the Indian States in Indian Customs receipts. This was a very important and difficult question, and a thorough enquiry into its practical aspects would be necessary before a decision could be taken. The subject would have to be taken up in the near future. The second question of first-rate importance was one that had been raised publicly by the Maharaja of Bikaner in his interview with Mr. Wickham Steed in the Review of Reviews last year—viz., the desire of the Princes to have some form of discussion of, or enquiry into, the subject of their future position in relation to a self-governing British India, presumably with a Government consisting mainly of Indians.

Some Princes were asking for an informal discussion with the Viceroy at which they could put forward their views. Lord Reading remarked that informal discussions of this kind were somewhat dangerous in India, in that persons interested were apt, by recording and quoting the proceedings, to try to make them in effect formal and binding. He had so far resisted the suggestion, and did not really think it desirable to enter into discussion of the subject with the Princes at present. It could hardly be profitable to discuss in detail the future relations of the Princes to the scheme of government for British India when the latter had not yet been worked out. But the anxieties of the Princes were natural; these would probably be greatly diminished if they had some assurance that in future they would have to deal with the Viceroy, and not with the Government of India (i.e., the Governor-General in Council), which is at present constitutionally the controlling power, and does in fact deal with the more important questions in regard to the States. The Princes’ main desire was to preserve their *izzat*, and to keep their relations, under their treaties, with the King-Empire through his representative in India.

LORD READING therefore proposed to reply to the Princes who were interesting themselves in this question to the effect that he had discussed the matter with the Secretary of State and that they did not think the matter could profitably be pursued at present, especially while it was not clear (as appeared from tentative discussion with the Maharaja of Bikaner of the latter’s suggestion for the convocation of a meeting) exactly what the Princes wanted or what representations they wished to make.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE suggested that some formula might be framed to meet what were after all not unreasonable apprehensions on the part of the Princes; possibly something to the effect that whatever constitutional changes may come after 1929, no form of government could emerge that would impair the existing privileges of the Princes.

LORD READING thought this last sentence a little dangerous. Possibly it would be better to say that in future discussions we should continue to have regard to their treaty rights. As regards future developments, he thought that the more moderate Indian politicians probably contemplated that the States would be outside the scheme of self-government, and dealt with by the Viceroy as representative of the King. He would, therefore, like to say quite informally to the Princes that when responsible self-government came, some arrangement on these lines might be the natural one.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE suggested as a possible formula: “If and when self-government comes, it could only be conceded on such terms as would effectually safeguard all the treaty rights of the Princes.” After some further discussion, the Secretary of State said that he would draft a formula for consideration by the Governor-General.

LORD READING expressed the view that we should not go too far at this moment to meet the Princes, who were pressing this matter perhaps somewhat unduly at present.

In reply to the Secretary of State, Lord Reading said that although the Swarajist campaign was repugnant to the views and practice of the Princes, this aspect of the matter presented difficulties. The Princes themselves desired to remain autocrats, but there was at the same time in their public attitude an element of playing up to the Indian nationalists.

Rajputana.—LORD READING said that there was one other subject on which he desired to say a word, and to be able to announce some conclusion, viz., the establishment of more direct relations between the Princes and the Government of
India, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. He referred specially to the case of Rajputana, and recalled briefly the course of past discussion of this question. The proposal of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, in its application to Rajputana, was in theory no doubt good, but in practice it presented great difficulties. Incidentally it rested largely on the supposition that the Political Secretary would be able to tour the States when necessary, which is in fact impossible.

Lord Reading's view was quite definitely that one alternative, viz., the abolition of the local Political Agents, was altogether impracticable, and the Princes had been informed accordingly. The other alternative, viz., the abolition of the Agent to the Governor-General, was a more workable proposition, but would be a great experiment. The Princes claimed that a statement made to them by Lord Chelmsford in this connection constituted a "pledge." Lord Reading said that he was satisfied, after very careful examination of the facts, that there had actually been no definite promise; but he considered that there had been something nearly approaching to a promise that something would be done to bring "direct relations" into being in Rajputana. The Government of India had come to the conclusion that it was desirable, therefore, to make some move in the direction desired by the Princes, and had put forward the proposal, now before the Secretary of State, that as an experimental measure an Eastern Rajputana Residency should be set up, directly under the Government of India, if it appeared that the Princes wished it. On reference being made by the Secretary of State to the views expressed by Sir Robert Holland in the correspondence, Lord Reading agreed as to their weight, though he did not go so far as entirely to agree with them. At the same time he desired to press for the acceptance of the Government of India's very moderate proposal, and mentioned that he would feel it very strongly if the proposal were rejected, because he himself had used language indicating an intention to implement the language of his predecessor. He felt doubtful whether the Princes would, in fact, desire the arrangement proposed, inasmuch as it went so little way in the direction of their objective. He would recommend abandoning this proposal if the Princes did not favour it.

Bhopal succession.—Lord Reading said that the Government of India had come to the conclusion that neither by Muhammadan law nor by the custom of her State could the Begum make good her claim to nominate her surviving son as her successor, and that the right of the son of the elder son to succeed was clear.
Summary of Conferences between the Secretary of State and the Governor-General, held in the Council Room, India Office.

Tenth Day. 11th June 1925.

Present:
The Right Hon. THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD.
The Right Hon. EARL WINTERTON, M.P.
Sir ARTHUR HIRTZEL, K.C.B.
Sir Louis KERSHAW, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Mr. R. B. EWANK, C.I.E.
Mr. V. DAWSON, C.I.E.

Subject:—Agricultural Improvement.

The Secretary of State, after considering the list of separate subjects which remained for discussion, said he wished to hear Lord Reading's views briefly on the question of agriculture, and the possibility of doing something to improve the yield of this industry, which formed the mainstay of so large a part of the Indian population. He said that he had some time ago written privately to Lord Reading on the subject and had received a reply which he regarded as encouraging. But he would like to know what Lord Reading's views were as to the possibility of doing anything practical, having regard to the fact that agriculture is now a transferred subject.

Lord Reading said that his Government had been considering for some time whether the Central Government could not do something towards initiating improvements and advocating new lines of policy on transferred subjects in general. He had already stated in another connection that in his view the arrangements made for the division of the spheres of the Central and Provincial Governments respectively, in respect particularly of transferred subjects, had come dangerously near leaving the Central Government high and dry with little or no means of supervising policy in the provinces. He explained that the Government of India, with a view to the establishment of a co-ordinated policy in certain respects in the Universities, had held their Universities Conference. This was a modest venture, and was within its limits successful. It brought representatives of the various interests together in conference, and agreement was reached regarding certain problems. The Government of India had intended that this should be followed later in the year by an Agricultural Conference to be attended by provincial representatives, with the idea of formulating resolutions as a guide to provincial policy. But then came a change of Member for the Department of the Government of India, and necessarily action was postponed. More recently he had received the letter from the Secretary of State, which showed that his mind had also travelled in the direction of improvement of agriculture. The Government of India had every intention of attempting to arrange a conference on agriculture. It must be recognised, however, that their powers were very limited, and he thought that little benefit could be expected from a Royal Commission. Much better chances of fruitful results might, in his view, be expected from a gathering in conference of officials and non-officials from the provinces who would be directly concerned with the carrying out of any recommendations that might be formulated. At the same time it must not be forgotten that much has been, and is now being, done to improve agricultural methods and results. A notable instance of late has been the improvement of cotton.

The Secretary of State said that he was glad to learn that they might look forward with some confidence to a conference being appointed.

Lord Winterton said that it had been represented to him that there had of late years been much deterioration in the condition of the roads in India owing to the

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transfer of the subject of local self-government, and it seemed to him that if this were the case it must react unfavourably upon agriculture, and that one important necessity for benefiting agriculture would be the improvement of roads.

Lord Reading said that this point would certainly be considered, though he doubted whether, under present Indian conditions, the state of the roads is not of primary importance to the agriculturist.

Sir Louis Kershaw suggested that an important factor in the question of agricultural improvements was the retrenchments which had followed upon or been recommended by the Inchcape Committee, and that unless the Government of India were in a position to put up a considerable amount of money for research, little improvement was to be looked for.

Lord Reading agreed that this matter was of great importance, and said that he himself regarded some of the Inchcape Committee's recommendations in this direction as doubtful economy, and had in fact on this ground delayed carrying all of them out. But another factor of importance associated with this question, and which would require consideration, was the tendency of the India Office to insist that the Central Government should spend no money from Central revenues on subjects which were Provincial. This had been a difficulty which had met them, and not only with reference to expenditure on agricultural research, and which was still under consideration.
Tenth Day. 11th June 1925.

Present:
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Birkenhead.
His Excellency The Earl of Reading, G.C.B., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., G.C.V.O.
The Right Hon. Earl Winterton, M.P.
Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B.
Sir Louis Kershaw, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Mr. R. B. Ewbank, C.I.E.
Mr. V. Dawson, C.I.E.

Subject: Proposed Exchange and Currency Committee.

The Secretary of State said that he himself had no points to raise on this question, and so far as he was aware there were no difficulties, but he would be glad to hear what Lord Reading had to say.

Lord Reading agreed that no difficulties presented themselves with regard to the general question of the policy to be followed with regard to exchange and currency. Details of the matter had been under discussion between Sir Basil Blackett and the India Office and he had himself discussed it with Sir Basil Blackett. The only point he would like to get settled was the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the stabilisation of exchange. They were already committed to the appointment of such a Committee, and the action recently taken by His Majesty's Government with regard to the Gold Standard had accentuated the necessity for pushing on with it and had removed the reasons which until recently had made it desirable to temporise. He suggested, therefore, that a Committee should be set up to enquire and take evidence both in England and India, beginning its enquiry about October next. He would advocate a Committee consisting of eight members, four European and four Indian, with an English Chairman, and with two joint Secretaries, one English and one Indian. For the post of Chairman he strongly recommended Lord Bradbury, if he could undertake the task. As regards the Indian members, he would suggest Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy, Sir Rajendra Nath Mukherji, Professor Cowasjee and Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.

For some reasons he would have preferred to omit the last-named because he was already committed to a Bill which he had introduced in the Assembly, the object of which was to stabilise the rupee at 1s. 4d. It seemed necessary, however, that the Committee should include a representative of that view, and Sir Purshotam was well qualified to represent the Bombay interests, which must be considered. As regards the English members, his difficulty was that while the Imperial Bank must be represented, he did not want that interest to be overweighted. He provisionally suggested the following names:—Sir Alexander Murray, Sir Norcot Warren, Sir Malcolm Hogg, or Mr. Haggerty of the Exchange Banks, and Sir H. Strakosch. For the Indian Secretary he would certainly recommend Mr. Aiyar of the Finance Department. He did not know whether Mr. Kisch held too high a position to be asked to act as English Secretary, or possibly as Member-Secretary, but, if not, he would be inclined to suggest his name.

Sir Louis Kershaw suggested that it would be essential that Mr. Kisch should be examined as a witness. He further suggested that it would be undesirable to make any definite announcement about the appointment of a Committee until it was known whether the monsoon was likely to be reasonably good.

Lord Reading said that his suggestion would be that he should make an announcement about the middle of August on his return, which would probably be late enough for a reasonable anticipation as to the character of the monsoon to have been arrived at.
As regards the question whether the enquiry should be conducted by a Royal Commission or a Committee, for both of which precedent existed, Lord Reading thought that, on the whole, there were political advantages in having a Royal Commission, and it was agreed that the enquiry should take this form.

As regards the terms of reference, Lord Reading said that he himself was in favour of a reference in as short a form as possible, and he had little doubt that a satisfactory formula could be devised in consultation with the India Office. He need not, therefore, trouble the Secretary of State at this moment with the exact form of words to be used.

**Eleventh Day: 19th June 1925.**

*Present: As on 11th June, and the Right Hon. Viscount Peel, G.B.E.*

The Secretary of State said that he had considered with his advisers the suggestions which Lord Reading had made on the 11th June as to the personnel of this Commission. As the result of this consideration there was no difference between them as to the Chairmanship, and he had already arranged to ask Lord Bradbury whether he could undertake the task. They were further agreed as to the names of Sir Alexander Murray and Sir H. Strakosch, but in place of Sir Norcot Warren and either Sir Malcolm Hogg or Mr. Heggerty they would prefer Sir Reginald Mant and Mr. Gubbay. They would also prefer to have three instead of four Indian members, since they thought difficulties would arise from establishing the precedent that absolute racial equality was necessary or desirable on Commissions of this kind. For the three Indian members they would suggest Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy and Professor Cowasjee (whom Lord Reading had proposed) and as the third Mr. Sethna. The Secretary of State said that he found difficulty in understanding how Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, whom Lord Reading had suggested as the fourth Indian member, could usefully sit as a member of the Commission when he was definitely committed to a particular point of view. The reason why Sir Reginald Mant’s name was suggested was that it was important to have on a Commission of this kind a person who was well acquainted with the Government’s position and was consequently qualified to put to witnesses the right kind of questions. There was ample precedent for the inclusion of official members on Commissions of this kind, and Sir Reginald Mant, if included, would be the single official on a Commission of eight or nine and, as such, could hardly be regarded reasonably as impairing the independence of the Commission as a whole.

Lord Reading said that he very much hoped that the suggestion for a smaller number of Indian than of European members would not be pressed. After all, the matter with which this Commission is to concern itself affects all Indians in their everyday lives, and affects them far more than it does the European. Indians, therefore, would certainly strongly criticise any representation which they might reasonably regard as inadequate, particularly in view of allegations of insufficient opportunity of stating their own case in the past. Moreover, there would be a European Chairman. Great political importance was attached in India to the idea of this enquiry, and he thought it was essential to give Indian representation upon it the fullest possible scope.

As regards Sir Purshotamdas, he had on the previous occasion expressed the doubts which he himself had felt as to including him, but he was convinced that the position would be very much easier if he were included than if he were excluded. Whatever Bombay representative is placed upon the Commission (and it would be essential, in his view, to include a Bombay representative), he would undoubtedly take much the same view as that to which Sir Purshotamdas might be regarded as having committed himself, in view of the known predilection of Bombay for stabilisation of the exchange at a low rate; and he regarded it as by no means certain that Thakurdas, if included in the Commission, would necessarily end, after having had to face and argue with his colleagues throughout their sessions, with the same view as he now holds. Nor did he see any reasonable danger of Sir Purshotamdas carrying with him the other Indians whose names he had suggested, and thereby succeeding in producing a purely Indian minority report. The other Indian members proposed were all men of independent views who would arrive at their
conclusions on their merits. Moreover, if Sir Purshotamdas were excluded there
would be no Member of the Assembly on the Commission, and although, if he were
to write a minority report of his own, the fact of his membership of the Assembly
would be of no assistance in securing the Assembly's support to a different point of
view, he regarded that objection as of no consequence, since the Assembly's business
would be to arrive at conclusions upon the basis of a report which had taken full
account of all relevant factors and of all points of view.

LORD READING also said he was not disposed to favour the appointment of a
Member of the Secretary of State's Council. It was true that there are precedents
for official membership of Commissions and Committees of this kind, but he felt
certain that no one in India would now regard a Member of the Council of India as
independent, and that the presence of such a member on the Commission would tend
to prejudge the question of its impartiality. In any case, he thought it most
important that Sir Norcot Warren should not be excluded, as he possessed special
knowledge of the subject of a kind which the Commission could ill spare, and he
thought that if Sir Reginald Mant were to be included it would be preferable to
substitute him for some other person than Sir Norcot Warren. He thought, and
it was generally agreed, that it was important that the announcement of the
personnel of the Commission should be made simultaneously with the announcement
of the intention to appoint it.

It was finally agreed that as soon as Sir Basil Blackett had arrived in India,
Lord Reading should consult him and the Government of India by telegram on the
discussion of to-day with a view to arriving at agreement before the time came for
him to leave this country.
SECRET.

Summary of Conferences between the Secretary of State and the Governor-General, held in the Council Room, India Office.

Eleventh Day. 19th June 1925.

Present:

The Right Hon. The Earl of Birkenhead.
His Excellency The Earl of Reading, G.C.B., G.M.I., G.M.E., G.C.V.O.
The Right Hon. Viscount Peel, G.B.E.
The Right Hon. Earl Winterton, M.P.
Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B.
Mr. R. B. Ewbank, C.I.E.
Mr. V. Dawson, C.I.E.

Mr. S. F. Stewart, C.S.I., C.I.E., also was present during the discussion of the Public Service Commission.

Indian Church Measure.—The Secretary of State said that he understood that this question raised no difficulties on the merits, the proposed changes having emanated from the Church, and having been accepted by the Government of India. The only difficulty which arose was as to the method of giving effect to the proposals, namely, whether procedure should be by means of a Measure passed by the National Assembly under the provisions of the Enabling Act, or whether by such a Measure accompanied by Parliamentary legislation. As he understood the matter, Parliamentary legislation appeared to be likely to be involved in any case, in order to remove the doubts which had arisen as to the legal obligations resting upon the Secretary of State to maintain and pay from Indian revenues an establishment of Chaplains. That question he proposed to refer to the Law Officers of the Crown, and upon their advice would depend the necessity for legislation on this aspect of the matter.

Lord Reading said that he would be strongly opposed to procedure by a Measure passed under the Enabling Act alone. Anything which was to be done affecting the Church alone and its own ecclesiastical jurisdiction was undoubtedly appropriate for consideration by the National Assembly, but as questions were involved of amending the Government of India Act and affecting the great principles which were there enacted, it seemed to him that Parliamentary legislation was essential. Moreover, his impression was that the National Assembly itself, or the Committee of Parliament, would be unwilling to take upon itself consideration of legislation of this character. In stating this view he was merely restating recommendations which had been made by his own Government and by himself after full discussion with them, and in particular with Sir Charles Innes, the Member of his Council who was in charge of this matter. After explaining, in answer to a question by the Secretary of State, his view of the circumstances and considerations which had led the ecclesiastical authorities to press for this change, he went on to say that he wished it to be understood that his Government were not seeking as a Government in any way to get rid of obligations, whether legal or moral, to provide funds for the maintenance of Chaplains or for the construction and repair of Christian churches. No doubt some changes would be involved in these respects, but this was in no way a factor which had led the Government of India to support the proposed Measure, and it would in any event have arisen independently of the present Measure.

After further discussion the Secretary of State said that there appeared to be no disagreement, that the proper course was to proceed as far as possible by means of legislation under the Enabling Act, but that the more important principles affecting the statutory powers and obligations of the Secretary of State and the Government of India in relation to ecclesiastical establishments should be clearly laid down by Act of Parliament.

Lord Winterton said that he would like to suggest consideration of the possibility of combining in one Bill the legislation required for this latter purpose with that required in connection with the Muddiman Committee’s proposals, and it was agreed that this possibility should be explored.

Public Service Commission.—The Secretary of State said that there were a few points connected chiefly with the personnel of the proposed Commission which
he wished to raise. In the first place, he thought that the sum of Rs. 6,000 a month was a more suitable figure than the Rs. 4,500 proposed by the Government of India as the salary of the Chairman.

Secondly, he inclined to the view that while it was desirable to make it a condition of the Chairman’s appointment that he should be excluded from further office under the Crown in India, it was unnecessary and undesirable to impose this limitation in respect of the other members of the Commission, because it would unduly limit the field of choice; but having regard to the high and entirely independent position which it was desired to secure for the Chairman in particular, he thought that this principle should be insisted upon in his case, and that largely in compensation therefor it would be necessary to fix his pay at the figure he had named. In arriving at this position he had not been exclusively influenced by comparisons of the volume of work which would be likely to fall to the Chairman’s lot as compared with that of other high officials on a similar rate of salary, such as a Chief Justice of a High Court or a member of the Governor-General’s Executive Council. The main consideration was that it was proposed to secure the whole time of a person of great standing and experience and, moreover, to debar him from other employment in India thereafter.

Lord Reading said that he entirely agreed that for the position of the Chairman of the Commission it was important to secure a man of the highest standing, and desirable, possibly, to make this appointment the end of his career. If so high a salary as Rs. 6,000 a month were fixed it would undoubtedly be much criticised, and it could hardly be contended that for the sum that the Government of India had suggested it would not be possible to obtain the services of a man of the stamp required. He was inclined to suggest that Rs. 5,000 a month was the utmost that could be justified.

The Secretary of State said that he would take note of Lord Reading’s view that he considered Rs. 5,000 sufficient and preferable to a higher figure. He further asked what Lord Reading’s view would be as to the suitability of Sir Frederick Whyte as Chairman.

Lord Reading said that if it was not intended to take a Judge or other official for the post of Chairman, Sir Frederick Whyte would be, in his opinion, in every way an admirable choice. He explained the grounds on which, in his view, the Government of India and the Assembly owed a great debt to Sir Frederick for the services that he had rendered them in his capacity as President of the Assembly, and said that it was a great misfortune that owing to the provisions of the Government of India Act his tenure of that office was bound to terminate very shortly.

The Secretary of State said that Lord Reading’s observations confirmed the impressions which he had gained from other quarters, and suggested that at the appropriate time Sir Frederick Whyte’s name should be brought forward by the Government of India.

Lord Reading, in further discussion, said that he was somewhat puzzled to understand why the Secretary of State thought it desirable to place a limitation of no further employment upon the office of Chairman only. He was inclined to think that the only feasible course would be to place this restriction upon all or on none, and that if temptations to exhibit lack of independence of view would assail any of the members of the Commission in the absence of this restriction, they would be at least as likely to assail the other members as they would the Chairman.

The Secretary of State repeated his view that to apply this restriction to the whole of the Commission would unnecessarily and unduly hamper the choice of the selecting authority. He admitted, however, that there had been a difference of view on this point both in this Office and apparently also, judging from the terms of para. 9 of their telegram, in the Government of India itself.

Lord Reading said he took note of the Government of India’s telegram on this point, though he could not feel sure what their exact intentions were. He was inclined to think the wording of the telegram indicated a difference of view and a compromise. He should hesitate to express a final opinion without discussing the matter with his Council and ascertaining exactly what their possibly differing opinions were.

Lord Winterton said that, so far as he was aware, this matter had not been discussed by the special Committee of this Office which had been dealing with the Lee Commission’s proposals, and he suggested that it would be inadvisable to arrive at decisions until the Committee had had the opportunity of tendering its advice.
The Secretary of State said that, in view of the difficulty of the question and of the difference of opinion, he thought that it was very unlikely that, if the Government of India expressed a clear preference for the imposition of the restriction on the whole Commission, it would be opposed here, though it must be borne in mind that a decision in the opposite sense, namely, to impose no such restriction upon the Chairman, might well affect the question of the amount of salary to be paid to him.

It was agreed finally that a decision must be left over until the matter had been placed before the Special Committee at the India Office, and, on consideration of their views, a telegram sent to the Government of India who would be asked for their further opinion after discussion with Lord Reading on his return.

The Secretary of State said that there was one further point he would like to mention, namely, the question whether the principles which regulate the status, functions and duties of the Commission should be embodied so far as possible in Statutory Rules or in what he might describe as pious admonitions.

Lord Reading said that his clear impression was that the former was the right course. He thought it of the greatest importance that the proposed Commission should be established on the best and surest foundations and that Indian opinion, which he felt sure was looking to the Commission to assist them in lifting the Service question out of the sphere of political controversy, would agree that Statutory Rules would form the proper basis for it.

This conclusion was agreed to, subject, however, as in the case of the previous question, to further consultation by Lord Reading in India with his Government.

Opium.—The Secretary of State said that this question had been brought to more or less satisfactory conclusions as the result of the recent discussions, and there appeared to him now to remain only the general question of future policy and the continuance of opium exports from India. He only wished now to indicate the current of opinion which, as Lord Reading was no doubt aware, was strongly held in this country, namely, that public feeling is now strong, and will undoubtedly become more strong, against the continuance of this trade at all, and we shall therefore be forced to a policy of gradual or speedy diminution. He thought, therefore, that the Government of India ought now to be looking round and considering what the future is to be. The case against us is that, in spite of our high professions, we are interested in the considerable revenue which still results from our opium policy. He had arrived at no conclusion except that this question is undoubtedly one which is likely to be troublesome.

Lord Reading said that he had no hesitation in agreeing that we must take such action as we can to purge ourselves of any suspicion, whether ill-founded or well-founded, that our policy is not in accordance with the highest motives. It had been for some time passing through his mind that it might be useful to set up in India a Committee charged with the duty of ascertaining Indian opinion on the opium question and on the lines of future policy, including, if that policy involves diminution or abandonment of the revenue at present obtained from opium, proposals for replacing that revenue. Supposing that Indian opinion were found by such a Committee to be in favour of no great change, we should be undoubtedly in a stronger position to face outside critics.
Summary of Conferences between the Secretary of State and the Governor-General.

Note of Conference in Lord Chancellor's Room, House of Lords, 17th June 1925.

Present:
The Right Hon. THE LORD CHANCELLOR.
The Right Hon. THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALDANE, K.T., O.M.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT PEEL, G.B.E.
Sir CLAUD SCHUSTER, K.C.B., C.V.O., K.C.
Sir Arthur HIRTZEL, K.C.B.
Sir C. NEISH, K.B.E., C.B.

Subject:—The personnel of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in relation to Indian Appeals.

LORD HALDANE stated that owing to the age and infirmities of the present members of the Judicial Committee specially selected to hear Indian appeals, it was becoming impossible to carry on. As a remedy he proposed the appointment of two first-class Indian Judges, first of all to hear Indian appeals, but eventually, when they had established themselves, Dominion appeals also. The salary he thought should be 4,000£.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said that British members of the Judicial Committee commanded great confidence in the Dominions, and he was not sure that Dominion members, or Indian members, would command equal confidence. He was, therefore, not in favour of prescribing that the two new members should be Indian.

LORD READING was of opinion that it would be much easier to carry the proposal through the Indian Legislature if it were so prescribed. It would also get over the communal difficulty. He thought 4,000£. salary sufficient.

After further discussion it was agreed that it was undesirable to lay down any racial qualification, and Lord Birkenhead expressed the opinion that in practice it would be unwise to begin by appointing two Indians, because it would be very difficult to depart from the precedent thus created.

The questions whether there should be a limit of age, or whether appointments should be made for a specified period (five or seven years) were also discussed. Of the two Lord Reading preferred the latter, but thought that if either limitation were imposed in the case of these two appointments alone there would be unfavourable criticism in India. He undertook to consider this question further, and it was left open.

The following were the conclusions finally arrived at on the relevant points other than the last-mentioned:

Two members, for the purpose of hearing Indian appeals, to be appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister in consultation with the Lord Chancellor and the Secretary of State for India. Neither racial nor judicial qualifications to be prescribed. Men of high standing at the Indian Bar to be eligible. Salary 4,000£., including any pension already earned in India. Service on the Judicial Committee to count for Indian pension in the case of judges who had not served their full time on the Bench. The cost to be shared by British and Indian revenues in equal moieties of 2,000£.

The two existing members to be allowed to remain.

These recommendations require the concurrence of the Government of India, and Lord Reading asked that this should not be sought until he had returned to India. Legislation this session is therefore impracticable.