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Appreciation of the Political Situation by  
the Government of India, dated 18th January 1935.

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Confidential Appreciation of the Political Situation  
in India dated 18th January 1935, issued  
on the authority of the Secretary of State  
for India.

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There is little change in the political situation and the columns of all newspapers are still filled with criticisms of the details of the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report. The Liberal Federation passed a resolution that any constitution based on the Report would be wholly unacceptable to all shades of Indian political opinion, which concluded by saying "this federation does not want any legislation based on the Report". The Right Honourable Mr. Shastri, in support of this resolution, drew special attention to the omission of any reference to "dominion status" and contended that this omission was tantamount to a repudiation of the declaration made by Lord Irwin on the authority of His Majesty's Government and of the pledge given during the debate in Parliament after the first and second Round Table Conferences.

The resolution of the Liberal Federation did not introduce the word "rejection", no doubt in recognition of the fact that the final decision must be reached by Parliament, but to what extent liberal and moderate politicians will refuse to co-operate in the new constitution when it is brought into effect is still uncertain. Though strong opinions are expressed, both in the press or on the platform, the point must not be forgotten that the question at issue is not whether there shall be no advance, or that recommended by the Joint Parliamentary Committee, but whether the advance shall

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be more rapid. A large advance being certain, it is not surprising that politicians, even of moderate views, hesitate to endorse openly the present proposals and thereby lay themselves open to a charge by extremists of being "Anti national".

The Report has been discussed in some of the Provincial Legislatures and, in these discussions, more moderate views have been expressed, as shown by the following appreciations given by Provincial Governments.

Punjab. The final resolution was that the Report does not satisfy Indian aspirations. Several members admitted that the magnitude of the constitutional advance proposed and the trend of the debate was not seriously adverse to the Report though details were criticised. The chief point of interest was that the Council as a body was adverse from accepting a motion that the Report should be rejected. Local Government conclude that there is no doubt that the constitution will be worked in the Punjab.

United Provinces. In a three day debate the discussion was maintained on a fairly high level. Speeches, with one exception, were dignified and avoided the mistake of wholesale and reckless condemnation. Several speakers mentioned appreciatively some features, but the general trend was adverse and friendly critics maintained that the proposals did not go far enough. The Deputy President went so far as to characterise its aims as the maintenance of autocracy in the garb of democracy. Both members of the Government spoke in defence and explanation of the main features of the Report. Chintamani, leader of the opposition, delivered

a reasoned and vigorous attack on the Report and concluding by saying that he much preferred the existing constitution.

But he devoted much of his speech to matters of extra provincial concern such as the constitution of the Federal Government, separation of Aden and Burma from India. Generally speaking, the debate attracted little attention and less enthusiasm. On the second day there was a bare quorum and an air of unreality frequently pervaded the proceedings, caused no doubt by the recent large majority in the House of Commons in favour of the Report which seemed to assure for the Bill an easy and unamended passage into law. The Local Government further states that in districts, the report seems to have attracted no attention outside the press. Central Provinces Government report that, outside Congress circles, there is a fairly large element not displeased with the report and disposed to accept what is now given in the hope of more in future.

Bengal. Extreme Hindu opinion was poorly represented (it must be remembered that Congress party boycotted the last elections to all provincial councils) but Hindu liberals, depressed classes, Europeans and Muslims all expressed their willingness to work the system. The financial recommendations were regarded as unfavourable to the province and the communal award, though defended by Muslims, was strongly condemned by caste Hindus. The depressed classes made it clear that they would only accept the alterations on their own conditions.