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PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS

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BY
MAJOR-GENERAL H.H.
THE MAHARAJA DHIRAJ OF PATIALA
G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., A.D.C.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE
INDIAN STATES COMMITTEE

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FOREWORD

IN ordering the publication of this reprint of speeches and articles on the position of the Indian States, acknowledgments for permission to reproduce articles originally contributed are tendered to the Editors of *The Sunday Express*, *The Contemporary Review*, and *The Empire Review*, and to the Hon. Secretaries of the East India Association and the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

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Speech delivered by HIS HIGHNESS on the occasion of the visit of the Indian States Committee to Patiala, February 1928

YOUR HIGHNESSES, MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN STATES INQUIRY COMMITTEE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN : It gives me the greatest pleasure to welcome to-night my friend Sir Harcourt Butler and his colleagues. My pleasure is the greater in that circumstances have made it possible for me to call together a goodly assembly to do them honour. It is a source of legitimate pride to me that Patiala is among the first States which the Inquiry Committee has visited ; and while I am sorry they have been able to give us such a short time, I only hope that they have enjoyed their visit nearly as much as I have enjoyed entertaining them.

I am, I think, revealing no State secret when I say that I was among the first of the Indian Princes to press for the appointment of a Committee, such as I am glad to welcome to-night in my State, whose task it should be to inquire authoritatively into the political and economic relations between the Indian States and the Government of India. When the confidence of my Brother Princes induced me to accept the responsible position of Chancellor of the Chamber, I determined that it would be no fault of mine if the Committee which I and several of my Brother Princes had for so long desired did not speedily materialise. Thanks to the generous and sympathetic attitude of Lord Irwin, this ambition has been fulfilled. The election to the office of Chancellor of the Chamber is, as you may know, annual. For two years I have held this position ; I do not know if I shall hold it again. But I am glad to think that my term of office has enabled me to do this much at least—to satisfy the desire, for long cherished by a large section of my Brother Princes, for the institution of an Inquiry into the difficulties of various kinds which we have been experiencing.

I should not be honest if I were to pretend that I am other than

gratified by the personnel of the Committee which has been appointed. In Sir Harcourt Butler the Princes feel that they have a wise and statesmanlike friend, whose experience in the filling of high positions calling for tact, sympathy, discretion and firmness is probably unique in India. We all of us feel that Sir Harcourt Butler can be trusted on every occasion to look far ahead, to rise superior to the difficulties of the moment, and to formulate those lines of policy, based not merely upon the present but also related to the future, which are above all things characteristic of the statesman. In Mr. Peel we have a man of affairs, holding a high position in finance, with both international and parliamentary experience, to whom, we believe, the complicated problems presented by the economic relations between the States and the Government of India will not appear insoluble. Professor Holdsworth, a Jurist of International reputation, by his office represents the rule of Law and Justice, the foundation of all good politics, of those engagements which we prize so deeply, and which are fully implemented throughout the deliberations of the Committee.

It is far from my desire to inflict a long speech upon you this evening ; but as this is the first occasion upon which I, as Chancellor of the Chamber, and as a Ruling Prince in his own State, have enjoyed the opportunity of welcoming the Indian States Committee, I cannot refrain from making a few personal observations upon the relations as they exist to-day between the Indian States and the Government of India. I will speak quite frankly, for I am sure that frankness is above all things necessary in our dealings with the Indian States Committee. We must lay all our cards upon the table : we must exchange ideas without reservation : and we must labour together in harmony, but also in candour, to find a solution of the problem which confronts us. I think it only fair to say in the first place that if there is one sentiment which animates in common the Indian Princes, it is their loyalty to the British connection, proved

beyond doubt by deeds as well as by words. The history of my own House shows that since the time when my ancestors first entered into relations with the British, we have on every occasion done our utmost to honour our plighted word. Not a campaign has been fought in India in which British arms have been engaged, scarcely a war has been fought by the Empire as a whole, since Patiala entered into relations with the British, in which the resources of the State have not been freely offered to, and in most cases as freely utilised by, the Imperial Government. In the dark days of the Mutiny it was the proud privilege of my ancestor, the then reigning Maharaja, to place his resources at the disposal of the hard-pressed British, and it is from the testimony of British Officers we learn that had it not been for the services of Maharaja Narender Singh there would not have been an Englishman alive between Ferozepore and Delhi. Again, in the Great War, when the needs of the Empire were such as to rally all loyal liegemen of the King-Emperor, it was my proud privilege to maintain, as I hope, without belittlement, the unfaltering traditions of my House. Now, while I like to think that the record of Patiala in this direction is unsurpassed, I should be the last to claim that it is unique or solitary. I would rather say that all the great Princes in India, according to their means and resources, have displayed on every occasion a similar attitude. We are all deeply attached to the Great Empire to which we belong ; our personal devotion to His Majesty the King-Emperor is a living force in our lives.

In view of the solid and unshakable understanding which I have already described between the Indian Princes and the British Commonwealth, what ground does there exist for uneasiness on the part of myself and my Brother Princes ? It is a question which I am often asked ; and it is one which is difficult to answer in a few words. Is it not true that the sanctity of the treaties and engagements which form the guarantees of our position has been repeatedly

and generously affirmed in the highest quarters? Has not His Majesty the King-Emperor himself gone so far as to declare that these treaties are "inviolable and inviolable"? All this may be frankly and indeed gratefully admitted; and yet the fundamental fact remains that the present position is causing among all of us grave anxiety. If I were asked to explain this anxiety in a sentence, I think I should feel inclined to say that since the treaties were concluded the world has not stood still, and shows no signs of so doing. In the East as well as in the West the forces which operate in the political sphere are dynamic rather than static in character. To be more precise, the Government of India as it exists to-day is no longer the simple organisation, controlled by a few definite personalities, which it was at the time when our engagements with it were initiated. It has now become a machine, immensely complex and immensely sensitive, liable to be set in unexpected operation by pressure from any one of an infinite variety of directions. It is ponderous; and when in motion, moves with almost irresistible force. For a number of reasons which I need not here particularise, it is now very much stronger and very much more impressive, as compared with the States, than at any earlier period of its history. It has gathered vested interests; it has formulated definite policies. Hence it happens that while the sanctity of treaties is a fundamental principle in the relations between the Government of India and the States, the States are increasingly conscious that political practice as opposed to political theory leads inevitably to the subordination of their interests to those of British India whenever the two come into conflict. The States are isolated, scattered, and find close combination difficult. The Government of India is a unified, centralised machine, always in a position in the last resort to cause its will to prevail. This, in brief, seems to me one of the fundamental sources of the present uneasiness of the Princes. They believe that political practice, dictated as it may be by the best of motives,

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threatens seriously to undermine certain of those rights and privileges which they have hitherto believed to be inviolably safeguarded by their treaties and engagements. Moreover, the treaties themselves are not as a rule ideal instruments, in this age at least, for the purposes which they were originally designed to serve. They have many gaps; they do not provide for many characteristic features of modern life; through these gaps the well-nigh irresistible influence of the Government of India tends to percolate, thereby modifying, as it seems to the Princes, many aspects of the political relationship in a direction unfavourable to themselves and to the welfare of their subjects. Further, the Government of India, as is the natural tendency of all great corporations, advances progressively from step to step. It consolidates its position, it proceeds to further lengths. Thus, as the years go by, the Princes feel they are the helpless spectators of a cumulative process which threatens to end disastrously for themselves. Their power for good, in regard both to the government of their own States and to their utility to the Empire as a whole, is unquestionably diminishing. Each new development of modern life—airplanes, wireless and the like—gives an opportunity for further inroads upon their fast dwindling sovereignty.

It will be idle to deny that point is lent to many of these considerations by the reflection that the control of the present Government of India is coming more and more into the hands of the educated class in British India. I should like to make plain here what has already been emphasised over and over again by myself and my Brother Princes, that we are not hostile to the aspirations of British India, and that we have not the least desire to oppose them. But we cannot from our present experience envisage with any degree of equanimity the prospect of control by a Legislature, responsible to an electorate bearing some resemblance to the present one, over our destinies, of the same kind and of the same degree as

is now exercised by the Government of India. We would plead for a fundamental consideration of the problem as to whether there is any justification for the British India of the future to exercise control over the Indian States ; and as to whether there be not room within the wide confines of this country for two sister polities, albeit dissimilar in size and in organisation, in one of which the democratic, and in the other the monarchic, principle is embodied. In my judgment they can co-exist and work together for the common good of India.

I have hitherto said nothing in regard to the economic sphere ; but this, for obvious reasons, demands quite as much care and attention on the part of the Committee as the political sphere, upon which I have already touched. Tariff changes have been introduced in British India for the purposes of protection. Such a policy, to which our assent has not been invited, affects us very deeply. At present there is no machinery by which our voice can be heard effectively ; no method by which the adjustment of differences between ourselves and British India can be settled, save by the administrative decision of the interested party, who in this case is also the stronger. Indeed, when I look back at the history of the relationship between the Indian States and the Government of India, I am sometimes surprised to reflect how seriously the interests of the States have suffered. Agreements have been entered into with the Government of India which, even assuming they were equitable at the outset, have by lapse of time seriously penalised the States.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not pleading in all that I have said for a reversion to past conditions ; for a denial of modern progress ; for any artificial archaism. The States themselves are moving with the times : we are endeavouring to modernise our administration, to make it more efficient, to make our subjects more prosperous, more progressive, more contented. We are

endeavouring to the best of our abilities to discharge the great responsibilities which lie upon us. That there is leeway to be made up I do not deny. But the spirit and the will to achieve progress are there. No, I and my Brother Princes are not among those who desire that the world shall stand still. We rather look not merely to the past and to the present, but also to the future ; and we desire a constructive, progressive, solution of our difficulties, which will lay the foundations for a political adjustment in which the rights of both the parties are fully safeguarded.

I have very briefly, yet, I fear, not without strain upon your patience, indicated to you something of what is in the mind not only of myself, but of many of my Brother Princes. We admit the paramountcy of the British Government, but we believe that this paramountcy had in its origin a definitely circumscribed ambit, and should be equally defined in its operation. This is not the occasion for illustrations of what I mean : I know that the Committee will give us the fullest opportunity of giving particular examples in order to explain the views which I am now expressing. It is, in truth, for the recognition of the fact that the presence of the self-governing States within the boundaries of the Indian Peninsula of itself necessarily involves a limitation upon the freedom of action of the Government of India in certain spheres that we are primarily pressing. Some may think it would be well for India if there were no States. I do not agree with that opinion. I believe that the presence of the States is a factor that makes for the welfare of India as a whole. But of one thing I am clear : the States do in fact exist, and I would urge that the consequences of their existence must be fully recognised. If among these consequences are certain restrictions upon the powers which the Government of India to-day claim to exercise of formulating and carrying into execution far-reaching policies applicable to every inch of Indian soil ; and the substitution in certain spheres of diplomatic negotiation for

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administrative fiat : the fact may be regretted, but ought not to be ignored. Further, if the existence of the States may ultimately impose restrictions upon the absolute autonomy of a self-governing British India, once again the situation must be frankly recognised and boldly faced. Between the British Government and the States there exist ties stronger than steel of obligation mutually pledged. The States have been true to their plighted word, on many occasions when a narrow insistence upon expediency or self-interest might have tended to prevail over loyalty and honour.

We have stood by the British in many an hour of the utmost need, and have discharged our side of the obligation without hesitation, with no reckoning of the cost. Now the hour of our own need has come. Are we asking too much when we call upon Britain to come to our aid, as we have so often come to hers? We are willing to accept to the full the obligations which rest upon us, in a manner that will ensure their performance ; but we believe that there is a real necessity of rearrangement of the relations as they obtain in practice, in order that we may be able to discharge those obligations in the highest measure of our capacity.

Declaration made by HIS HIGHNESS at the Bombay Meeting of Princes and their Representatives in April 1928

I WANT, in the first place, to say a few words as to the relations between the larger and the smaller States. From information which has come to me, I believe that the Rulers of the smaller States are in some instances hesitating to join with the Standing Committee because they fear that their own interests may suffer, and that any change which is made in the present system will be of advantage only to the larger States and not to the smaller States. I believe that this hesitation arises from some misunderstanding as to what the object of the whole scheme is.

I should like to ask the representatives of the smaller States one question. I know you are not satisfied with the present system. Would you not prefer a change such as we are also seeking, which will bring your affairs as well as ours, through the proposed States Council, under the influence of members of your own Order? We recognise the large stake which you, individually and collectively, possess ; and we ask you to join with us in forwarding our common interest. If you will do so we will pledge ourselves to do our very best for you. The time is not ripe to speak of anything like specific guarantees, if only because we, like you, have still to vindicate our rights. But your interests and ours are common. Neither you nor we can improve the present position unless all the States, large and small, stand together.

Message given by HIS HIGHNESS to Reuter's Representative at Bombay, April 1928

THE MAHARAJA OF PATIALA, interviewed by Reuter's special representative, stated that he had come to England in his official capacity as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes at the request of the Standing Committee of the Chamber. The purpose of his mission was to supervise, in consultation with Sir Leslie Scott, the preparation of the case which the Princes are presenting in common to the States Inquiry Committee.

He explained that the action of the Standing Committee of the Chamber in retaining Sir Leslie Scott in the preparation of the general case had received the warm approval of so many of the princely order.

We, the members of the Standing Committee, said His Highness, realised at once the extreme importance of presenting to the Indian States Inquiry Committee a well-prepared case on behalf of the Indian States as a whole, and the unique difficulty of accomplishing such an achievement. The States are autonomous units, each with its own Government and administrative system. There is no central record room from which the necessary material could be gathered. Accordingly, we have been obliged to create a special organisation to collect and arrange material which each individual State can contribute towards the preparation of the general case.

We believed that if the representation we are making on behalf of the States was to carry conviction, not merely to the Indian States Committee but also to the British parliamentary and public opinion, we must secure the services of a man so eminent that his mere position in public life would afford a guarantee that our case is not only powerful but also of great Imperial importance. Accordingly, we arranged to approach Sir Leslie Scott, and, as I had hoped, were able to convince him, not only as a lawyer but as

an English public man of the highest reputation, that the problem of the relations between the Indian States and the Paramount Power was among the most difficult and far-reaching questions which confront the statesmen to-day.

The Indian Princes themselves have held this view for some time, not only because they are conscious of the magnitude of their own States in India, but because they see that upon the manner in which their relations with the Paramount Power are adjusted may well depend the whole future of the country—at least, so far as the British Empire is concerned.

Moreover, the Indian States and British India live side by side in one great country which is rapidly becoming an economic whole, and unless they can co-operate in a fashion which will at once preserve the rights of either side and promote the welfare of all India, the future of the country, whatever its exact world position may be, must invariably suffer.

It was our conviction along these lines which led us to press upon Lord Irwin the desirability of an inquiry into our relations with the Paramount Power and British India, and I cannot express too warmly my appreciation of the sympathetic and broad-minded statesmanship which marked his entire attitude. No doubt his initiative and support led the Secretary of State to accede to our request for an inquiry. The appointment of the Indian States Committee has given us an opportunity which we long have been pressing for, and the fact that the efforts of the Standing Committee of the Chamber have been supplemented by the labours and supported by the reputation of Sir Leslie Scott has rallied an extraordinary number of Indian States in support of the effort we are making.

It is certain that never before in the whole history of the country have so many rulers of States, great and small, displayed so remarkable a degree of unanimity and determination. With a few

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exceptions, principally accounted for by the particular circumstances of individual States, the whole weight of Indian-ruled India is behind us, and even those States which are not joining in our presentment of our case are united with us in our opinion as to the main object for which we are striving.

CO-OPERATION WITH BRITISH INDIA

I, as Chancellor, and my colleagues of the Standing Committee are deeply conscious of the responsibilities which rest upon us. We are endeavouring, as demonstrated in the resolutions passed at Bombay on April 19, to approach the problem in a spirit not of mere selfish assertion of what we believe to be our rights, but of the highest constructive statesmanship. Our aim simply is this : that, whilst preserving the integral rights of the States, we may contribute all we can to the solution of India's problems in a spirit of goodwill to all, believing that in this fashion can the States and British India march hand in hand to their great destiny within the Empire.

We are very anxious to enlist the co-operation of public and parliamentary opinion in England in support of our attempt to carry out a real piece of constructive work for the Empire : and I cannot but feel that the problem is one which deserves the close attention of British statesmen.

Speech delivered by HIS HIGHNESS before the East India Association, July 23, 1928

THE INDIAN STATES AND THE CROWN

YOUR HIGHNESSES, MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :
When I received the kind invitation of my old friend, Mr. Brown, your Honorary Secretary, to address you this afternoon, I was very pleased at the compliment paid to me ; but I hesitated as to whether the compliment was one which I ought to accept. In the first place, I had some natural diffidence, because I believe this to be the first occasion on which a Ruling Prince has personally addressed a learned gathering of this description. In the second place, I realised that certain aspects of the subject which it was proposed I should discuss are being examined by the Committee presided over by Sir Harcourt Butler. But on reflection I decided that both these grounds for hesitation were more apparent than real. I knew that I should find in you a kindly audience, very tolerant of any shortcomings on my part ; and I soon found, on thinking the matter over, that there were many aspects of the relationship between the Indian States and the Crown, or, at any rate, many topics necessary for a right understanding of that relationship, falling entirely outside the scope of the Committee's inquiry. So I made up my mind that I would come and address you.

May I begin by taking my stand upon the hard facts of geography ? It seems to me that it is difficult to understand the relations between the States and Crown unless one realises the great importance of the position which the States occupy in the actual geography of India. I wonder how many of my audience realise that it would be possible to fly in an aeroplane from the most northern border of the territory ruled over by my friend and brother, His Highness of Kashmir, to Cape Comorin at the extreme south of India, without traversing

more than a very few hundred miles of British territory. Yet this is a fact. If one were to go from the extreme northern border of the great State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is almost the size of France, due southward, one would only cross that very narrow neck of the Punjab which intervenes between Kashmir and the Simla Hill States. The Simla Hill States, in their turn, are joined by the territory ruled by myself and the descendants of our common Phalkean ancestor to the enormous block of territory known as Rajputana, the original home of my own and the great majority of the ruling dynasties of India.

Continuing our line due south through Eastern Rajputana, we should come without a break to Central India and the great Mahratta territories. On leaving these we should traverse a narrow neck of land between Bombay and the Central Provinces before entering the great State of Hyderabad. Hyderabad is directly linked with Mysore, and by the time we had attained the boundary of the latter State we should already be south of Madras. There is then a small piece of British territory before the Southern Indian States of Cochin and Travancore are reached. Beyond them is the sea.

Almost equally striking would be the result of observations made in the course of a direct east to west flight from Calcutta to the boundaries of Baluchistan. From Calcutta, it is true, one would first traverse a considerable strip of British territory, but one would quickly find oneself—as speed is measured in the air—passing through an outlying portion of the Orissa Feudatory States. Another small stretch of British territory, and we should come to the large Baghelkhand group of States, whence we should make our way almost uninterrupted into Rajputana. The very small British province of Ajmer in the heart of Rajputana would be the last British territory we should see until we touched the Indus. From the Indus westwards we should traverse another narrow neck of British territory

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until we came to Baluchistan, and with Baluchistan and its tribal chiefs to the borders of India.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

These two bird's-eye views, north to south and east to west, serve to show in what a remarkable manner the territory of the States lies across, and from one point of view dominates, the whole of India. There are only two stretches of British territory which continue without interruption for many hundreds of miles; one is the Gangetic Plain and its continuance, the basin of the Five Rivers. From the Punjab there is, it is true, uninterrupted access to the sea at Karachi; but this long neck of British territory is flanked by States on either side. Secondly, along the east coast of India, British territory runs in an uninterrupted band from Bengal to the extreme south; but between this band and the centre of India there lies a solid block of States territory. It is impossible to travel from Bombay to Calcutta, from Bombay to Delhi, or from Bombay to Madras, without traversing in one's journey hundreds of miles of territory which are not under British rule.

From these facts there is one deduction which I should like to make immediately. The Indian States are so situated that the main arteries of communication, which are vital both for the safety and the well-being of the Indian Continent, run principally through State territory. Does not this seem to argue that the prosperity of India as a whole is very largely dependent upon effective co-operation between the governing authorities in British India and the governing authorities in the Indian States?

Before I develop this point, I should like to answer very briefly a question which I am sure must have formed itself in the minds of many of my hearers. How is it that the map of India—India which is popularly supposed to be a British dependency—has assumed these extraordinary characteristics? For I believe extraordinary is the

right word. Great Britain controls the destinies of India, and yet inside India there are a number of autonomous political units over whose actions the Government of British India has relatively little control. In order to answer this question I shall have to look to the past, and I hope you will forgive me for introducing some history into my talk.

THE DAYS OF "JOHN COMPANY"

If I were to endeavour to trace, no matter in how summary a fashion, the history of the relations between the Indian States and British India, I should really be tracing the whole rise and progress of British rule in India. I will not attempt so impossible a task, and will content myself with saying that the East India Company found it necessary for its own existence to enter into treaty relations with some of the Indian rulers in order that it might subdue, or protect itself from, other powers. Between 1757 and 1803 the Company dealt with the Indian States on more or less equal terms. It made treaties with them on a reciprocal basis ; it entered into alliances with them of a kind which varied from time to time. When it was strong it would dictate terms to the greatest States ; when it was weak it would welcome the smallest as an ally. In short, its principal object was to maintain its own position against possible rivals ; and to do this it surrounded its own territory with a ring of friendly States, whose main contribution to the common defence was an exclusive alliance with the Company, and a subvention for the maintenance of its troops. The Company was not concerned with the internal affairs even of those States which were its border defences, and time after time deliberately refused to interpose its shield between more distant States and those who attacked them.

Before long, however, this policy was found to be dangerous ; and in the time of the Marquis of Hastings the British pursued a policy which remained almost unchanged until the eve of the Mutiny. The Company rigorously refrained from intervening in

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the internal affairs of the States, took the entire obligation of their military protection upon itself, and controlled the whole of their external relations with an iron hand. Each State was kept in isolation, the only link between them being the common control of external affairs. All pretence of equality between the British Raj and the States had been abandoned ; and by 1832, Sindia, the last of the independent powers, was entirely surrounded by territory belonging either to the Company or to its allies. But no sooner was the process completed than its own peculiar dangers became apparent. The system was really impracticable, because it condemned the States to unhealthy stagnation generally, while it insisted upon the rigorous discharge of heavy external obligations towards the Company. Each little Government in its watertight compartment tended to grow less competent, and each ruler tended to fall more and more into the hands of the Company's local representative. Despite all the rebukes which were delivered to these representatives by successive Governors-General, there was an increasing tendency on their part to interfere more and more in the purely domestic affairs of the States, to set the treaties at naught, and to interpose their own authority over the head of the ruler.

ABSENCE OF CLEAR POLICY

The real truth is, of course, as is plain from contemporary records, that no one, either in India or in England, had any very clear ideas upon the future of the Indian States. So far as British India was concerned, people like Monroe and Macaulay could at least speculate upon a time when, enlightened by centuries of Liberalism, the Indian subjects of Britain could "frame a regular Government and preserve it," but the Indian States did not fit into the picture. It was recognised that their treaties must be honoured, at least in name ; and this recognition formed an awkward obstacle for those who enthusiastically advocated the extension of British rule.

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What was to become of the States? The answers to the question varied from time to time. Some men were for annexation, regardless of the treaties; others were staunch upholders of obligations involving the honour of the British race. Actually nothing much happened till the time of Lord Dalhousie, except that the earlier tendency of the residents to interfere unduly was more or less successfully checked. The States Governments regained a measure of their prestige, even if they were not very efficient according to Western ideas. But it is plain from a study of the literature of the time, that in the eyes of the average British administrator who had spent his service in British India, all the States alike were of little account.

Looking backwards, we can see why the position was so unsatisfactory. The very proper reluctance of the Company to interfere in the internal affairs of the States involved the assumption that the States Governments were adequate to their task. This in turn involved harmonious co-operation between the States and British India—and this was something for which the system made no provision. In rare cases, such as Oudh, the Company's abstention from interference led to an accumulation of evils which eventually reduced the administration to chaos. We can now see that there was no necessity to have annexed Oudh—an enforced abdication, a few British administrators, the management of the country as Mysore was managed, and the State would have been saved. But the difficulty was that the British did not at that time really want to save it, since the value of the Indian States as a factor in the politics of the country was not realised.

STAPLE POLITICAL UNITS

All this changed with the Mutiny. For nearly half a century the territories under the control of the Company had been free from serious internal disturbance, while successful campaigns had extended the British Raj from Afghanistan to Indo-China. In

contrast with the brilliant achievements of the Company with its wealth, and with the splendour of its dominions, the Indian States collectively as well as individually appeared poverty-stricken and negligible. If it had been hinted to the civil or the military servants of the Company in the last year of Lord Dalhousie's rule that the Indian States, weakened by isolation and perturbed by the doctrine of lapse, would nevertheless be hailed as the only stable political units in India, and would intervene, with decisive effect, in the hour of Britain's greatest need, the comment would assuredly have been neither courteous nor credulous.

Yet precisely this thing happened. In May 1857 the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces was officially informed from Calcutta that if he were hard pressed he must apply for aid to the rulers of Patiala or of Jind. But for our States, Lawrence and Nicholson would have found themselves unable to strike at Delhi. "If it had not been for the Rajah of Patiala," wrote Forsyth, the Deputy Commissioner of Ambala and the adjacent districts, "none of us here would now be alive." The services of the Indian States in the Mutiny were not forgotten, and when the Crown assumed the direct government of India, Queen Victoria, in her gracious Proclamation, assured the States of her desire scrupulously to maintain the treaties, and to safeguard the honour and dignity of the Indian rulers as her own. The British in India seemed definitely to have cast off the old tradition of regarding the Indian States as possible rivals, only to be prevented from attaining dangerous eminence by a policy of rigorous and unremitting suspicion.

From the time of Lord Canning onwards, there may be noticed an increasing desire to regard the Indian States as allies. But the effective operation of this desire soon proved somewhat limited. Indeed, a quarter of a century after the Mutiny, the position from the standpoint of the States seemed almost the same as it had been before that upheaval. It is true that the Indian Princes were no

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longer treated with the same suspicion ; but they felt neglected, and they also felt that the position guaranteed to them by their treaties and engagements was not entirely secure. These conclusions resulted first from the increasing economic progress of India, which tended to overleap political frontiers ; and secondly, from a very remarkable process of centralisation which made of British India practically a single great unit, controlled by the Governor-General in Council. Under the influence of these two factors, British India advanced very rapidly, while the States dropped behind. Despite their services in the Mutiny, the British Government could not conquer its traditional habit of dealing with each State separately, and forbidding each Prince to concern himself with anything but the affairs of his own particular State. The States remained poor, partly because their territories were as a whole less fertile than those which the Company had acquired for itself, partly because they were forbidden access to the capital expenditure which would have enabled their immense mineral wealth and other natural resources to be effectively developed.

ISOLATION

At the same time, it is a mistake to regard them as constituting, even at this epoch, mere backwaters or stagnant pools. Within the scope of the resources available to them, they were modernising their administrations, developing their communications, and undertaking beneficent activities of every kind. Further, the foundation of the Chiefs' colleges was rapidly producing a change in the ideas of the aristocracy and of the Princes themselves, who became at once more progressive and more ambitious to do well for their people. With changing times there came also to the Princes an increasing consciousness that their position was unsatisfactory ; and that those rights and privileges which according to their treaties and engagements they believed themselves entitled to enjoy were in practice

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infringed very often in deference to the imperious political and economic requirements of British India. And while from the beginning of the present century the personal relations between the Princes and the Imperial throne, and the Princes and the Viceroy, became ever more intimate and ever more valued by either side, the fact remained that it was not possible for each Prince, as an individual ruler, effectively to protest against what seemed to him to be infringements of his treaty rights.

Indeed, it was just because the Princes were treated as isolated powers that no exit from their difficulties proved possible. Even the largest State is so small, as compared with India as a whole, that ordinary administrative tendencies decreed the subordination of the individual rights of each State to what was conceived to be the general good. In other words, the infringements of treaty rights, of which the Princes complained, were so far from being deliberate that they existed side by side with the most solemn and authoritative declarations of the British Sovereign, Viceroys, and Secretaries of State to the effect that the treaties would be observed both in spirit and in letter. The fact is that from the standpoint of the practical administrator, acutely alive to the requirements of British India and indeed of India as a whole, it was quite impossible to deal with several hundred separate entities, who did not speak with a common voice, and who could only be brought to the acceptance of a common policy by over-ruling their protests with a strong hand. Unless Indian India, the India of the States, could be in some measure organised for common purposes, the individual rights of its isolated units must necessarily be over-ridden in pursuit of a policy to which it was impossible, from the standpoint of practical politics, to invite their individual adherence.

PROPOSALS OF 1917

In the first twenty years of the present century matters advanced considerably. The new generation of Princes became alive to the

necessity of some organisation for common interests ; the new generation of British administrators realised that the time had come when such a combination was essential. The experience gained by the specially summoned conferences of Princes was encouraging ; and no objection was taken by Government to meetings of the Princes themselves. Once more, as destiny would have it, a great Imperial crisis tested the loyalty of the Princes, and that loyalty emerged, as before, unscathed from the fiery trial. The time seemed ripe for a consideration by Great Britain of the whole position of the Princes in their relation both to the Crown and to British India ; but the more pressing political exigencies of the moment secured for British India dominant attention. However, the Princes themselves had devoted much time and thought to their own problem, with the result that when my very dear and deeply lamented friend, Mr. Montagu, came to India on his Imperial mission in 1917, a number of Princes, with whom H.H. of Bikaner and myself had the honour to be associated, were ready to present to him our scheme for the safeguarding not merely of our own interests but of the interests of India as a whole, and, as we believed, those of the Empire.

The scheme was intended to afford a basis for co-operation between the Indian States and the Government of British India, as well as to provide the means of rectifying the particular difficulties which the Princes had begun to experience in the working of the existing system. We contemplated the creation of three separate pieces of machinery : a Council of Princes ; a permanent Advisory Board ; and a system of arbitration. The Chamber of Princes was intended to enable the States to speak with a common voice, and thus to provide the foundations upon which negotiations between the States as a whole and British India as a whole could be based. The Permanent Advisory Board was to be associated with the Political Department in the management of the everyday relations

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between the States and the Crown, in order to ensure that the Princes' point of view was adequately represented when policies were framed. The system of arbitration was devised to secure the impartial decision of justiciable matters in dispute between States *inter se* and States and the Government of India.

THE MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REPORT

I am speaking with the fullest sense of responsibility when I say that we were able to convince Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford of the strength of our case. In support of my assertion I need only refer you to Chapter X of the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms which contains some very remarkable admissions as to the danger of the existing position, from the standpoint of the Princes. Now the recommendations which we made were perhaps too radical and far-reaching ; they perhaps involved too wide a breach with past traditions. I express no opinion upon this point. But the fact remains that while the Joint Report endorsed what I may call the externals of our recommendations, it deprived our proposals of the scope and functions which we had postulated. And when the proposals of the Report in their turn came to be translated into practice, those of us who had been responsible for framing the original scheme might well have rubbed our eyes in astonishment when we observed the shape which our suggestions had finally assumed.

The Chamber of Princes was indeed set up, but it was set up under conditions which made it almost useless for our purpose. The Advisory Council of our original proposals is represented to-day by the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes, with none of the functions which we had originally desired for it. The system of arbitration is represented by a Government of India resolution which enables that Government, when it so desires, to employ the form of an impartial arbitration to settle differences between itself

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and a State ; but allows the Government of India to accept or to refuse the result of the arbitration, as seems to it more desirable. I do not think I am overstating the case when I say that the result of all our thought and all our work was profoundly disappointing to us.

THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES

We had, however, gained this much : the majority of the more important States were now brought into political relations with the Government of India—a change for which we had been pressing for some time. But unfortunately the principle was not applied with the completeness we desired. For the rest, the majority of us realised very clearly that our position in India as well as in the Empire was such that we should undoubtedly gain a rectification of our grievances, if only we could secure a patient hearing. Accordingly, we pursued the policy of doing our best with what had been given to us. In the Chamber of Princes, it is true, we had, until a couple of months ago, no control over our own agenda or our rules of business. In passing, let me say that through the statesmanship of Lord Irwin we have achieved the first of these two points.

But even while the Chamber of Princes was thus hampered, it performed one very useful purpose. It brought together to Delhi every year a very large number—usually some fifty or sixty—Rulers of Indian States. In the Chamber itself we could only discuss a rather stereotyped agenda ; so we devised a plan of holding informal meetings in a building which we rented as our headquarters, where we discussed the things which seemed to us to require attention. By this means we were enabled to build up a very strong body of public opinion among the Princes in support of a definite line of policy. This line of policy may briefly be defined, first, as a fixed endeavour to bring home to every Ruler a sense of common responsibility to the order of Princes as a whole ; secondly, a deliberate encouragement by every means of efficiency and good government in the

States ; thirdly, a fixed determination to press for what we regarded as our undoubted rights under the treaties. This policy was steadily pursued with the object of inducing those Princes who took an interest in the Chamber—and their numbers increased year by year—to press once more, with added authority, for the adoption of the scheme which we had put forward to Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford.

ARBITRAL MACHINERY

So much for the Chamber of Princes. But in regard to the Standing Committee and the arbitral machinery, I must frankly confess that we could not make much of the position. The Standing Committee has been supposed to be engaged, along with the Political Department, in the standardisation of political practice. But the process adopted has been such that we have not been able to make much progress. We found in practice that as soon as we had come to some tentative outlines of agreement with the Government of India, the opinions which that Government elicited, either from provincial Governments or from local political officers, were such as to throw the whole thing into the melting-pot once more. The upshot was, of course, equally unsatisfactory both to ourselves and to Government. We often felt that we had gone to the very verge of compromising what we regarded as our undoubted rights, in order to meet the wishes of the Political Department. But the system of reference to which I have alluded effectually destroyed all real chances of satisfactory compromise. I am afraid the same thing is largely true in regard to the arbitration machinery. Since the time when the resolution was issued, there have been several cases which, to an outsider like myself, might have seemed very proper to be referred to an impartial body, identified with the interests neither of Government nor of the States. But in no case has a tribunal been appointed, and Government has preferred to give the final word itself.

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

I think I can fairly claim that we have persisted in co-operation despite our discouragement. We felt sure that this was a right policy, because we were conscious of being animated first by our profound and deep loyalty to the Person and Throne of the King-Emperor ; secondly, by a belief in the character of British justice ; thirdly, by a sincere conviction that we were asking no more than, on any reasonable view of the facts, we were entitled to obtain. We always had in our minds the three main requirements which we put forward to Mr. Montagu : an effective Chamber of Princes, a real Advisory Council, and a system of impartial arbitration. As time went on, however, and as we found that our position was becoming increasingly difficult, we decided to approach the Viceroy in person in order to ask for an impartial and authoritative inquiry into the whole of our position. For, during the years which had elapsed since the introduction of the Reformed Constitution into British India, we had become increasingly conscious of the fact that while there was never any intention on the part of the framers of that constitution to trespass upon the rights of the States, yet in actual practice the working of the reforms had been such as to affect our interests very deeply.

I need not go into details, which, indeed, are being authoritatively investigated in another place, but I will simply say that one glance at the map of India, from the standpoint which I took at the beginning of my address, might have convinced those who were legislating for British India in 1919 that anything which they did for those portions of India not under the rule of the Princes must necessarily affect, both directly and indirectly, the portions over which the Princes held sway. In a great variety of directions, for example, the fixing of the Rupee ratio, the introduction of protective duties, experiments with prohibition, and the like, we have found ourselves most deeply and vitally affected by policies in the framing

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of which we had no hand. Even before 1919, as I have already hinted, we had imagined that something of the kind might happen ; and it was for this reason that we laid such stress upon the Chamber of Princes, as providing an institution upon which might be based some machinery for joint consultation between the Indian States and British India, in matters of common concern to both. But I must confess that the actual working of the Reformed Constitution in British India, and the degree to which our interests were affected without our knowledge or control, came as a surprise to all of us. Hence it was that our previous desire to obtain the machinery of which I have already spoken became strengthened into a request for an authoritative examination of the whole of our position.

THE STATES COMMITTEE

Lord Birkenhead and Lord Irwin were kind enough to accede to part of our request, and to appoint the Committee which is now sitting under the able chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler. The terms of reference of this Committee are not as comprehensive as we originally desired, a limitation which I personally regret, because the revision of the position in British India after the report of the Statutory Commission—which itself has a much wider reference than the Indian States Committee—will both permit and necessitate a revision of the machinery for co-operation with the States. But we believe, nevertheless, that the investigations of the Indian States Committee can do us nothing but good, since they will enable us to put forward at least some portion of our case in all its strength.

In regard to the force of our case, and the desirability from our point of view, at least, that the present system should be altered, every Prince in India is agreed. Regarding the precise form of the constitutional machinery which is to inaugurate, as we hope, a new era, there are still some differences between us. I think it is fair to

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say that we are all agreed that there must be something like a federation for India ; and by federation I mean nothing more than a machinery which will enable British India and Indian India to meet together at the top, and to discuss jointly, in a manner consonant with the interests and importance of each, all policies and proposals which affect India as a whole. Concerning details, as will be obvious, there is plenty of room for difference of opinion ; but on these three broad lines—viz., the strength of the Princes' case, the importance of finding a remedy, and the necessity of some federal scheme—I think I may say there is entire unanimity among us.

BRITISH INDIAN NATIONALISM

Before I close, there are some few remarks which I should like to make. I want to emphasise most strongly, in the first place, that there is not, and cannot be, any ill-will on the part of the Indian Princes towards the Nationalist movement in India. We Princes, like all the greatest of the Nationalist leaders in British India, are firm believers in the value of the British connection. We do believe, however, that it is perfectly compatible with that connection that Indians should have greater power over the management of their own affairs than they possess to-day. We have not the slightest desire to thwart the progress of British India ; indeed, we hope we shall run a friendly race with them along the lines of national development. For reasons which I have already indicated, the States have some leeway to make up ; but I should like to emphasise most strongly my belief that this leeway is not so great as is sometimes represented.

May I remark in this connection that I have often been struck with the curious ignorance concerning Indian States which is to be found not merely in England—where it is quite natural—but even in India itself? I do not quite know why this should be the case, for, as far as my knowledge runs, every State welcomes visitors, is

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perfectly prepared to supply them with every information, and has no desire whatever to pursue a policy of secrecy. And yet, somehow or other, very little is known about us. When visitors come they are, as a rule, far more interested in our ancient forts than in our modern hospitals ; and when they have to choose—for the cold weather is a busy time in India—between a duck shoot and a visit to the Secretariat or to the village school, there are very few people indeed whose choice is not made with little sign of hesitation.

Probably, too, there is something in the idea which I personally have often held, that the States are a little shy of entering into intimate relations with British India, particularly since the emergence of the Nationalist movement, for fear lest their attitude might be misunderstood by the Government of India. I hope and trust that everyone, in England as well as in India, is now so firmly convinced of the loyalty of the States to His Majesty, and of their attachment to the Empire, that they would believe it no conclusive evidence of seditious tendencies if a Prince were to invite even an advanced politician from British India to visit him. But in the past, I am afraid, such an action would have been taken as proof conclusive of the most undesirable tendencies on the part of the Prince in question. However this may be, I do plead in all earnestness for a real effort by people in England and people in India alike to understand the Indian States.

PROGRESS IN THE STATES

I only wish that those persons who take advantage of an occasional folly or extravagance in one individual among what is, after all, a very considerable number of Rulers, to pillory the whole order of Princes, could spare time to come and visit, I do not say the model States, but the States whose Rulers constitute the rank and file of the princely order. I think these critics would be surprised. Only the other day, in my capacity as Chancellor of the Chamber, I had

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occasion to glance over some statistics, admittedly incomplete, but nevertheless, I think, illuminative. I happened to see the replies sent by thirty-four States up and down India to an interrogatory which was sent out. Not one of these thirty-four States was a large or particularly well-known State ; they varied in geographical location from the North to the South, and from the West to the East. In other words, to all appearances they were a thoroughly typical sample of the whole mass. Yet out of these thirty-four States, twenty-three had regular legislatures and definite machinery for enlisting public opinion on any State act, and five had the establishment of such machinery under consideration. Twenty-five of them had regular pension systems for their administrative services under their own civil service regulations ; twelve had a complete separation between judicial and executive machinery, a stage which has not yet been attained in British India ; while ten had the incomplete system of separation which obtains in British India itself.

FIXED PRIVY PURSE

Very interesting, I am sure, to my hearers will be the next point upon which I should like to touch. It may not be news to you that in the last session of the Chamber of Princes, my dearest elder brother and friend, His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, introduced a resolution bringing to the notice of every State the desirability of a fixed personal Privy Purse separate from the State revenues, and the desirability of ensuring a systematic and properly organised judicial machinery. Now, out of these thirty-four States, whose replies have come in quite at random in accordance with the promptitude with which the inquiry happened to be answered, twenty-six already possess the fixed Privy Purse system and three are introducing it ; while, so far as the judiciary is concerned, twenty-two possess High Courts of a regular type modelled on those of British India, and eight have courts in which the Ruler associates

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with himself one or more Ministers in the discharge of appellate functions. I do not say that there is not ample room with us, as with everyone else, for all the effort which enlightened Rulers, with the assistance and co-operation of their people, can bring to bear in the improvement of the internal condition of the States ; but I do assert with some confidence not only that the will to improve is there, but that very real improvements have in the course of a very few years been actually carried out.

OBLIGATIONS OF KINGSHIP

It is the characteristic tendency of the States, at the present moment, to lay down the lines of a stabilised administrative system which shall be independent of changes in the personality of the Ruler, and which shall operate with something like the same consistency and steadiness as characterise the work of Governments in advanced countries. But here again let me speak very plainly. It has sometimes been said that Rulers of Indian States are autocrats. I do not quite know the full implications of that term to Western ears ; but this I do know : that no Indian Ruler can resist, or would dream of resisting, the public opinion of his people. That is not our conception of kingship at all ; nor is it the idea which our people hold. To us, kingship is an office which has rights and which has obligations. The two are indissolubly linked. The same is true of the subject. He has his rights, just as he has his obligations ; and the King can no more transgress the former than he can permit the subject to transgress the latter. There is thus a really Indian conception of responsible government which needs to be appreciated ; the conception of a government in which every subject knows what his rights are, since those rights are secured to him by custom and by religion ; in which public opinion is the final sanction for every act of Government, and is able at any time to bring irresistible, because direct, pressure upon the administration. In those States where the

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subjects have desired to substitute for this system the machinery of the West, they have done so. But if in most States this substitution has not yet taken place, it is because the people of the State have shown no desire to change the system under which they live.

One last word, and I have done. It may seem to my hearers that I have said very little upon the subject of the relations between the Indian States and the Crown. In reality, as I hope reflection will show you, I have really said a great deal ; for I have done my best to explain to you as effectively as I can in the time at my disposal the manner in which the Indian States themselves conceive of this relation ; and the manner in which they believe it can best be implemented, for the benefit of Great Britain and the Empire, of India herself, of British India, and of the States.

Article written by HIS HIGHNESS in The Empire Review,
September 1928

THE OFFER OF THE INDIAN PRINCES

I HAVE ALREADY in my address to the East India Association, said something concerning the convictions of the Indian Princes as to what should be done for the States at the present moment ; but, in response to the kind invitation of the Editor, I will do my very best to put the position briefly for the benefit of the readers of *The Empire Review*.

Our fundamental postulate—and I speak here not merely in my personal capacity, but as Chancellor, in India, of the Chamber of Princes—is that India is made up of two distinct countries, geographically intermingled but politically distinct. If we leave Burma out of our reckoning, almost half the peninsula of India is composed of Indian States under their own rulers. The remainder of the peninsula is under British administration. A glance at the map will show the impossibility of making any political arrangements for India as a whole without recognising the existence of these two distinct territorial entities. Yet the history of the last ten years proves that such an attempt has actually been made ; that British India has been treated, in effect, as identical with the whole of India, and has been given the power of settling affairs which vitally affect the interests of the States. I will cite only such instances as the protective tariff—which hits the States' subjects very hard ; the fixing of the exchange value of the rupee ; the policy in regard to railway rates, as examples of what I mean. Is it realised in England that the revenues resulting from these changes go into the British Indian exchequer ?

From our point of view, this position is only a logical consequence of the situation which preceded it. The States, which originally came into the orbit of the British Empire on definite contractual

conditions, expressed in engagements of various kinds, have for long felt that these conditions were not being strictly observed on the British side. We quite realised how this had come about. The great machine called for convenience the Government of India has hitherto performed two sets of duties not always compatible with each other. It has governed British India, and it has acted as the Crown's agent for the enjoyment of the rights, and the fulfilment of the obligations, laid down in the engagements with the States. In discharging, for the most part very wonderfully, the first duty, it has found the Crown's rights over the States extremely useful. The Crown's obligations to the States, on the other hand, have often presented themselves in the light of inconvenient obstacles to things which the Government of British India desired to do. Human nature being what it is, the Crown's obligations—which are the States' rights—have suffered ; and British India, contrary to what we believe to be just, is acquiring a greater and greater control over our destinies.

The States have been unable to do much to protect themselves, because for long we were dealt with as isolated units and were not allowed to combine. Our protests were thus often ineffective. Since the Chamber of Princes came into existence the situation has, from our point of view, improved, for the Chamber, though defective in many respects—for reasons which I explained in detail in my address—has brought the States together and has given them the means of speaking with a common voice. To-day, the great majority of the Indian States are at one in condemning the present system, by which one part of India is subordinated to the other part of India, and in asking for a change. We believe that, when our ideas are examined, they will be found perfectly reasonable. Indeed, they were admitted to be perfectly reasonable by Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford in 1918 ; but little was done to put them into effect.

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We want three things, without which we consider neither our obligations to the Crown nor the Crown's obligations to us can be effectually discharged. We want our relations with the Crown as paramount power to be conducted by machinery quite separate from the machinery which governs British India. We want an arrangement by which the three parties interested—Great Britain, British India, and the Indian States—can get together in a union council to discuss and settle questions which affect the whole of India. Finally, we want a union supreme court to decide, in all justiciable disputes, where the rights of the three parties begin and where they end.

We have already gone some way towards thinking out all three proposals ; and, when the time is ripe, we hope to have an opportunity of putting them forward in detail. But the first thing that we have to do is to educate British parliamentary and public opinion into realising that the Indian States exist ; that they have rights guaranteed by the plighted faith of the British Crown ; that they have a great stake in India as well as a profound attachment to the Empire. When opportunity offered itself in the past, we have shown our loyalty to the Crown in a fashion which is more eloquent than any mere protestations. We can assure the British people that, if similar opportunities offer themselves in the future, the Princes and their subjects will stand shoulder to shoulder in support of the Empire's cause.

But we do ask Great Britain to see that we are put in a position to enjoy the rights which constitutionally belong to us. We do not ask for more ; we feel we ought not to be content with less. These rights should be authoritatively defined. We view the situation with anxiety, for we foresee a real risk lest the States should be so weakened by this gradual encroachment as almost to disappear as political forces. We believe this would be a calamity, especially at the present juncture, when British Indian politics are displaying so

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marked a tendency to swing to the Left. We do not wish to remain aloof in selfish isolation ; we are quite ready to play our part in the development of India as a whole and to make such sacrifices as the position may demand.

Further, we are willing not only to co-operate in every equitable way with Britain and British India, but also to enter into arrangements that will make such co-operation really effective. We have much to contribute to the common stock—magnificent man-power, proud and vigorous, whose birthright is warlike weapons ; a pristine system of traditional self-government which makes public opinion very powerful ; immense and unexploited natural resources, awaiting only the life-giving touch of that capital to which we have hitherto been forbidden adequate access. Are we far wrong in thinking that our hearty, enthusiastic co-operation would be a source of strength not only to India but to the Empire as a whole ?

Message given by HIS HIGHNESS to Reuter's Representative on September 22, 1928

HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF PATIALA, interviewed by Reuter's Representative, said that he associated himself wholeheartedly with the sentiments expressed in the recent speech of His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, whose many years of work on behalf of the Indian Princes invested his utterances with the greatest weight. His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala continued :—

The attachment of the Indian Princes to the Crown of England is unshakable. It has not only survived, it has been strengthened by, every Imperial crisis, from the Mutiny to the Great War and after. It has its roots both in the personal tie of loyal devotion which each of us cherishes towards the King-Emperor ; and also in our profound conviction that the British connection is vitally necessary to India. We Princes have a great stake in India : we have the interests of our people and of our country at heart. We firmly hold that India's best friends to-day are those whose aim it is to strengthen the ties with England.

We must face facts. India is not a small homogeneous country, but a vast continent, politically divided between the subjects of the King-Emperor and the subjects of the Indian Princes ; and the one link between the two parts is the paramount and uniting influence of Britain. Even British India itself is not a unit : it is split into a great variety of different races and languages ; it is rent by communal divisions.

There is no desire on our part to add to the difficulties which beset the progress of British India toward self-government ; indeed, we wish nothing more than to live in harmony with British India and to co-operate with its Government in promoting the progress of India as a whole. It is much to be regretted that the All-Parties Conference has not reciprocated our own attitude of friendliness and

detachment ; but has gone out of its way to settle our future without consulting us. The time has therefore come for us to make it clear that our political relations are with the British Crown, with whom our ancestors entered into engagements which we are proud to honour ; and that we and our people will never submit to being governed by British India, over many parts of which our States in former times held sway. The proposals of the All-Parties Conference have only strengthened our unalterable determination to safeguard at the cost of any sacrifice our separate political existence. While we offer friendly co-operation with British India, we and our people will not for one instant tolerate British Indian dictation.

We have long been conscious that the silent loyalty of the States has tended to count for less in the world of politics than the vociferous claims of British Indian leaders. Our experience of the last few years has convinced us that the Government of India, as at present constituted, tends to become more and more the Government of British India, and less and less to remain a power capable of striking an even balance between the claims of British India and the rights of the Indian States. It is far from our intention to call in question those powers in relation to the States which are secured to the Crown by the treaties and engagements, for we are seeking our constitutional rights and nothing more ; but at present we do not enjoy all those rights ; from some of them we are debarred by the position which has lately grown up in India. That is why the great majority of the Indian States are appealing to Great Britain to rectify the present position before it is too late ; and to recognise, in any future scheme for the governance of India, that British India and the Indian States are two entirely separate entities, between whom it is the responsibility of Britain to see fair play. We are entirely unanimous in holding that the present system, invariably in the last resort, sacrifices the interests of the States to those of British India. As to the precise form of remedy which will best meet the

existing difficulties, we have yet to arrive at complete unanimity. But concerning the difficulties themselves, and their unfortunate effects alike upon our political influence and upon our power to strengthen harmonious co-operation between Britain and India, there is complete agreement. Very many of us believe that the solution will lie along federal lines. We are endeavouring to devise a scheme which will secure the participation of the States in the settlement of All-India affairs; but will leave the States and British India alike free to pursue their own lines of development in domestic affairs. The States have now for long definitely ranged themselves on the side of ordered progress; but while they are actively pursuing, at the pace best suited to their individual circumstances, the modern ideals of efficient administration, they are also endeavouring to preserve the traditional Indian culture of which they have been for so long the custodians. We believe that our people have a definite contribution to make to the cultural life of India, just as the natural resources of our territories, when developed, will redound to the prosperity not merely of our own people but of the peoples of India as a whole.

We thus hold that the Indian States have a two-fold claim to recognition as partners in any future scheme for the governance of India: first as allies to whom Great Britain has pledged her protection and plighted her faith; and, secondly, as political entities of seventy million souls occupying three-quarters of a million square miles with interests and traditions distinct from, if analogous to, those of British India. We feel confident that as we have stood firmly by Britain in every hour of her need, so to-day Britain will not rest satisfied until our rights are secured to us.

Article contributed by HIS HIGHNESS to The Sunday Express, October 21, 1928

MANY PEOPLE in England seem to have very curious ideas about us Indian Princes—why, I do not quite know. To judge from what appears in the newspapers, we have nothing else to do except live in luxury and spend money with a shovel. I am sure that many of us wish that we were as care-free and as rich as we are often represented to be ! But, like everyone else in these times, we have to work pretty hard for our living ; and although most of us are not exactly poor men, even our resources could scarcely survive the strain of spending money at the rate we are accused of doing !

Can it be that in these post-war days, when most people have not much money to spend, the editors of newspapers believe that their readers like to hear about Princes who spend lavishly ? Or is it that the great business houses, the hotels, the railways, the shipping companies, find that the patronage of the Ruling Princes attracts other wealthy persons, and are thus anxious to draw attention to our doings ? However this may be, there is no doubt of the fact that many wild stories are circulated about us. I have found by personal experience that I cannot take three or four rooms at an hotel without being accused of having engaged an entire floor, or “ the Millionaires’ Suite ”—whatever that may be. If I bring with me from India the valet who looks after my clothes, people say that I am accompanied by hundreds of servants ; and if I give an ordinary dinner to a few friends, it is alleged that the dishes are brought from India or from Egypt—upon the Magic Carpet, I suppose !

All this has its amusing side, of course, but it also has its more serious side. We Ruling Princes of India cannot buy a standard model motor car without afterwards reading that it has an ivory steering wheel, or a jewelled carburetter, or a completely fitted

cocktail shaker in the back axle. I am myself interested in gun-dogs, and have done what I can to popularise their breeding in India. I also show a good deal in this country. But I cannot buy a dog at the ordinary market rate without being told, to my great surprise, that I have "given a blank cheque" for it, or that I have spent £10,000 on dogs! In all seriousness, I would ask whether this kind of thing does not amount to something like persecution. We all of us love England and the English people; but we begin to fear that the continued circulation of stories like these may make it very difficult for us to come here.

For the picture given of the life we are supposed to lead is so untrue that it really threatens to interfere with our real work, which is to govern our States in the interests of our subjects, and to strengthen the tie which binds the great Continent of India to Great Britain. Our own subjects are contented and loyal to us—we could not rule if they were not; for their devotion and their affection are the sole support of our thrones. But outside our States, in British India, we have enemies; because we stand so firmly for the connection with Great Britain, and because we and our statesmen, with centuries of experience behind us, believe that political advance must come steadily and sanely, as people are ready for it. These stories about our lavish expenditure, and these descriptions of our goings-on, which, if true, would argue that we were not merely irresponsible, but out of our senses, are a dangerous weapon in the hands of our enemies. Our people do not believe them; but our influence—which we desire to use wholeheartedly for the good of the Empire—extends far beyond our boundaries and into British India. This influence is weakened when those who do not know the facts read all these picturesque inventions.

I have already said that Ruling Princes these days have to work hard. We are not country gentlemen or leisured landholders, we are the active heads of large and complicated governments. We

have our cabinets, our councils, our public services ; our laws and our law courts, our police and our military, our medical and our educational systems are all quite distinct from those of British India—as distinct as the institutions of Belgium are from the institutions of France. In these times, when the functions of government have been extended to cover so many of the activities of the individual citizen, is it a small thing to rule millions of people ? The administrative system of all the larger States is, it is true, a smooth-running machine ; but our subjects are not content to be governed by a machine : they must have access to us personally ; they must bring us their grievances ; they must be assured that what they are expected to do is really our order, and that we really want them to do it. The upshot is that we have far less time to ourselves, I suppose, than any other class of people ; and unless we rise to our responsibilities our subjects quickly get dissatisfied, and there is trouble for everyone.

Will people in England try to realise what the true position is ? Because if they did, things would be much easier for us, and we should be better able to pull our weight in the Empire's boat. Very few of us ever come to England merely for pleasure. We mostly come on some Imperial mission, or very occasionally for reasons of health. We do our work as well as we can, and very hard work it is. We do not like being told in the Press that our life is one perpetual joy-ride punctuated by bouts of insane extravagance.

Article written by HIS HIGHNESS in The Contemporary Review, November 1928

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE INDIAN PRINCES

I HAVE ALREADY expressed myself at some length, in the hospitable columns of the British Press, upon the topic which forms the title of this article; and I hope that readers of *The Contemporary Review* will forgive me if I cannot find much that is new to say. But I am glad to accept the opportunity now afforded me of summarising, as I see it, the general situation in which the Indian Princes find themselves to-day.

It is, I believe, generally known in England that the present activities of the Chamber of Princes—which account for the presence here of my brother Rulers of Bhopal, Kashmir and Nawanagar, on behalf of the Standing Committee, and of several others of the many Rulers who are associating themselves with us—take their origin from a situation which has been of gradual growth. For a very long time, indeed, the Indian Princes have been oppressed by a feeling that all was not well with them: that their interests were suffering: and that they were gradually being excluded from a “place in the sun.” Let me trace very briefly how that feeling arose, and what was the foundation upon which it rests.

Do English people generally realise that the British Empire in India was for a long time only one among many States, and that it was once far smaller than my own territories? Such is the fact: and it has often seemed to me that this growth of the power of a handful of foreigners over the vast population of India is one of the most wonderful things in history. The ultimate success of the British in acquiring a paramount position in India is, I think, attributable to three factors. The first is British character, with its remarkable combination of individual enterprise and corporate discipline: the second is sea-power: the third is the loyalty of

Britain's allies among the people of India. With the first and second I do not propose to deal, for abler pens than mine have already undertaken the task. But regarding the third, I think there is a good deal still to be said. If we study the history of the growth of British power in India, we shall find that the Company was for long concerned to buttress its power by alliances with the Indian States. Recognising its remarkable characteristics, the more far-sighted Indian Statesmen and Sovereigns gladly entered into relations with it, placed their resources at its disposal, and paid for, as well as supplied, a large proportion of the armies which carried the British flag from one end of India to the other. For some considerable period, the British and the Marathas ran a neck-and-neck race for supremacy in India : and it was largely because the other Indian States preferred British to Maratha domination that victory came to the Company's standards. The result of the process was that while it suited the Company to ally with the States, and it suited the States to ally with the Company, the Company gradually attained a superiority of resources and of influence that dwarfed any other power in India. I do not assert that the Company then succumbed to the very human temptation of kicking down the ladder by which it had mounted to power : but I can certainly say that in the first half of the last century the States which had allied themselves with the Company, and had thereby ensured their own protection, had an uncomfortable time. They were rather despised because they did not share in that sudden spate of Westernisation which became so fashionable in British India : they were kept in rigid isolation one from the other, lest they should conspire against the Company : the authority of their administrations suffered because the local representatives of the Company engrossed power in their own hands.

With the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in 1857, a change came. The British in India suddenly found that in their own territories

their enemies were active while their friends were passive. To the surprise of everyone, it was the Indian States which saved the situation. "Those patches of Native Rule," to use Lord Canning's phrase, were the "breakwaters" which prevented the storm from sweeping the British power utterly away. In consequence, British people in India awakened to the value of the old, time-worn alliances with the States, and began to realise that, after all, Indian Princes were factors in Indian politics. They also realised, what I believe has never seriously been questioned since, that the plighted faith of the Princes would stand firm, even if the whole world tottered to destruction. There was thus a general disposition to wish the States well, and to regard them as friends to be preserved, rather than as nuisances to be abolished. Nevertheless, strange as it may seem, the root of the present difficulties in which we find ourselves goes right back to this particular period.

When the Crown took over from the Company those treaties with the States which the Company had originally contracted in its behalf, it proceeded to entrust agency functions to the new Government of India. Thus the Government became not merely the executive government of British India, but the Crown's agents for enjoying the rights and discharging the obligations laid down by the treaties. No one at the time could have foreseen that these two functions might one day become almost incompatible: and the arrangement adopted appeared obviously convenient. Yet before very long it began to affect the interests of the States adversely. This was a direct consequence of modern progress in means of communication, which began to weld British India into a single great territory under the supreme control of the Government of India. Wonderful possibilities now began to open up in the way of material advancement: capital was raised for railways, for irrigation, for commercial development, for scientific agriculture, for education, and for the thousand-and-one other things that world-

opinion was now counting among the enlarged functions of governments. The British Indian Government added more and more departments to itself: the experts in Simla planned great projects for the welfare of the people under their control: everybody in the Supreme Government was concerned with the task of modernising the administration and developing the resources of British India.

Meanwhile, how did the States fare? Unfortunately we remained both isolated and poor. Isolated, because the Government of India, despite our loyalty in the Mutiny, could not altogether overcome its atavistic fear of the "Country Powers" who not so long ago had been its equals. Poor, because we were forbidden access to the foreign capital which alone could enable large-scale productive expenditure to be undertaken. This prohibition originated, doubtless, in a benevolent desire to prevent simple-minded Rulers from being victimised by astute European financiers—as had occasionally happened in former days: but I cannot help thinking that its continuance into the age when States Governments were well able to take care of themselves in foreign financial transactions, was due partly at least to the desire of the Government of British India to avoid competition in the money market. However this may be, while British India was large, united, and increasingly prosperous, we continued individually in comparison small, isolated, and handicapped in all our endeavours to develop our States for the benefit of our subjects. We did all we could: we advanced perceptibly if slowly: and unquestionably we avoided perforce some of the mistakes of British India. But it was not easy for us to modernise our administrations, to improve communications, and to develop our resources. The efforts we expended might, under happier circumstances, have produced far better results.

The handicaps we suffered had other consequences than slow progress and comparative poverty. They made us weak at the time

when British India was growing stronger every day. They made us backward when "progress" was everywhere the catchword. They did more : they imperilled even the rights secured to us under our treaties, and guaranteed by the pledges of British Sovereigns. For British Indian administrators, anxious to get ahead with the big schemes they were planning, found themselves confronted with the treaty-map. More than one-third of the entire Indian continent, including Burma, is not British territory. What about all those States, with their antiquated treaty rights and their struggling governments? The British administrators went ahead without much regard to the rights of the States, from whom, somehow or other, a series of agreements was obtained, dealing with railways, mints, opium, salt, cantonments—indeed, with everything that the Government of India wanted. It was scarcely to be expected that these agreements would really safeguard the interests of the States, since they were designed to secure the interests of British India. Only in exceptional cases could the States, isolated and weak, deprived of the opportunity of joint consultation, successfully resist the pressure which could easily be brought upon them : but it is safe to say that a very large proportion of these agreements were signed against the real wishes of the States, and were often accompanied by formal protests. Further, when any doubts arose as to the meaning of the agreements, the Government of India interpreted them as seemed most convenient. To whom could the States appeal? There was no impartial arbiter at hand. The Secretary of State for India was far away : he could be approached only by Memorial transmitted by the very persons whose action was being protested against. The Government of India, which from one standpoint was the Crown's Agent charged to preserve the rights of the States, was the very administration which, in the interests of its more immediate responsibility, British India, was itself putting pressure upon the Princes. In fact, the dual function of the

Government of India, to which I have already referred, naturally predisposed it to concentrate all its best energies upon the favoured child, British India, and in pursuit of its benevolent ends to ignore the rights of the States. Its success was the more complete, first because the States were undoubtedly weak in comparison to itself ; and secondly because many of its new activities had taken them by surprise, so that in the case of a large proportion of the demands put forward by the Government of India, the States did not really know what their rights were ; and out of fear or out of courtesy fell in, though reluctantly, with the official view. Thus gradually but slowly the Government of India became the Government of British India, directing its policy towards the States in the interests, not of the Treaty relationship, but of British India. The new administrative Departments of the Government of India framed their policies. The States were not consulted, but had to acquiesce. The Political Department fought many a good fight to protect the States ; but official discipline is strong : and diplomats could not easily, on the strength merely of an honest regard for treaty rights, meet and defeat Railway and Finance experts on their own ground. So the process continued : and whenever the rights of the States seemed to conflict with the convenience of the British Indian Government, it was rarely the former that prevailed. Nevertheless, the new generation of Princes that was growing up, together with the efficient cadres of trained administrators upon which they insisted in their States, were preparing the way for a change. The rights of the States began to be investigated : new claims put forward by the Government of India were scrutinised. State Governments became increasingly efficient : and the States grew less helpless. But without the right of combination they could achieve little.

Since the beginning of the present century, certain new factors entered into the situation. Among the most important of these was the gradual association of British Indians in increasing numbers

with British officials in the control of the Government of India. The consequence has been to make the Government of India still more British Indian in its outlook : and to make it even more difficult than before for a State to assert its right against a claim put forward in the interests of British India. I am far from complaining of the policy which gives British Indians an increasing share in the government of their own country : it seems to me perfectly right and proper. I am only pointing out that such a policy makes it more than ever impossible that the Government of India should satisfactorily discharge two functions which have really become incompatible with one another. For if it governs British India well, it cannot possibly take anything but a British Indian view of State rights : and the British Indian view is based upon British Indian interests and convenience, and not upon the relationship, springing from the treaties, between the Indian States and the British Crown. What is the conclusion of the whole matter ? We see it before our eyes to-day. When people in this country talk or think of India, they mean British India : and they forget the States. They assume that British India has only to command, and the States have only to obey. Does this seem an uncharitable deduction ? I would only ask my readers to consider what happened in 1919. A Reformed Constitution was set up in British India. Did anyone in England ask how the rights of the States would be affected ? No ; and the result is that the popularly-elected legislatures in British India to-day are taxing the States, without their consent, in a variety of directions : are penalising them heavily in the spheres of tariffs, excise, exchange rates, salt, opium, and the like, for the benefit of the British Indian Exchequer and for the greater prosperity of British India. It is because we feel so convinced that the people of England did not intend this, and that, when they know what has happened, they will insist upon it being rectified, that my colleagues and I are here to-day.

But there is another factor in the situation, which is also in large measure responsible for producing our present appeal to the sense of justice which we know to reside in the British people. Since the War, when we Indian Princes proudly placed our swords, our lives, and the staunch loyalty of our subjects at the disposal of the King-Emperor, the Government of India has withdrawn its ancient embargo upon our meeting together and discussing the common interests of the States. From the time of that far-sighted and sympathetic statesman, Lord Hardinge, we have had many Conferences formal and informal : we have painfully acquired the habit of common action : we have struggled to overcome the heritage of individual jealousy and distrust fostered by years of enforced isolation. When the late Mr. Montagu visited India, we had already so far advanced as to be able to put before him, with the unanimous assent of a large number of our brother Rulers, a scheme for the rectification of our position. We wanted three things : a Chamber of Princes which would enable the States to speak with a common voice, and thus take their share, along with British India, in framing policies and taking decisions which affected the whole of India in common ; an Advisory Board, which was to be associated with the Political Department, to ensure that when policies were framed and decisions taken affecting the States alone, the standpoint of the States themselves might be adequately considered ; and lastly, a system of arbitration which, in justiciable matters at least, could give an impartial decision on any issue arising between the States and the Government of India. Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford broadly endorsed these proposals, and in their Report gave frank expression to their recognition of our difficulties. But after all, the action that was taken fell far short of what we wanted—principally, I believe, because we had no means of bringing our position to the notice of the British people. We got the shadow without the substance : and have had to rely upon our

own energies to supplement, so far as possible, the deficiencies of the machinery which was established. Since 1919 our difficulties have increased rather than diminished, on account of the influence over our destinies which has been conferred, unwittingly as we believe, upon the British Indian legislature. British India still dictates policy for All-India : and we are given no share in framing it, although it vitally affects us. The policy of the Government of India towards the States is still a resultant of the personalities of the Viceroy and of the Secretary to the Government of India in the Political Department. There is still no system of impartial arbitration in the case of a conflict of views between a State and the Government of India, even where, as in the Jamnagar Port case, the matter is one in which reference to a third party is the sole means of obtaining an equitable decision.

But we are confident that in the long run we shall be successful in our attempt to convince British opinion that our request for justice is reasonable. For the first time we are proceeding in accordance with a prearranged plan. For the first time, also, a predominant proportion of the 108 " full-powered " States of India are joining in concerted action. We realise that we must put forward our case : must prove it : and must take our share in devising a remedy. As a first step, we have asked for and obtained the appointment of a Committee, at present sitting under the chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler, to make a preliminary investigation into our political relations with the Crown and our fiscal relations with British India. We realise this Committee can settle nothing, but we hope its Report may prepare the way for a due recognition of our rights. We are ourselves exploring, with the help of the best legal advice we can obtain, the constitutional relationship between the States and the Crown, which is the foundation of our case. We have set up a special organisation, staffed by some of the most experienced and trusted Ministers of States, to collect and arrange,

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in a systematic form, examples of the way in which, as it seems to us, the existing arrangements fail to do justice to us. We earnestly trust that when the time comes for the British Cabinet to take action upon the Simon Report, there will not be a second attempt to proceed as though the 78 millions of people and the 800,000 miles of territory which together constitute the Indian States were factors which could be ignored in any rearrangement of the governance even of British India. When once our rights are vindicated, and publicly acknowledged, we are fully prepared to negotiate with His Majesty's Government a form of settlement which will take the most careful account not only of our own interests but also of those of Britain and of British India.

Fundamentally, of course, our appeal is to the plighted faith of the British nation, which, through the mouths of Sovereigns, Secretaries of State, and Viceroys, has pledged itself to abide by the treaties. We are ready and willing to co-operate in every way with British India for the advancement of the interests of the whole country: we are perfectly prepared to entertain the idea of a Federation such as has been proposed in the Memorandum presented to the Simon Commission by the European Association of India. But we are not willing to be ruled by, or in the interests of, British India: and we look to Britain to see that our unflinching loyalty to the Empire and to that Empire's Sovereign is no longer employed as a means to compel us to acquiesce in the process of our own extinction as a living political force in India.

Address by HIS HIGHNESS to the Royal Institute of International Affairs on November 8, 1928

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN : I have spoken and written so much within the last few months, in my endeavour to acquaint people in England with the topic which forms the subject of my address, that I fear much of what I shall say will not be new to you. But in addressing the Royal Institute of International Affairs, I feel that I am privileged to speak to an audience which is already to some extent familiar with the general outline of this problem. I think, therefore, that it will hardly be necessary for me to do more than to recall to your minds certain elementary facts, which must be carefully remembered if the present difficulties and the present attitude of the Indian States are to be justly appreciated.

May I assume that every member of my audience realises that the territory administered by Great Britain in India amounts to little more than half the area of that country? The rest of India, in area 800,000 square miles, inhabited by close upon eighty million people, is not British territory. The King's Writ does not run there ; the inhabitants are not British subjects. This is the territory of the Indian States. But although it constitutes so large a proportion of India its importance in the political and economic structure of the country is even greater than its area might indicate. It does not lie in one compact self-contained mass, but is scattered in a variety of great blocks up and down the whole Continent. In consequence, all the main arterial roads and railways, from East to West and from South to North, to say nothing of the feeder roads and feeder lines, pass alternately through State territory and British territory. But generally speaking, since the States constitute, as it were, the spine of the Indian Peninsula, it is actually possible as the crow flies to go from Cape Comorin to the Northern boundaries of Kashmir, and from Calcutta to the most Western

boundary of Baluchistan, without passing through more than a few hundred miles, out of several thousands, of British territory.

Having assumed that you have got more or less clearly in your minds the large area, and, by implication, the great territorial importance, of the Indian States, I am going to make an even larger assumption. I am going to assume that you have a general idea of how the map of India came to assume this shape. Unless you know this, it will be as difficult for you to appreciate the problem which I am going to put before you, as if you were unfamiliar with the size and importance of States territory. But in speaking of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, I feel sure that it will be unnecessary for me to do more than clear up a very few points connected with the rise of British power in India, upon which I believe rather common misconceptions exist.

I want first of all to deal with the rather common mistake, which I believe is held in many quarters, that the States owe their existence to the British power. Out of some 450 States, big and small, which are enumerated in the Official List published by the Government of India, the vast majority were in existence before the British Flag was ever seen on the shores of India. With comparatively few exceptions, the Indian States have for many centuries played their part in the politics of India, acknowledging the supremacy of the Empire of Delhi when that Empire was strong, but reasserting even their external independence when that Empire was weak. The Turkoman, the Tughlak, the Pathan, and the Moghul, all in turn exercised Imperial sway over India ; but while they exacted the acknowledgment of their supremacy, claimed, and sometimes enforced, tribute, and suppressed assertions of independence, they did not interfere with the internal administration of the States. In case of anticipated trouble, and particularly when they scented a combination against the Imperial authority, they would drastically punish disloyalty or refusal to acknowledge the Imperial authority.

Further, in times when the Delhi Empire underwent an urge to extension, it would occasionally bring once more under Imperial sway States which had taken advantage of the period of weakness to assert their independence. On such occasions as these, as in the times of Akbar and Aurangzeb, the Delhi Emperors would occasionally displace a dynasty and annex an entire Kingdom to the Empire. But these circumstances were very exceptional, and broadly speaking the general idea animating the Imperial authority at Delhi, throughout the course of the last thousand years, has been to exercise paramountcy over a collection of subordinate Kingdoms. The subordinate Kingdoms were expected to co-operate with the Imperial arms ; their Rulers were occasionally invested with Imperial authority for the government not of their own territory but of adjacent Imperial positions. It is unquestionable that it was no part of Imperial policy in India throughout historic times to build up a vast centralised Empire, with a single Imperial Executive. The local Kingdoms were preserved and utilised, and the support which they gave to the Imperial authority was highly valued. It is, however, interesting to notice that this same traditional Imperial policy also animated the later Empires like the Maratha Confederacy. It has frequently been asserted that had it not been for British supremacy in India, the Marathas would have destroyed every other Indian State. Such a view is not only contrary to the lessons of Indian history, but is actually at variance with recorded facts. The Marathas at the climax of their power exercised, it is true, an overlordship of a somewhat oppressive type over those Kingdoms which did not submit, but had to be compelled by force of arms to acknowledge their supremacy. But these Kingdoms were not destroyed, and there was never any question either of destroying them or of replacing the ancient dynasties. The anxiety with which some of the ancient Rajput Kingdoms, which suffered severely from Maratha sway, sought alliance with and protection

from the British, did not arise from any fear of being annexed or abolished, but simply because they hoped to exchange a heavy tribute for a light one. Indeed, it was probably this realisation of the comparative merits of a British and of a Maratha Empire which finally turned the scales in favour of the British. For if the Indian States at the beginning of the nineteenth century had not come to the conclusion that British supremacy was preferable to Maratha supremacy the verdict of history might perhaps have been different. In histories we read much of the exploits of British Admirals in Indian waters, and of British Commanders in Indian campaigns. But do we always realise that the great majority of the troops which followed these same British Commanders were paid for, and in many cases supplied, by the Indian allies of the East India Company? In actual fact, it is impossible to understand the rise of British power in India without an understanding of that loose tributary system of Empire which has for so long determined the conditions of every Imperial power. At the time when the British became a serious factor in Indian politics, the system had reached one of its recurrent periods of decline. No one who could avoid it—and most of them could avoid it—paid any tribute to the shadowy Empire of Delhi. And although the Company's positions in Bengal depended theoretically upon an Imperial grant, Warren Hastings himself formally repudiated tribute in the year 1773, and set the East India Company, like any other powerful Indian State of the day, upon its own feet as an independent entity. It was the same statesman who laid the foundations for the expansion of British power by entering into a series of alliances with neighbouring Indian States. In a letter to Alexander Elliot in 1777, he thus gives his views on the matter :—

“ You are already well acquainted with the general system which I wish to be empowered to establish in India, namely, to extend the influence of the British Nation to every part of India not too remote

from their possessions, without enlarging the circle of their defence or involving them in hazardous or indefinite engagements, and to accept the allegiance of such of our neighbours as shall sue to be enlisted among the friends and allies of the King of Great Britain. The late Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula [of Oudh], who wanted neither pride nor understanding, would have thought it an honour to be called the Vizier of the King of England, and offered at one time to coin siccas in His Majesty's name. . . . On this footing I would replace the Subaship of Oudh. On this footing I would establish an alliance with Berar [Hyderabad]. These countries are of more importance to us than any other, from their contiguity to ours, and therefore it is of consequence to settle their connection with us before that of any other. But the system might be rendered more extensive by time, and the observance of a steady principle of conduct and an invariable attachment to formal agreements."

Warren Hastings was following a strictly Indian tradition, first in his repudiation of tribute to an Empire too weak to enforce it, and secondly in his endeavour to build up a combination of friends and allies to buttress his position against possible rivals. From the year 1773, when he repudiated tribute, and when your English Parliament began for the first time to legislate for the British possessions in India, the Company ceased to have, even in theory, any connection with the moribund Moghul Empire. It entered into relations with the other powers of India. It concluded alliances ; it contracted engagements, without reference to any superior authority except London. On the other side, the States with which it entered into engagements behaved as entirely independent units. They neither desired nor sought the sanction of the Moghul Empire for the steps they were taking. The importance of these facts will be better appreciated when it is realised that the Moghul Empire still had more than half a century of phantom existence ahead of it. Yet throughout the whole of this period both the Company on the

one side and the Indian States on the other entirely ignored its existence. All of this, I believe, goes to show quite clearly that there is no sustainable argument in the contention occasionally put forward that it is as heirs of the Moghul Empire, and as successors to a Shahenshah at Delhi, that the British exercised their present paramountcy over India. So far as British India is concerned, you hold your power partly by conquest and partly by the willing acceptance of the people. But so far as the Indian States are concerned, your paramountcy depends entirely upon the contractual obligations into which you entered at a time when it was largely in their hands to make or mar your future in India.

When the Company finally won the race for supremacy in India, it found itself called upon to conduct two entirely separate sets of duties. It was absolute master, subject only to control from Great Britain, of its own territories. In addition, it had to conduct relations, governed by a complicated series of alliances, engagements and agreements, with the Indian States. As might have been expected, in the discharge of this latter function it followed the kind of principles which had been adopted by previous Empires. It left the internal management of the States very largely alone. It prevented them from combining against itself, and forbade intercourse between them. Occasionally it intervened when it considered its own interests required such a step, with drastic effect. But the official policy was one of rigid non-intervention. The Company was apprehensive of its own position so far as the English Parliament was concerned, and desired to avoid any opposition to the periodic renewals of its charter. The manner in which parliamentary opinion was reflected in the successive variations of a policy during the time when the Company was engaged in its long-drawn duel with the Marathas will be familiar to you all, and I will not weary you by repeating information which can be had from the ordinary textbooks. But I should like you to notice that this fear

of British public opinion, as expressed in Parliament, persisted for long in the days of Wellesley, Shore, and Hastings, and was very largely responsible for the cautious manner in which the affairs of the Indian States were handled. When the intervention, which was recognised as always likely to lead to trouble, had to be resorted to, it was resorted to by the authorities of Fort William themselves. And it was always done in response to some urgent necessity, real or assumed. The local representatives of the Company, accredited to the Courts of the Indian States, were most rigidly restrained from interfering in any manner whatever. The restrictions imposed upon them were not always effectual, particularly in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century. For there was a wave of humanitarian sentiment passing over England at that time in which the Company's servants shared, and the diplomatic agents found it difficult not to interfere in the internal affairs of the States for the purpose, as they thought, of introducing a Western tone into the indigenous governments. But, as I have said, this was not in the least the idea of the higher authorities. They only desired their agents at the Courts of Indian States to keep them informed of what was going on, to save possible trouble, and generally to keep things as quiet as possible. This policy was officially laid down as early as the time of Lord Hastings. Writing officially to the Resident in Hyderabad, who had advocated interference, the Governor-General said :—

“ In the second paragraph of your first letter you say that ‘ you suppose our interference in the Nizam's affairs to be not merely right, but also a duty, arising out of our supremacy in India, which imposes on us the obligation of maintaining the tranquillity of all countries connected with us, and consequently of protecting the people from oppressions, as no less necessary than the guaranteeing of their rulers against revolution.’ The assumption of our possession of universal supremacy in India, involving such rights as

you have described, is a mistake. . . . Although a virtual supremacy may undoubtedly be said to exist in the British Government, from the inability of other States to contend with its strength, the making such a superiority a principle singly sufficient for any exertion of our will, would be to misapply and to pervert it to tyrannical purposes.

“ Paragraphs 4 and 5 plead necessity for our interposition, because the Nizam does not rule his subjects with equity and prudence. The fact of maladministration is unquestionable, and must be deplored. Does that, however, decide the mode in which alteration is to be effected? Where is our right to determine that the amount of the evil is such as to demand our taking the remedy into our hands? His Lordship in Council observes that the necessity stated is altogether constructive. Were such a pretence allowable, a powerful State should never want colour for subjugating a weak neighbour. The consequence is so obvious that no principle in the law of nations leaves room for acting in such a presumption. It is admitted that if convulsions rage so violently in one State as clearly to threaten the excitation of ferment in a bordering one, the latter may be justified in reducing to order the nation by which its tranquillity was menaced. This, however, is an extreme case, at the same time that it is of a description strictly defined. No analogy exists between indisputable exigency and an asserted convenience, where vague arbitrary charges, if tolerated on the ground of procedure, would furnish ready pretext for the foulest usurpations.”

The very Officer to whom this admonition was addressed evidently came to realise the mistaken character of the policy he was urging, for he himself writes, some fifteen years later, as follows :—

“ Another evil of interference is that it gives too much power to our Agents at foreign courts, and makes Princes and Ministers very much the slaves of subjects of their will. An interfering Agent is an abominable nuisance wherever he may be, and our Agents are apt

to take their turn. They like to be masters instead of mere negotiators. They imagine, often very erroneously, that they can do good by meddling in other people's affairs, and they are impatient in witnessing any disorder which they think may be remedied by our interference, forgetting that one step in this course will unavoidably be followed by others, which will most probably lead to the destruction of the independence of the State concerned."

It must be admitted to be an evil of the non-interference policy that temporary and local disorder may occasionally ensue, and must be tolerated, if we mean to adhere strictly to that principle. But this is a consequence which we naturally dislike. We are not disposed to wait until things settle themselves in their natural course. We think ourselves called on to interfere, and some bungling or unnatural arrangement is made by our will, which, because it is our own, we ever after support against the inclination of the people and their notions of right and justice. And that this policy remained officially accepted is proved by its repetition, almost under the same terms, by no less a person than Lord Dalhousie himself.

"Again, it is often maintained that such is the misgovernment of His Highness the Nizam, that so great are the violence and lawless confusion which pervade every part of his dominions, that it has become the moral duty of the British Government, as the paramount power in India, to assume to itself the Government of His Highness' dominions, in order to correct the evils of his rule, and to rescue his subjects from the sufferings which are alleged to proceed therefrom.

"I desire to repudiate all adhesion to a doctrine which leads, in my humble judgment, to a system of unwarranted and officious meddling.

"In too many instances, I fear it proceeds not from sentiments of enlarged benevolence but from the promptings of ambitious greed. Even where the motive from which it springs is pure and sincere,

the doctrine is, in my view, not the less unsound. The acknowledged supremacy of the British power in India gives to it the right, and imposes upon it the duty, of maintaining by its influence, and (if need be) compelling by its strength, the continuance of general peace. It entitles it to interfere in the administration of Native Princes if their administration tends unquestionably to the injury of the subjects or of the allies of the British Government.

“ But I recognise no mission confided to the British Government which imposes on it the obligation, or can confer upon it the right of deciding authoritatively on the existence of native independent sovereignties, and of arbitrarily setting them aside, whenever their administration may not accord with its own views, and although their acts in no way affect the interests or security of itself or its allies.

“ Still less can I recognise any such property in the acknowledged supremacy of the British Government in India, as can justify its rulers in disregarding the positive obligations of international contracts, in order to obtrude on Native Princes and their people a system of subversive interference which is unwelcome alike to people and prince.”

In passing, may I hazard a guess? One of the reasons disposing Lord Dalhousie to embark upon his various annexations and to enunciate his much-discussed “ policy of lapse ” was his conviction that only by resort to such drastic measures as he suggested could the blessings of British rule, of which he was such an enthusiastic advocate, be extended to the Indian States.

One result of the Company’s deliberate policy was that the States scarcely shared at all in that craze for Westernisation which was so striking a feature of the epoch immediately preceding the Indian Mutiny. While the Officers of the Company in British India were busily engaged in introducing Western education, Western communication, Western Christianity, and Western methods, the Indian

States remained very largely governed by their traditional systems. It was perhaps fortunate that this was the case ; for when the shock of the Mutiny burst upon an astonished Empire, the Indian States proved the only stable political units. That the Princes themselves would be true to their treaty obligations, went without saying, but the important thing to remember was that their people followed them devotedly. In British India the friends of Britain were hesitant and apathetic, their enemies were active and malignant. We have only to read the Blue Book called " Honours and Rewards for Mutiny Services " to realise what would have happened had the States not stepped into the breach and enabled the scattered survivals of British power to weather the storm. It may be doubted whether there would have been an Englishman left in Central or Northern India.

The Mutiny and its suppression brought many changes, but among these I do not count any alteration in the constitutional position of the Indian States. The Crown, when it assumed the Government of India in 1858, merely displaced the Company, so far as the States were concerned, as a principal displaces an agent. The engagements which had been concluded by the East India Company were, so Constitutional Lawyers affirm, engagements between the States and the Crown ; since only in virtue of the sovereign authority delegated to it by the Crown could the Company enter into such relationship. Accordingly, after the Mutiny, the Crown as a formal act assumed the obligations of the treaties, and proceeded to delegate the task of conducting the treaty relationship to its own servants, namely, the Government of India as reconstituted. But, unfortunately, no sufficient distinction was made between the machinery which governed British India and the machinery which conducted the treaty relationship.

Now this direct assumption of responsibility by the Crown prepared the way for a change of policy. I have pointed out that the

East India Company, save for exceptional and drastic action, desired nothing better than to leave the States alone and to hear nothing about them. It may be questioned whether the Government of India which came into existence after the Mutiny would have been content with this policy of *laissez-faire*, even had circumstances permitted it to continue. For in the first place this Government was much more secure in its position than the Government of the East India Company had ever been. It was a branch of His Majesty's Government. Its Officers were Crown servants. It therefore felt itself competent to do, and did, a number of things which the Company, particularly towards the end of its existence, would have been afraid to do. Secondly, while the Company in the twenty years immediately preceding the Mutiny had learned to look down upon the Indian States and to minimise their importance, the circumstances of the Mutiny had shown that as political factors they were very much to be reckoned with. It was therefore natural for the new Government of India to adopt, both by inclination and from a sense of expediency, a more positive policy towards the States than had been regarded as necessary in the days of the Company. The immediate thing to be done was, of course, to recognise their services in the Mutiny ; and with certain exceptions this was done ungrudgingly. Further, the unequivocal declarations of Queen Victoria and of Lord Canning regarding respect for the treaty rights of the States, and the distribution of the so-called Sanads of adoption, were all part of a policy designed to reassure the States that no aggressive measures against them would be countenanced. Nevertheless, owing to the force of circumstances, the remainder of the nineteenth century was to witness a progressive and serious encroachment upon those State rights which the Crown had solemnly undertaken to safeguard.

In my recent address to the East India Association I sketched in some little detail the reasons for this development, and I do not

desire to cover the same ground at any length. I will only mention that the injuries suffered by the States proceeded principally from two factors. The first was their isolation. For despite their proved loyalty in the Mutiny, the Government of India for more than half a century continued to discountenance any collaboration or even intercourse between them. Each State remained an isolated unit, dealt with as such, and deprived of the counsel and support of the rest. In contrast with this position, British India assumed, through the rise of modern means of communication, an increasing unity ; with the result that if any difference of interest arose between British India and the Indian States, this difference was uniformly presented as a difference between the whole of British India on the one side and an individual State on the other. In face of such disparity, it was difficult to expect that State rights could be preserved. In the second place, the Government of India became, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, more and more exclusively the Government of British India : and since it managed the Crown's relations with the States, it proceeded to manage them more and more from the British Indian point of view. The fifty years which elapsed after the Mutiny were a time of great material progress throughout the world in general. In this progress British India conspicuously shared. With the development of modern communications, which linked the great territories of British India together, it became possible for the Government responsible for their administration to embark upon widely conceived schemes of development. In the execution of these schemes the Government of India came to rely more and more upon their own technical experts, who, being neither diplomats nor politicians, regarded all India, British territory and States territory alike, as being a fair field for their activities. In pursuit of the overmastering interest of British India, State rights were in practice constantly infringed. More and more was the convenience, the

interest, the prosperity of British India regarded as being the sole and only test which a particular policy must satisfy. The States, isolated and comparatively poor, were, as a rule, in no case to make a successful stand for themselves. They were obliged by pressure to execute a lengthy series of agreements, dealing with railways, excise, transit duties, opium, and many other matters. All these agreements were framed with one end in view—the advantage of British India. The States were further hampered in many directions, lest they might interfere with any one of the number of cherished schemes. They were prevented from raising the loans necessary for their internal development. They were checked in their endeavours to exploit their natural resources. These things were done with the sole object of benefiting the favourite child of the Government of India—the territory for whose administration it was responsible to Great Britain.

Now, I am not for one instant asserting that the progress of British India should have been arrested by any unreasonable attitude of obstruction which the States might have chosen to adopt. But I think I can safely assert that the attitude of the States was very far from being obstructive. In that period, as at the present time, they were perfectly ready and willing to come to working arrangements which would be to the benefit not only of British India but of the country as a whole. But both in the one-sided character of the agreements, and in the methods which were employed to extort their consent to the abandonment of a number of cherished prerogatives, it is, I think, unquestionable that the States had a serious grievance. My hearers will, I am sure, appreciate the fact that with the growing centralisation of the Government of India, and with the gradual multiplication of its experts' departments, the Political Department, in whose charge was the everyday transactions of business with the States, found itself obliged for the most part to follow the general line. The Indian Princes acknowledge,

and gratefully acknowledge, that on many occasions the Political Officers attached to them fought hard and valiantly in support of State rights. But the Political Department was, after all, but a single branch of the Government of India ; and in the last resort, official discipline prevailed. Hence there was during the period which I am now examining a very marked change in the functions of the Indian Political Service. Instead of discharging their old diplomatic role and of proffering wise counsel and advice when they thought such a step necessary, they became more and more the instruments for enforcing upon the States a policy conceived and executed in the interests, not of the treaty relationship, but of British India.

I must, if I am to make you understand the feelings of the Indian States at the present time, pause for a few moments more on some of the characteristic features of the system. For it is necessary to make you realise how helpless the States felt themselves to be. I have already remarked upon the policy of isolation which prevented the Princes from discussing questions of common interest, and from devising a common policy. But I must now mention to you a further fact, namely, the changed position of the Political Officer. During the time of which I am speaking the Political Officer tends more and more to become not merely the Crown's representative, but a physical embodiment of the Crown's paramountcy. Upon his reports a particular Prince was marked down in the books of the Government of India as being loyal or disloyal, efficient or inefficient, complacent or stubborn. The Prince himself, for obvious reasons, never had any opportunity of seeing these reports. Instances have come to my own notice in which a Prince has been seriously prejudiced in the eyes of the Government of India, on the strength of the wildest gossip carried to his Political Agent by disaffected or interested parties. What wonder then that in many States the Political Officer was regarded, by Princes and people alike, as an

omnipotent being whose lightest suggestion partook of the nature of a command? Worse still, from the point of view of the Rulers of the States, was the tendency of the Political Agent to displace the authority of the Princes, and to offer himself as an asylum for the discontented. As I have already said, the work which the Political Service has performed for the benefit of the States is very great, and for this work we Princes will always be grateful. But the system under which the work was conducted, placed even the best and most loyal Ruler largely at the mercy of a particular individual Officer. It is, I think, a great testimony to the personnel of the Political Department that under a system with the disadvantages which I have described, occasions for friction should have been so comparatively infrequent. But I am prepared to maintain without fear of contradiction that the system itself was such as to hamper both the Princes and the Political Officer in their endeavours to discharge satisfactorily their respective duties. In the next place, I should like to draw attention to another characteristic of the system. There was no impartial tribunal competent to decide questions at issue between a State and the Government of India. The word of the Government of India was final in any matter under dispute. It is true, of course, that a right of appeal to the Secretary of State was vested in the Princes, but the conditions under which the memorials were submitted could hardly be described as satisfactory. The Prince only knew his side of the case; but was not informed of the reasons behind an adverse decision by Government. His papers were submitted through the official channels; he could never be sure how far his strongest point might or might not be offset by a marginal note to which, had he been given a further opportunity, he might himself have supplied a satisfactory reply. The defects of this procedure were the more serious because, as I have indicated, the developments in British India brought the Government of India into contact with the Indian States in a very

large number of directions. And it seemed to the States inequitable that the party in whose hands the final decision, for practical purposes, generally lay, should itself be the party against whom the complaint, or to whom the petition, was addressed. Finally, the policies laid down by the Government of India, although conceived primarily in the interests of British India, were found in effect to exercise an influence over the affairs of the Indian States. Here again I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not denying that it was for the advantage of India as a whole that wise and far-reaching policies should be formulated and executed by the best brains in the country. But I do say that it was hard to expect the States to acquiesce passively and without demur in policies vitally affecting them, which had been formulated without their consent.

The system which I have outlined, while it was powerless to modify the proved loyalty of the Princes to the Crown and to the Empire, was unquestionably a cause of considerable uneasiness to them. For the reasons which I have already indicated, they were unable to oppose it. But here, as in many other circumstances, the Great War brought a change. I think I cannot do better than quote from the Montagu-Chelmsford Report regarding the part played by the Indian States in that great struggle. The late Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford wrote : " No words of ours are needed to make known the services to the Empire which the States have rendered. They were a profound surprise and disappointment to the enemy ; and a cause of delight and pride to those who knew beforehand the Princes' devotion to the Crown. With one accord the Rulers of the Native States of India rallied to fight for the Empire when war was declared ; they offered personal services and the resources of their States. Imperial Service Troops from over a score of States have fought in various fields, and many with great gallantry and honour. The Princes have helped lavishly with men and horses, material and money ; and some of them have in person served in

France and elsewhere. They have shown that our quarrel is their quarrel, and they have both learned and taught the lesson of their own indissoluble connection with the Empire and their immense value as part of the polity of India.”

This final proof of the complete loyalty of the Princes to the King-Emperor, and of their devoted attachment to the Empire, gave the death-blow to the old policy of isolation. Lord Hardinge, with a really statesmanlike intuition, inaugurated the plan of calling some of the Ruling Princes together to discuss matters of common interest. Lord Chelmsford further developed this idea, which coincided with the desires of the Princes themselves. It was generally understood that the official ban on the meetings of the Princes was withdrawn. As a result, when Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford were engaged in making their survey of the Indian situation towards the close of the War, a number of the Princes were ready to propose a scheme for the better adjustment of their relations with the Paramount Power. This scheme comprised three principal features. In the first place, it was designed to give the Princes some voice in the discussion and formulation of policies applicable to the whole of India ; and for this purpose contemplated the creation of a Chamber of Princes which would at once enable the States to speak with a common voice, and would provide the basis for some machinery by which matters of common concern to the States and to British India might be investigated and settled. In the next place, it was designed to associate with the Political Department a standing body representative of the States, whose function it would be to bring to the notice of the Viceroy and all his officers the collective opinion of the Princes upon important matters. In the third place, it was to provide a system of arbitral machinery which would enable an impartial decision to be arrived at when disputes arose regarding their respective rights between States and the Government of India.

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It is interesting to recall that ten years ago these ideas were discussed and generally approved in the Joint Report of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford. But for reasons into which I need not enter, they have still failed fully to materialise. Had they been given the necessary form and content, I think it unlikely that the Standing Committee of the Chamber would have decided to depute my colleagues and myself to England this summer. But while British India received, as a result of the recommendations of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford, a considerable instalment of that which it desired, the Indian States were lost sight of. Indeed, I am prepared to maintain that the condition of the States as compared with that of British India is perhaps even less satisfactory to-day than it was before the last Government of India Act of 1919. For at the time when this Act was passed, it seems to have escaped the notice of statesmen in Great Britain that certain powers were by that Act conferred upon the new British Indian Legislature which might seriously affect—and in fact have seriously affected—the interests of the States. I need not elaborate this point : because I am sure that one of the most outstanding examples, namely, the high protective tariff imposed upon all India for the benefit of British India, will be in the minds of my hearers. But the result of our experience of the work of the new constitution in British India has been to convince us that there is very real danger lest the rights which have been guaranteed to us by the Crown may suffer even more seriously in the future than they have suffered in the past, by a gradual process of erosion. It is for this reason that we asked Lord Irwin, as representative of the King-Emperor, to arrange for that inquiry into our position which is now being conducted by Sir Harcourt Butler and his colleagues. We hope that the report of the Indian States Committee will clear the ground. At least, we have spared neither pains nor money in our endeavour to place the whole of our case before them in as plain a manner as possible.

It remains for me to indicate very plainly the present attitude of the Indian Princes, first towards Britain and the Empire, and secondly towards British India. I and my colleagues have been pained to read irresponsible statements and to hear irresponsible remarks to the effect that we are aiming at complete independence of the Empire ; or that we desire to dispute the authority of the Viceroy ; or that we desire to abolish the Indian Political Service. It is hardly necessary for me in speaking to an audience such as this to tell you emphatically that every one of these allegations rests upon an entire misconception of our attitude. From Great Britain the Princes of India are seeking nothing more nor less than their constitutional rights. Exactly what those rights are is a question now being investigated. But one thing is perfectly certain. The rights of the Indian States, when they are authoritatively determined, will be found to define in the plainest possible manner the rights of the Paramount Power. We fully recognise that there can be no right without a corresponding obligation. Just as we ask Great Britain to see that we enjoy the former, so do we unhesitatingly assume the responsibility for the latter. And I think that our record of loyalty to the King and of service to the Empire since the time when the British Raj in India grew up, entitles us to believe that our assurance in these matters is worthy of respect. But I do not conceal from you that we are anxious to get both our rights and our obligations clearly defined ; for only after this has been done shall we be in a position to play the part which we believe we ought to play in the politics both of India and of the Empire.

Next, as regards British India. We realise fully that the question of the constitutional development of British India is one which lies between British India and Great Britain. We have neither the right nor the desire to interfere. In so far as we hold an opinion upon this question, it is that we wish British India well, and that we hope that the constitutional rights of its people will be realised, under the

aegis of Great Britain, at such speed as wisdom may dictate. We do not think that there is any incompatibility between the discharge of Great Britain's obligations to British India and the fulfilment of her plighted word to the Indian States ; for we are living in a world of facts, and in politics, in particular, compromise and adjustment form the basis upon which most problems can be settled. We are fully prepared to enter into working arrangements with British India, and are glad to notice the recent indications that the misunderstandings between the All-Parties Conference and ourselves may shortly give way to a more cordial sentiment. We realise that State rights must not be made an excuse for compromising the development, economic and political, of India as a whole. Our simple request is that these rights should first be recognised, and that then we should be asked, as reasonable men and as responsible rulers, to enter into the kind of working arrangements which will promote the general good. But we do not believe that because Great Britain is pledged to help British India to achieve responsible government the Indian States are therefore necessarily obliged to accept the political or economic domination of British India. Here again there is much misunderstanding which can be cleared away only by friendly agreement following upon frank discussion. For our own part, while we believe that the British connection in India will be necessary for as far ahead as we can see, we do not believe that the emergence of the Indian States as a factor in the politics of the country need impose any obstacle to the attainment by British India of that goal to which British policy is pledged.

I have hitherto been content to deal with some of the problems of the States from an external standpoint. If I were to explain to you in detail the policy of the Chamber of Princes in using wise endeavours to promote efficient administration and sound progress along every line in its constituent States, I should detain you too long. But I would ask you to realise that the Indian Princes, with their age-long

traditions of administration, have grasped, and grasped firmly, one point. They are fully convinced that, in the last resort, their survival as political units depends upon their own subjects. With their subjects behind them, they have nothing to fear from any quarter. If their subjects grow disaffected ; if that wonderful personal touch between ruler and ruled, of which the Princes of India are so proud, shows signs of weakening, then it is obvious to us that not even the whole might of the British Empire, if it were to be employed on our behalf, could suffice to secure our position. It is therefore to setting our own houses in order, quietly and without ostentation, but none the less systematically, that our endeavours are now directed. We realise that the world is not standing still ; but that the political ideas current in British India are not to be excluded by any frontier line upon the map. But we believe that the system of personal government, modified in harmony with modern conditions by an efficient public service, an upright judiciary, and by an increasing association of the traditional leaders of the people with the Councils of the Government, may yet prove to be a plan which in India has much to commend it. As I have said, I will not detain you by entering into details of what the Chamber of Princes has done and what it hopes to do in the way of encouraging developments in this direction. But I should be unfair, both to you and to my Brother Princes, if I allowed you to remain in ignorance of the extent to which this problem of the internal good government of the States is ever present to our minds.

One last word, and I have done. I have tried to sketch very briefly the way in which the present position of the Indian States has grown up. I have outlined to you the reasons which made that position unsatisfactory from our point of view. It remains to me to appeal to those of you here who believe that the Princes have a case, to see to it that when the time comes for Great Britain to legislate once more for British India you will not suffer that legislation

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to assume a form by which the interests of the States are either prejudiced or ignored. You will find among the Indian Princes every disposition to be reasonable, every disposition to assist you in finding a solution for their problems. But we do earnestly ask you to believe that such a solution, to be successful, must be arrived at in consultation with ourselves, and that the fundamental treaty position between the States and Crown points to the machinery of Round Table Conferences and direct negotiations, rather than of executive fiats and one-sided commands.

Message given by HIS HIGHNESS to The Morning Post on Armistice Day, 1928

THE TIME HAS COME for us to commemorate with all reverence and solemnity the tenth anniversary of the termination of the greatest war mankind has known. In that terrible struggle, India, like other portions of the British Empire, played a part of which her sons may well be proud.

On the battlefields of the world they lie beside their British comrades : and their blessings rest upon the Empire for which they gave their lives. They helped to make safe the cause of righteousness. Let us look to it that we do not falter in our pursuit of those ideals for which they died.

At the same time it was given to the Indian Princes to show that the spirit of their ancient chivalry was not diminished ; and as in the dark days of 1857, so again in 1914, it was our pride and joy to draw the sword in defence of our plighted honour. We made the cause of the Empire our own : we placed at the service of the King-Emperor our lives and all that made those lives worth the living. We counted it our privilege to throw ourselves and all that we had into the scale, deeming our loss as but gain, so only that the cause of the Empire were advanced.

In common with my Brother Princes of India, I join in homage to the memory of the Empire's glorious dead. It is for all of us who fought for Britain to see that their sacrifice was not made in vain : and that the lives they ransomed at so dear a price are lived worthily and well. If in the years which have elapsed since that November morning, a decade ago, when the cannon of the world fell silent, there have been disillusion and disappointment, so that men grow weary of waiting for that new dawn which is yet to come, there remains but the greater need for steadfastness, for courage, and for determination. Through fair weather and through foul, the

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Princes of India have stood firmly for Britain. As we suffered with you in the agonies of war, so we will toil with you to build up our common strength anew. Whatever the future may have in store for the Empire and for ourselves, we will stand with you shoulder to shoulder unflinchingly, as we did in the days when those whose glorious sacrifice we now commemorate laid down their lives for King and Country.

Speech delivered by HIS HIGHNESS to the Indian States Committee, November 27, 1928

SIR HARCOURT BUTLER, MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN STATES COMMITTEE : The protracted enquiry which has occupied you so long is now approaching its concluding stages ; but before it terminates I am anxious to take advantage of your indulgence in order to give expression to some of the feelings which I know well are common to me and to my Brother Princes. I will not detain you very long.

I am quite sure that from the commencement of your labours, Mr. Chairman, you and your colleagues shared with the Princes an anxiety to obtain as much information as possible bearing upon the problems which stand to be investigated. We acknowledge the courtesy with which you have afforded us the opportunity of collecting evidence in our endeavours to put forward a comprehensive case. We further acknowledge the patience which you have displayed in arranging for these protracted Sessions. We hope that we have shown that on our side neither energy nor expense have been spared in our endeavours to provide you with all the assistance in our power. But there was one factor over which neither you nor we could exercise complete control ; and that is the factor of time. You, Sir Harcourt, possess a profound knowledge of the essential elements of the problems which you and your colleagues are investigating ; but I may perhaps venture to question whether at the commencement of this enquiry, you had formed an estimate, any more accurate than that which we ourselves had formed, as to the time really requisite for the preparation of our case. We Princes have done our best ; our Counsel, our Special Organisation and our Ministers have laboured devotedly. But the fact remains that the time at your disposal and at ours has been all too short to enable us to do even the barest justice to the case which we desire to

put before you. This shortness of time has been responsible for certain defects, to which I would briefly draw your attention. In the first place, it has handicapped the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes in its endeavours to secure complete unanimity among the Members of the Chamber. Had more time been available, there can be little doubt but that the States who have authorised us to speak for them would be even more numerous than they are to-day. By way of illustration I may mention the fact that even since your Committee commenced its Sessions in London, four more States have joined us—Cooch Behar, Bahawalpur, Dewas Junior, and Tehri Garhwal ; and I think there can be no reasonable doubt that had there been sufficient opportunity for me and my colleagues of the Standing Committee to explain more fully to our Brother Princes the aims and objects of our activities, we should have been able to appear before you with the declaration that the Princes of India spoke with a unanimous voice. If this consequence of the shortage of time has operated to handicap us, there is a further consequence which, if I may say so, has operated to handicap the Committee also. And that is the visible marks of haste which are so apparent in the Evidence which we have placed before you. I do not here refer merely to certain minor misprints and misplacements in the printed volumes. In my opinion, considering the short time at their disposal, the printers have worked something very like a miracle ; and I do not think that these small deficiencies are likely seriously to impede the work of the Committee. I refer to more serious considerations. In the first place, the quantity of the Evidence which we have placed before you would have been largely augmented, had it been possible to spend a larger amount of time in its collection. It may perhaps surprise the Committee to learn that almost one-fourth of the States who are associated with the Standing Committee have found themselves unable to submit evidence in the detailed form upon which our Counsel has rightly

insisted. This, of course, does not mean that these twenty States have got no cases. In reality, they possess many important ones. But in the time at their disposal, some of the States whose archives are not systematically arranged, have found it impossible to search out all the documents necessary for the proper establishment of the contentions they desire to put forward. Not only has the quantity of the Evidence thus been diminished by the shortage of time ; but in some respects its quality has also been affected. Our Counsel has already explained to you that the selection of Evidence presented to you is merely representative. The task of selection would, I think, have been greatly facilitated had all the States which have joined us been able to submit their cases in the form which Counsel required. For we should then have been able to select as illustrations under every head a variety of instances fully illustrative of all the hardships from which the States are now suffering. Under many of the heads this has been done, but it will not have escaped the notice of the Committee that certain of the illustrations are of a kind which may appear, on superficial examination, somewhat trivial. I and my Brother Princes feel the utmost confidence that the particular nature of these cases will not cause the Committee to overlook the fact that they frequently represent small examples of the violation of great principles. But it would have been more satisfactory, both to the Committee and to ourselves, if examples of these violations could have been in every case important of themselves instead of merely important from their implication. There is no doubt that we could have put forward under a variety of heads better and more striking examples, had we been in a position to devote a longer time to the task of collection. Finally, having collected the Evidence in an imperfect manner, we were also compelled to deal with it in a fashion far more summary than its importance demanded. I have been interested to learn that if we had entrusted the preparation of the presentation of our Evidence

to one of the most prominent firms of London solicitors they would have required nearly twelve months, and a special staff, in order to deal satisfactorily with these four volumes which have been put into your hands. Had time been available, we should not have dreamed of asking you to consider the evidence in this comparatively undigested form. Our Counsel would have been able to reduce the case to a series of general propositions, illustrated by particular examples. Thus the value of the evidence would have been easier to estimate ; and its total effect would have been more obvious. I fear, therefore, that we have to convey to you, Sir Harcourt, and to your colleagues, our regretful apologies for the manner in which we have had, quite involuntarily, to add to your already burdensome labours. But I trust I have said enough for you to realise that we have done our best despite many handicaps. Not the least of these handicaps, to be entirely frank, is the long-cherished belief of the States that their rights were perfectly safe ; and that in the face of the frequent and authoritative declarations made by the highest personages regarding the sanctity of the Treaties, they could rest secure. Only recently has it been borne in upon the States that if the Crown is to protect them in the enjoyment of their rights and their privileges, they must be in a position to bring to its notice, clearly and precisely, the exact content of these rights. The result has been that for the last many years, the Indian States have never even contemplated that a time might come when it would be necessary, in the interests of the Crown as well as of themselves, that they should put forward a reasoned case as against some of the actions of the Government of India. Such a supposition did not enter into their calculations. Their archives have never been arranged in such fashion as to facilitate it. Hence, when the necessity arose it found the States almost entirely unprepared.

May I explain very briefly why we felt the need for the appointment of the present Committee ? Our relationship with the

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

But when the British became paramount over the whole of India, their representatives turned naturally to the development of that portion of the country for whose administration they were directly responsible. Their desire to do their best for the great charge committed to them, naturally led them to set a high value upon the virtues of efficiency and the methods of standardisation. They began to conceive far-reaching policies for the benefit of British India ; and the application of these policies came in time to embrace even the territories for whose administration Britain was not responsible. But almost up to the last decade of the nineteenth century, though pressure was unquestionably exerted upon the States in order to obtain from them agreements whose object was the enhancement of British Indian revenues, the arrangements in connection with salt, opium, railways and the like, were still concluded, in the letter, but not in the spirit, with the consent of the States. The almost irresistible process which was making towards economic and even political unity throughout India, regardless of

the privileged position in which the States stood towards the Paramount Power, was re-inforced by internal developments in British India. The spread of Western education which Britain to her credit has always encouraged, led to a demand for the admission of British Indians to the Councils of their Government. In larger and larger measure the British principle of associating the governed with the Government, has been applied ; with the natural result that the interests of British India and of its people came to bulk more and more largely in the estimation of the Government of India. If we consider the length of the period which has elapsed since the Mutiny, and the powerful operation of these forces, economic and political, which I have briefly mentioned, we shall not be surprised at the development of a position in which the Indian States find themselves to-day. For our own part, we are convinced that this position accords ill either with the treaty rights of the States, or with those interests which the British power has from time to time pledged itself to respect. The economic interests of the States, and the prosperity of the States peoples, have unquestionably suffered ; and we hope that we have brought to the notice of the Committee sufficient evidence to show upon how solid a basis our contentions rest. I could if necessary quote the words of British Officials of the highest rank in further support of the States contention that the present position is unsatisfactory and calls for redress and for amendment.

We ourselves have for long been only too clearly aware of this. We knew we were in the position of allies. We had no doubt that our treaty rights were being infringed in a variety of directions. But until we took the unprecedented step of obtaining the best legal advice available, as we are not lawyers we were working to some extent in the dark. The legal position has now been fully cleared up, for the first time, I believe, since the Indian States came into relations with Britain. The names of the Counsel who have

subscribed to the legal opinion we have placed in your hands, carry an authority which cannot be questioned. I am informed that in accordance with the great tradition of the English Bar the opinion is a wholly impartial one : that our leading Counsel, like his distinguished colleagues, was only concerned in the opinion to elucidate the legal position, whether it made for us or against us. The result you know. What we now seek is an official and effective recognition of the true position, that consent is the basis of our relationship with the Crown. Once this has been admitted, we Princes are prepared to negotiate with His Majesty's Government as to the machinery which will be necessary to ensure the preservation of our own rights as well as to promote the progress and prosperity of India as a whole. You will find us ready to co-operate with you in every reasonable way. But we do ask you to recognise the essential basis of our rights.

There is, however, one observation upon which I should like to lay great emphasis. I want to dissipate the impression that the Princes are plaintiffs, in a case where the Government of India are defendants. This is not so. The position as I see it is that the Indian States are doing their best to assist the Crown to establish a position which shall be satisfactory to both parties. If I may venture to say so, we are all sitting together as colleagues ; and our one aim is to see that the true spirit of the relationship between the Indian States and the Paramount Power is in the first place elucidated, and in the second place respected. If we have placed before you instances which seem to us to argue disregard of the States rights and interests, it is only because we who wear the shoe may be expected to judge more particularly as to where that shoe pinches. We are not treating you as a criminal court, and arraiging the Government of India before you, we are only doing our best to place before you the manner in which, as it seems to us, the present political system fails to secure the due discharge of those

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mutual rights and obligations which together constitute the bond between the States and the Crown. We feel that unless we elaborate before you both the variety and the extent of those encroachments upon the rights of the States which the existing system has made possible, you as a Committee would scarcely be in a position to judge as to the extent to which that system requires rectification.

I should like, if you will allow me, to speak with the utmost frankness and to express, as perhaps only an Indian Prince can, some of the ways in which I and my colleagues conceive that the present system does lasting injury to the relationship, of which we are so proud, between ourselves and the Crown. The first point to which I should like to draw the attention of you, Sir Harcourt, and of your colleagues, is the peculiar position in which those servants of the Crown, whose function was originally that of diplomatic agents, now find themselves placed. The Political Officer accredited to the Court of an Indian State is invested with an artificial authority which can be used, and is occasionally used, in a fashion which must necessarily reduce for the subjects of the State the effectiveness of the Ruler and of his administration. The Political Officer has come to be regarded, not merely as a representative for diplomatic purposes of the Paramount Power, but as constituting in himself the embodiment of paramountcy. The use which he makes of his position is, in general, a matter of the personal equation. The Indian Princes acknowledge, and gladly acknowledge, that in the person of the Political Officers accredited to them, they have on occasion found their best, their wisest, and their most sympathetic friends. But at the same time we cannot ignore the fact that the position in which the Political Officer is placed enables him at any time to interpose his authority between the Ruler of a State and that Ruler's subjects. Where such interposition takes place, the results are disastrous. If once it is recognised that the Political Officer is willing to receive and to countenance complaints against the Ruler

and his administration, then immediately such an Officer becomes the refuge of all who are discontented and all who desire to evade the responsibilities which they owe to the State. The Ruler and his administration are regarded as under the orders of the Political Officer. Not only does their prestige suffer, but their sense of responsibility is gravely affected, and their power for good unduly lowered and diminished. There is another side to this question. If the authority of the Political Officer is interposed between that of the Ruler and the Ruler's subjects, there is an inevitable tendency for the Ruler to conclude that his security and his reputation depend more directly upon the goodwill of the Political Officer than upon the happiness and the contentment of the people of the State. Such a state of affairs is disastrous. According to the ideas of Indian Kingship, Ruler and people must ever remain face to face ; so that while the subjects do not evade their obligations to the Ruler, the Ruler is equally unable to escape the duties which he owes to his subjects. Where an alien authority in the shape of a Political Officer intrudes itself between Ruler and ruled, the sense of responsibility of the Rulers is naturally weakened ; the obligations owed by the ruled are transferred to an alien power.

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

stages of development. But we most earnestly desire to suggest that these natural tendencies should be restrained by the consideration that Western institutions, Western standards, and Western customs, are not necessarily suitable to polities where Ruler and ruled who are of one race, and who thoroughly understand one another, are still closely bound together by the ties of traditional sentiment. In this respect, we frankly look for help to the Crown. We hope that it will bring to the notice of its Political Officers that the ancient customs and the long-standing traditions of the Indian States have an intrinsic value of their own, and a part to play even in the world of to-day ; that they do not depend for their survival upon the half contemptuous toleration of the British Government. We would also earnestly ask that same Government, in the interests of the relations which exist between the Indian States and the Paramount Power, to discard some of those notions of prestige which have already wrought such grave harm. We Princes of India are only too ready to co-operate with the Government of British India in the pursuit of aims which will redound to the advantage of the country as a whole. We would only ask that our co-operation should be invited ; that the reasons underlying Government policy should be explained to us ; and that where action on our part is desired, we should be satisfied of the necessity of the measure in question. I would ask the Committee to believe that it is in no spirit of fault-finding that I say that the present conditions are far different from those which I had indicated. Too often, when we Princes have to transact business with the representatives of the Government of India, we feel we are meeting men who are rigidly bound by certain instructions from which they cannot depart. We feel that their minds are already made up ; that the issues under discussion are prejudged ; and that the one aim and object is to induce us by any possible manner of means to acquiesce in views which have already been formulated. I would respectfully

maintain that in such circumstances as these justice and equity cannot flourish. If we are to co-operate wholeheartedly with the Government of India and with its Officers, we must do so in a spirit of give and take. The intercourse between us must be of a kind which exists between persons who desire to reach an equitable decision after frank and free discussion. We cannot be expected to open our hearts in the presence of Officials who treat their own opinions and their own judgments as the epitome of wisdom, and who regard honest differences from their point of view as partaking of the nature of personal affronts. We earnestly hope that as the result of the representations we are making before the Committee, the Paramount Power will not only admit, but will impress upon its representatives, the position which we regard as fundamental, mainly, that the States have a perfect right, outside the limits of the paramountcy agreement, to decline propositions of which they do not approve ; and that it is not correct for every servant of the Government of India to look upon himself as the representative of a power which has the right, as well as the physical force to impose its will upon the States in every particular.

We Indian Princes feel that if we are to discharge our obligations to the Crown, we must be placed in a position in which we can do our duty. We feel that through the operation of the existing Political system, we have lost initiative and a sense of responsibility. Whatever may have been the ideas underlying that system, its practical effect has been to keep us in leading strings. But we feel that unless we are allowed to buy our experience, no matter at what cost ; unless we are brought face to face with the consequences of our own actions so far as our subjects are concerned, we can never fully rise to the responsibilities of the position in which we have been placed by Providence. In appealing to a Committee composed of Englishmen, I think it is hardly necessary for me to justify a desire which I know is shared by my Brother Princes, that in the

sphere of sovereignty which remains to us, however great or small that may be, we should in truth be masters. But such an aspiration is all too frequently misunderstood. When some of us stand firm upon our rights as we conceive them to be ; when we attempt, as loyal friends and allies of the Crown, to establish firmly our authority within our States, we are forthwith accused of cherishing ridiculous aspirations towards complete independence, and of manifesting a spirit of hostility to Britain. No assurances of mine, I feel confident, are necessary to demonstrate to such a Committee as this the irresponsible, the wholly untrue, character of these suggestions. But the mere fact that they can be made, and are made in the case of those of us who take our responsibilities, both to the Paramount Power and to our own people most seriously, is surely an indication that something is wrong. What that something is, we look to the Committee to discover. But for our own part we believe that it arises primarily from the fact that no definite and separate machinery has ever been set up to preserve and safeguard the spirit of the relationship between the Indian States and the Crown. The Political Department, whose services to the States we all of us frankly recognise, is after all but one branch of the Government of India. And if the Government of India is committed by its position to take a predominantly British Indian view, then the Political Department as a part of that Government has to act under the orders which it receives. If the Government of India, in the discharge of its responsibilities towards British India, concentrates its attention primarily upon the development of British Indian resources, and upon schemes for the progress of British India, it is only natural that the rights of the States and of their subjects should fall into a secondary place.

Inevitably in such conditions as these, the interests of the States are subordinated to those of British India ; and the Political Department, despite the best efforts of many admirable officers, tends to become

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merely the instrument by which this subordination is enforced. I desire to make plain once and for all the attitude of myself and my colleagues towards the whole of this vital enquiry. We are profoundly loyal to the Person of His Majesty the King-Emperor ; we are equally loyal to the obligations imposed upon us by our agreements with the Paramount Power. We admit the rights which that Power is entitled to claim under the Agreements ; we look to it to see that our own rights are equally secure. We have not the slightest wish to go outside the Empire. We only desire that the true spirit of the relationship between ourselves and Britain shall be respected. We have nothing but the friendliest feelings towards that Department of the Government of India which is primarily concerned with the transaction of our day-to-day business ; we desire only that it should be placed in a position in which it is free to respect, and to mould its conduct in accordance with, the treaty relations. Incidentally, we have no hostility towards British India, and we do not desire to oppose its aspirations. We recognise that the question of political advance in that part of the country is a matter for settlement between British India and Great Britain. But our basic attitude can be summarised in a single sentence. We want to maintain our link with Britain. We believe that our relations are and have always been, with Britain ; and it is to the spirit of these relations that we desire to remain as true in the future as we have done in the past. We hope that there is nothing unreasonable in this desire. We feel that we are appealing to a power which has manifested so great a regard for the sanctity of solemn pledges that it entered the greatest War in history in defence of its plighted honour. We believe, and firmly believe, that the ties of obligation existing between Great Britain and ourselves are no less sacred than those which exist between Great Britain and Belgium.

May I close upon a note of personal appeal ? I would beg of you, Sir Harcourt, and Members of the Indian States Committee, when

you are drafting your Report, to remember the manner in which the Indian Princes stood firm by Britain in 1857 and in 1914. As we have stood by you in the past, so we will stand by you in the future. We are putting forward no claim, we are raising no contention which we do not regard as fully justified by agreements which your Monarchs have declared to be sacred and sacrosanct. We trust to you to see that this great opportunity is not lost. We have exposed to you, as frankly as we were able, what we regard as being the defects of the existing system by which our relations with the Crown are conducted. We have demonstrated to you our difficulties ; we have shown you something of our grievances. We believe that wisdom and policy will alike dictate that steps should be taken to confirm and strengthen our devotion to the King-Emperor and to the British connection, by vindicating our claim to those privileges which have been guaranteed to us, and by securing to the people of our States that treatment to which they are in all equity entitled. Finally, I would beg of you to remember that at a time when a large section of politically-minded British India has boycotted the Simon Commission, because the method laid down for the enquiry was not pleasing to it, we Princes have from the very beginning co-operated whole-heartedly with you in an endeavour to clear up the problems referred to you. What the Simon Commission will recommend for British India I do not know. But I respectfully submit that it would be the part of Statesmanship for Britain to see that those who have co-operated with her, do not fare worse than those who have chosen the path of boycott. I trust it will never be said that the people of British India obtained justice from Britain by boycotting the Simon Commission, while the Princes, people and States of Indian India were penalised, were disappointed of their rights, and were sent empty away, while they co-operated to the utmost of their capacity, in the work of the Indian States Committee.

