An Australian in India

Rt. Hon.
R.G. CASEY

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AN AUSTRALIAN IN INDIA

A TREASURER of the Australian Commonwealth and Minister of the Crown in Britain during the war years cannot but have something individual to contribute to the birth of a new Dominion. *An Australian in India* is a record of The Right Hon. R. G. Casey's reaction to the years he spent as Governor of Bengal. A practical administrator as well as an experienced politician is analysing the situation in India as it is to-day. Character sketches of the Hindu, Muslim, and other leaders, based upon personal knowledge, and a pithy statement of the political and economic factors make up the book.

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by the Rt. Hon.
R. G. CASEY
Australian Minister in Washington, 1940-42. Minister of State Resident in the Middle East and Member of War Cabinet of the United Kingdom, 1942-43. Governor of Bengal, 1944-46.

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD.

IN THIS small publication I have tried to put on paper a short account of what seem to me to be the principal matters bearing on politics and public affairs in India to-day. It does not, of course, set out to be a comprehensive account of India, which could not be condensed into a book many times this size.

Indeed, this book represents little more than the sort of memorandum that I would have liked to have had put into my hands when I took over the Governorship of Bengal in January 1944.

I have tried to keep it as short as possible. I considered writing additional chapters on several other subjects which are of consequence but, I believe, not necessary to the understanding of the Indian political problem to-day. So there are no references to Communism in India, nor any account of Indian overseas trade or public finance or education or the Press, nor of many other subjects that are important but not essential in a short and perhaps ephemeral conspectus.

Whatever the future may hold for the people of India, I have nothing but goodwill towards them. I have made some criticisms in this book, but that is inevitable if one is to speak one's mind at all usefully about any country and its institutions and politics and public men.

I need hardly say that my interpretations and views are my own and have no official flavour whatsoever. Indeed in several directions I have reason to believe that the official view is opposed to my own.

My reason for writing this book is to try to interpret the politics and problems of India as simply and as shortly as I can to those who have not had the privilege of living and serving there.

R. G. CASEY.

BERWICK,
VICTORIA,
AUSTRALIA,
APRIL, 1946.

Chapter One

EARLY DAYS

IN January 1944 I set out on what was to me the uncharted sea of the Province of Bengal. I said publicly that I was going to India with an open mind. What I really meant was an empty mind. I knew that Bengal had had a turbulent history for a generation at least—that it was the home of terrorism and of fierce Hindu-Muslim antipathy. I knew that the population of Bengal was about 65 millions—and that they nearly all grew rice. I knew that it had had a year of devastating famine behind it. I knew that the Burma front was on the eastern edge of Bengal—and that Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten wanted me to provide him with a quiet and contented base—which sounded a pretty tall order. I knew that the two Governors preceding me had died in office and that their predecessors had been shot at on quite a number of occasions. I had heard of the evil record of a place called Midnapore, in Bengal, where successive District Magistrates had been assassinated not so very long ago. I had been told of the piece in the Christmas pantomime a few weeks before I arrived in Calcutta, when the evil spirit said to the good fairy: "And now the greatest curse of all —may you become the Governor of Bengal".

But, apart from these depressing things, I knew practically nothing about Bengal, and I was very certain that I had to learn pretty quick or some of these things would start happening to me.

I reached Bengal and was sworn-in as Governor in late January 1944, and so I did not personally experience

the devastating Bengal famine of 1943. However, I saw the appalling aftermath of the famine, and I naturally took pains to try to discover the lessons that the famine had to teach. In the course of this I learned a good deal about the famine itself.

Bengal has not, on the average, grown enough rice to feed herself for many years. In times of peace, rice is imported (usually from Burma) to make up the deficiency in Bengal production. Owing to the occupation of Burma by the Japanese in 1942, this source of rice imports was cut off. It should be explained that there are three principal rice crops per year in Bengal—the "boru" crop (harvested in April–May), the "aus" (harvested in August–September), and the "aman" (harvested in December). The "aman" or winter rice crop represents about 75 per cent of the total tonnage of rice grown in the Province during the year. The "aus" represents about 21 per cent of the year's rice, and the "boru" about 4 per cent.

It so happened that the Bengal "aman" rice crop (the principal crop of the year) in December 1942 was the smallest "aman" crop for a great many years, with the exception of the "aman" crop of December 1940, when the deficiency could be (and was) made good by imports from Burma. The very large deficiency caused by the relative failure of the December 1942 crop could not be made up from Burma owing to the Japanese occupation. On top of the relative failure of the December 1942 "aman", the small "boru" crop in April 1943 was smaller than usual, and—the final blow—the "aus" crop of August 1943 was light. (I am not going into the detail of the cyclones, tidal waves and insect pests that were, in part, responsible for these

crop shortages. The matter of importance is that all three crops were grievously short.) This meant that the total tonnage of rice produced in Bengal in the "rice year" (December 1942 to November 1943) was under 7,000,000 tons—an appallingly low tonnage.

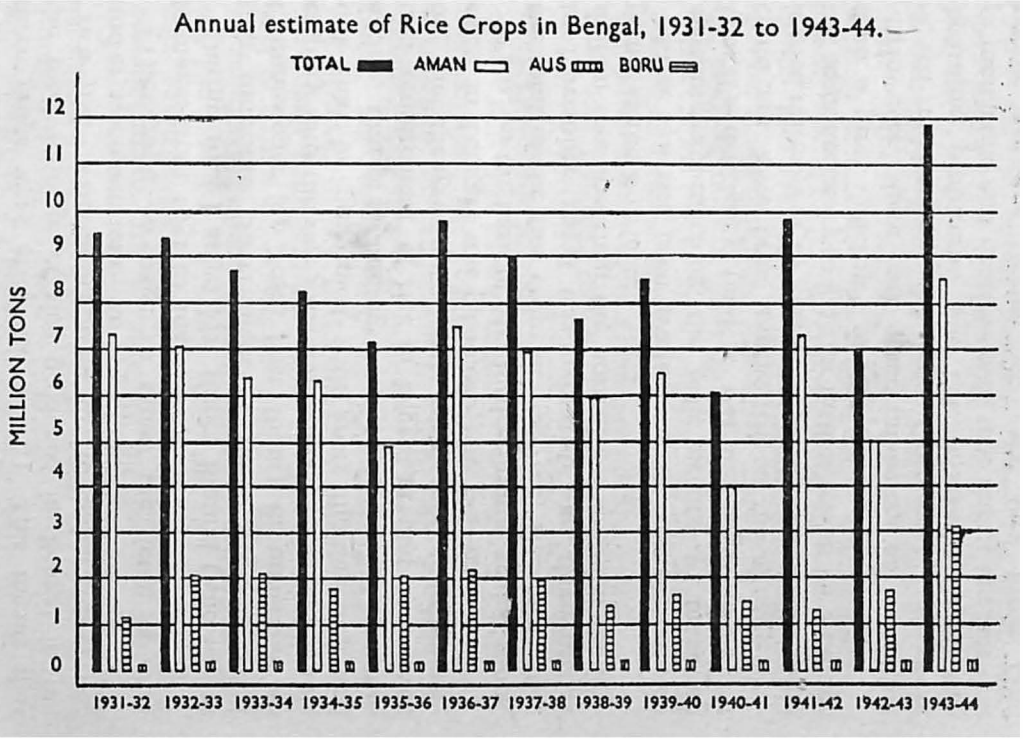
(The graph on page 10 shows the detail of crop tonnages from 1931 to 1944.)

During 1944 I asked Mr. Justice Braund (who was at that time the Government of India Regional Food Commissioner for North East India) to undertake an enquiry into the rice situation in Bengal—a considerable task that he performed with great thoroughness and ability. One of his findings was that the normal consumption requirement of rice in Bengal at that time (even on the meagre nutritional basis that unfortunately exists in Bengal) was 9,800,000 tons per year.

Thus, on the basis of Mr. Justice Braund's calculations, the total of the rice crops of 1943 (i.e. December 1942 to November 1943) was over two and three-quarter million tons less than the normal consumption requirements of the Province.

Even had rice been available in the rest of India on anything approaching the scale needed to make up Bengal's deficiency (and it was not so available), it could not have been transported on the already-overloaded railways or by coastal shipping. So that it would not seem necessary to look for further reason for a famine than a gross deficiency of this order.

However, there *were* other influences at work that served to intensify the crop shortages. I speak of hoarding, profiteering and black-marketing by a host of merchants and dealers—evils that reflect the fact that people are not lacking who will seek profit (and


Annual estimate of Rice Crops in Bengal, 1931-32 to 1943-44.
TOTAL
AMAN
AUS
BORU
MILLION TONS
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
1931-32
1932-33
1933-34
1934-35
1935-36
1936-37
1937-38
1938-39
1939-40
1940-41
1941-42
1942-43
1943-44

extortionate profit) from the misfortunes and calamities of their fellow-men. Added to this was the fact that the Bengal Government was not at that time adequately organised to cope with food difficulties on anything like the necessary scale. The combined result of the crop shortages and the other influences at work was that the price of rice shot up to unprecedented heights, and for at least six months of 1943 people died like flies.

Many people have sought subsequently to make political capital out of the Bengal famine of 1943. It was said that the famine was "man made". I have even heard it alleged that we (the British) created the famine for our own purposes, and that when we thought it had gone on long enough, we called it off!

The Woodhead Commission investigated the Bengal famine and reported at length on the subject—but did not add greatly to our knowledge. The simple point emerges that the Bengal famine was specifically and primarily caused by the gross crop shortages of December 1942 to November 1943. Had there been no hoarding and profiteering and no rise in the price of rice, there would have been a very bad famine in Bengal in 1943. The factors other than crop shortages merely intensified the famine that would, even in their absence, have been an appalling one.

I worked very hard and fast in my early period in Bengal, in an endeavour to find out what it was all about. I couldn't have had a worse Press before I arrived. They shouted to high heaven about an Australian being sent to govern them—"have we become a colony of Australia?"—"how are we to endure the humiliation of a Governor from a country that prohibits Indians from even entering their country?"

However, they got over that and we became quite friends. On the whole I had a friendly hand from India, once we got to know each other—and after two strenuous years I came away with real regret.

The Governor of a Province like Bengal has many decisions to make every day. He has plenty of advice given to him, but the decisions have to be his own and he has to stand or fall by them. There are quite a lot of people who want to see him fall.

Fortunately for me, I had a fairly quiet time politically for the first few months, and by that time I had caught my breath again and had learned something about the set-up. After about three months I started to form opinions, and after about six months I felt, rightly or wrongly, that I could more or less stand on my own feet. I was definitely lucky to have had these early months without major problems.

Then the bowling started to get a bit fast, and from then on there was never a dull moment.

After a few months in Bengal, it became clear that the situation was something like this—the Province had 65 million people in an area not much bigger than England. It had an out-of-date system of administration and a microscopically small and overtired staff. It had just been through a very bad famine and there was no reserve of food. The Province was almost completely undeveloped, and even the rail, river and road communications were hopelessly inadequate—particularly when they had to be shared with the Army and Air Force on the Burma Front. The Province was the immediate base for a great war effort—the Burma campaign. Efforts to overcome as many as possible of these disabilities had to be put in hand at once. It was

necessary to get more administrative staff to organise and improve the food situation, to find out what was wrong with the administration and to endeavour to put it right, and to develop some confidence and assurance in the Province.

At the same time, I had a Ministry consisting of a dozen Indian Ministers whose political position in the Bengal Legislature wasn't too strong—as I was soon to discover.

I discovered quite early in my time in India that Bengal was an unpopular Province—unpopular with New Delhi and with the other Provinces. The temperament of the Bengali may have something to do with this. He is probably the cleverest and the quickest of Indians—but he is temperamental to a degree. He has the name of being fanatical and politically minded, without the gift of initiative and capacity for solid work. The climate of Bengal is such that Indians from other parts of India dislike having to serve there. The comment that springs easily to the lips of the rest of India is that Bengal is always in some trouble or difficulty, in respect of which it makes a great noise in the hope that the rest of India will come to its aid. Like many other such easy criticisms, this is an unfair comment. Bengal has inherent problems of a much more intractable order than the rest of India, and has had inadequate help to overcome them in past generations. The accumulated neglect of the past is now coming home to roost.

The first hurdle that presented itself was the introduction by my Ministry of a Bill to reform the control of Secondary Education. The Bill provided for a much greater control by the Muslim community of the Province than they had had hitherto. (The word "Muslim"

will appear frequently from now on, so that this is the place to say that, as far as I am aware, the words Muslim, Moslem, Mohammedan and Mussulman all mean the same—a follower of the Prophet Mohammed, a man of Islam. I use the word Muslim throughout.) The Muslims are in a majority in Bengal, but they are mostly cultivators and, for one reason and another, the more wealthy and better-educated Hindus control the greater part of education and the secondary schools. The Muslims wanted to get a greater share of control—hence the introduction of this Bill. The Bill was thrown on to the pitch with great velocity. The principal batsmen hit out with impassioned gusto. Some of the fieldsmen were so alarmed that they changed sides in the middle of the game. The uproar was terrific, and a good time was had by all. Nevertheless, eventually I had to declare the match a draw and adjourn the Assembly—because, after all, there were still some 65 million people requiring not only education under whatever form of control but, more immediately, food and clothing.

There were certainly problems enough. To start with, I suppose that on any orthodox financial view the Government of Bengal was bankrupt, so far as any government can be said to be bankrupt. We were living far beyond our means and it was practically impossible to get new taxation measures through the Bengal Legislature, and we had at that time no borrowing capacity. The only salvation lay in getting the Government of India to *give* us some money to bridge the immediate gap. So I gathered my facts and sorted my arguments and, with the most pleasant smile that I could produce, I proceeded to New Delhi, the seat of the Government of India. After two days of

active discussion, I came away with enough to see us through for six or nine months—not as much as I wanted, but fair enough. I went back nine months later and they were good enough to give me some more.

For the last 50 years the Government of Bengal has been starved of money. Before the war, the total provincial revenues amounted to under 20 million pounds a year for a population of what was then about 55 millions; that is under eight shillings per head of the population to cover everything—agriculture, health, police, and all the other functions of government. The Bengal Government within its limit was, I believe, not a bad Government. It did its best within its pitifully small resources. Nevertheless, the cheese-paring economy that the Province, through no fault of its own, had to follow had a crippling effect on the initiative and imagination of its public servants—both British and Indian.

This was not our fault, at least not all our fault. On what was at that time orthodox financial reasoning, India was a very poor country, and it was thought dangerous to spend the large sums of money necessary for the creation of large-scale development works, and so only the bare minimum of development was undertaken.

Looking into the past, the extent to which Governments in India confined themselves to law and order and revenue is reflected in the fact that the Governor of Bengal up to 1905 administered the present territories of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (78 million people) on an annual expenditure of £4,000,000.

I am hopeful that these parsimonious policies are things of the past, and I claim with due humility to

have put a nail or two into their coffin. Also, I did all I could to influence the Government of India to adopt a more rational method of allocation of surplus Federal revenues amongst the various provinces. The Australian Commonwealth Grants Commission system seemed to me a great deal more satisfactory than the system existing in India, which, in regard to Bengal, had operated very unfairly.

Up to the time of leaving Bengal, although I hadn't secured an actual revision of the financial relationship between the Government of India and Bengal, I had at least got an admission that a revision was necessary and that the Australian method was the best in sight.

The greatest single problem in Bengal throughout my time—and one that was a constant headache—was the food problem. As I have mentioned, I came to Bengal towards the end of a devastating famine, which was followed by widespread debilitation, by epidemics of disease and a very high rate of mortality. It was an experience which quite understandably had unnerved and demoralised the Province. It was as hard to restore confidence as it was to build up an organisation to acquire and to distribute the essential supplies needed by 65 million people. We managed it with luck and endless work, but there were some anxious moments that I should not like to go through again.

Food in Bengal means rice. The Province of Bengal eats about ten million tons of rice a year. Our object was to spread a net throughout the Province to catch all the rice surplus to the individual cultivator's family needs. In effect, the Bengal Government and its agents took over the whole rice trade of the Province. I may say that we took over a host of other problems along

with it. For example, when we had purchased the rice we had to store it until it was needed. This meant building a very great deal of storage. The Bengal climate is just about ideal for the deterioration of foodstuffs. The monsoon rains, the warm moist heat, the appetite and fertility of rats, mice, and every conceivable type of insect combine to spoil the stocks. Well, there were mistakes and upsets enough, but on the whole we managed the rice trade not too badly. Nevertheless, should any of my friends very kindly think of asking me to a meal, I hope very much that they will not give me rice in any form. I shall be rather "off" rice for some time to come.

Along with the rice we had to handle a lot of other things—wheat, sugar, salt, kerosene, mustard oil, cloth, and a wide variety of consumer goods that were in short supply. Eventually the turnover in our Supply Department was over three times the value of our total pre-war provincial revenues—that is, about 60–70 million pounds.

All this meant the building up of a very large organisation almost from scratch. The permanent Civil Services were struggling along with quite unfamiliar tasks, each officer trying to do about ten men's work. It was obvious that help was needed wherever it could be got, and quickly. I got a great deal of help from the army in the shape of officers who volunteered for civil duty. Also, I got a loan of a few officials from the Ministry of Food in the United Kingdom, a few Australians and New Zealanders, and the services of a number of high-powered business-men familiar with Indian conditions and commercial ways. Later I got a further batch of Army officers, many of whom had taken part in the operation of grain collection schemes in the Middle

East when I was Minister of State there. Altogether it was a mixed bag of impressive size, and the mixture blended fairly smoothly with the regular Indian Civil Service (Indian and British) in the Province. The foundation of the Administration was, of course, purely Indian, but those whom I was personally concerned to recruit were the higher executives whom India, during wartime, was not able fully to supply.

(Some smart fellow coined the phrase "the Governor's parachutists" to describe the Army officers and others that I had brought into the Administration from outside.)

Speaking to the people of Bengal over the radio in July 1944, I put matters like this:—

"There has been a very great increase in the last 12 months, and particularly in the last six months, in the amount of Government administrative work to be done in Bengal to meet current necessities and—most important—to build for the future, and in consequence the resources of the Province have been greatly strained to find the required numbers of trained administrators and experts in various lines of governmental activity. The Government has actively speeded up promotions amongst members of the various Government services, and has re-employed many retired Bengal officials, but even so it is no longer possible to find the necessary numbers of middle and top-grade officers of adequate experience and ability from amongst the members of the existing services in Bengal. In these circumstances we have sought help from other provinces in India, but even after doing this we are still short. We are now drawing on the Army for Army officers for temporary administrative appointments in Bengal.

In addition to this, we have got a few high-level experts from England for temporary employment here—men who are experts in food problems, in agricultural economics, and in general administration and organisation.

"I mention this because I do not want you to think that we are importing individuals from outside Bengal for service here, even on a temporary basis, until we have done all we can, consistent with reasonable efficiency, to find adequate people from our own Bengal resources. The administration would suffer, and you would suffer, if we did not make these unusual efforts to get men to do all the necessary work that there is to be done.

"I believe that the prudent thing is for us now to set about the training of our own men, particularly in technical employments, so that we will have a supply of trained young men ready after the war to fill the many jobs that will have to be filled in the various branches of agriculture, forestry, engineering, veterinary science, fisheries and many other practical sciences and professions. I make no secret of my own belief that India in the past has gone in too much for the study and practice of the law and too little for the more practical and nation-building professions and employments."

By the beginning of 1945 I thought everything was going pretty well. In the course of 1944 we had managed to get hold of over a million tons of rice, and the food position seemed fairly secure for the time being. Of course there were continual difficulties; we were always grievously short of something—wheat, salt, sugar, mustard oil, or something else. But these were comparatively

minor matters compared to the vastly-improved general position and the signs of returning confidence.

Unfortunately there is no rose without its thorn. Just when things seemed to be fairly neat and tidy, a cloud started to appear on the horizon. First there were whispers of cloth shortage. Then people talked of a cloth famine. Bright young members of the Communist party began to organise processions of the semi-naked poor. Cloth disappeared from the shops—to be produced, at a monstrous price, from under the counter. My Ministers became increasingly worried and decided to clamp down on the cloth trade. The cloth trade did not much like being clamped down upon—profits were too good. The powerful cloth merchants declared war on my Ministers, and influence of all sorts was brought to bear. The result was that there was an uproar in the Assembly; members again started changing sides; those who took a poor view of human nature said that a good deal of money changed hands in the process, and one day in March 1945 the Ministry was defeated, and I found myself without a Ministry and with no prospect of getting another. So, under the provisions of the Constitution Act, I had to function alone—without any Ministry or any Parliamentary form of Government—a state of affairs that continued throughout my last year in Bengal, until conditions made possible the holding of general elections to resolve the political deadlock.

It is an unfortunate fact that a certain proportion of Muslim politicians have shown themselves to be unstable in their political affiliations, and to be capable of being seduced by their political opponents. The same thing

applies to a proportion of the Scheduled Caste[1] politicians. Broadly speaking, the Congress Party is rich, and the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes are poor. Purists might say hard things about such matters, but they are understandable in a country in which representative democratic institutions are a relatively new conception. New wine in old bottles. Such political instability will no doubt diminish as the electorate becomes politically more mature and more critical. However, in a Province such as Bengal, where the Muslim majority over all others (Caste Hindus, Scheduled Castes, Anglo-Indians, etc.) is only 4 per cent of the population, such irregularities do not promise well for stable government, which will need the staunch and unwavering support of all Muslims for its achievement.

[1]The "Scheduled Castes" is the present official description of the non-caste Hindus who used to be called "untouchables" or "depressed classes". Dr. Ambedkar prefers to use the old term "untouchables".

Chapter Two

GETTING A MOVE ON

BENGAL administration is an old-fashioned affair that has grown up without any apparent design in the course of the last hundred years or so. Its original function was little more than the administration of civil and criminal law, the preservation of the public peace, and the collection of the land revenue. Bits and pieces had been tacked on to the administrative system from time to time to keep pace with the increasing functions of government, but frequently the new bits had been attached to the wrong parts. Thus I inherited one department administering the strange alliance of Forestry and Excise under a secretary who had a full-time job in another department—while another department dealt simultaneously with Education and Land Registration, also under a secretary with pre-occupation in another department. The people at the top had to give their personal attention to trivialities that should have been settled elsewhere, while some of the officials had been made responsible for such a mass of miscellaneous, but important, duties that it was impossible to carry them all out. Also, the various departments worked with little regard to what the others were doing. Consequently the administration used to tie itself into such knots that it was impossible to carry out any policy reasonably promptly. Under the stress of war and economic dislocation it became clear that the machine needed remodelling and bringing up to date.

I therefore set up a Commission of some weight and authority to investigate the whole administration and to

recommend how best its component parts should be fitted into their right places—so as to provide an effective instrument of Government. The Commission produced what I regard as a valuable and original rèport. It was the first attempt that I know of to survey an administration as a whole and to recommend its remodelling as a whole.

We made a good start, in my last year in Bengal, by way of putting the Commission's recommendations into effect. It will take a little time for the new set-up to run itself in, but I believe that the changes made will give Bengal a much more workmanlike and effective administration than the province had before. It was a much-needed major reform, and I am glad to have had a hand in it.

Another innovation of some consequence was the introduction of "Organisation and Methods" into the Bengal administration. This rather high-sounding description is the name given to a system of departmental reconditioning of which most departments in most Governments stand in need. It was developed by the British Treasury during the war, and I used the system to advantage in the Middle East. The object of the system of Organisation and Methods is to increase the efficiency of the office side of Government by analysing the functions of each department in turn and relating the organisation and equipment of the office staff to the work that they exist to carry out.

The machinery of Government in India has not kept pace with the rapidly increasing complexities of Government over the last decade in particular. Departmental organisation is of the horse-and-buggy category—trying to cope with motor-car conditions. The Government offices are cramped, dark and stuffy. Office equipment is short and old fashioned. Filing and registry methods are

archaic. The pay and prospects of the clerical staff are such that no incentive to good work exists. The pace has increased to such an extent that no one has had the time or opportunity to consider scientifically the working of the machinery of Government. Speed, efficiency and the co-ordination of effort have fallen far behind what is necessary.

Organisation and Methods experts have no magic powers, but they have knowledge of the principles of good administration, they have experience of coping with similar problems elsewhere, and they know what office equipment to recommend to save time and to ensure accuracy. I am convinced that O. and M. has a great deal to offer Bengal.

I think it is not too fanciful to compare the task of Organisation and Methods with that of the aircraft designer, one of whose important preoccupations is the reduction of aerodynamic "drag", or, in other words, to reduce the impediments to the quickest possible movement of the aircraft through the air.

I was fortunate in getting from England the loan of the services of an officer well versed in the art of Organisation and Methods, and we subsequently sent several Bengal officials to the Organisation and Methods School in the Treasury in London. Useful results were beginning to show by the time I left Bengal, and I hope that the O. and M. Section of the Chief Minister's Department will be a permanent addition to the machinery of Government in the Province.

The principal aim that I had in all this was to try to speed-up the conduct of public business. I recall that Kipling, in one of his verses, described something rather unpleasant that happened to the man who "tried to

hustle the East".[1] I also remember Noel Coward's line that "in Bengal to move at all is seldom, if ever, done". However, in spite of these warnings, we did manage to speed things up a bit, although there is still a lot to be done.

The complexities of modern Government are such that the written word has become discounted through over-use in a spate of paper. Especially is this so in India, where the writing of letters and memoranda and notes on files has become a disease of malignant form. For the purpose of getting things done, it has become urgently necessary to increase personal contact.

Lord Curzon wrote a magnificent memorandum on Departmentalism in 1899, in the early stages of his period as Viceroy. I studied it with the greatest interest. It is difficult to believe that it was written 47 years ago. He began: "I invite the attention of my colleagues and of the secretaries of departments to the manner in which business is conducted in the various offices of the Government of India, to the excessive noting and writing which are the characteristics of that system, to the delays involved in inter-departmental communication . . . and to the effect . . . upon the despatch of business and the efficiency of Government". This was followed by a masterly diagnosis of the disease and some simple and common sense rules for its treatment and cure, which I have no doubt was effective at the time. However, the disease must be endemic in India, as it is worse to-day than ever it was.

[1]Now it is not good for the Christian's health to hustle the Aryan brown,
For the Christian riles, and the Aryan smiles, and he weareth the Christian down,
And the end of the fight is a tombstone white with the name of the late deceased,
And the epitaph drear, "A Fool lies here who tried to hustle the East".
Rudyard Kipling, *The Naulahka*, Ch. 5, heading.

One of my legacies to the Government was a small air service to fly Bengal Government officials on their business round the province and to bring the outlying districts and the headquarters of the Government in Calcutta into closer touch with each other. There was far too much tangled and dilatory correspondence between headquarters and the districts which faster and easier personal contact would have avoided. Ordinary communications in Bengal are appallingly bad because of the many great rivers and the low-lying, swampy nature of the country, which makes it difficult to build roads and rail tracks. Air travel should be an immense boon in Bengal.

Another aspect of the Government of Bengal that at first surprised me—until I got to know its ways—was the lack of any publicity sense. Most of the officials seemed oblivious to the fact that it makes a world of difference to the success of their work how it is put across to the public. They would carry out an interesting and useful job and describe it—if they deigned to describe it at all—in Press notes of unimaginable tedium. Consequently the Government used to lose the credit for a lot of solid achievement, and they were seldom within miles of catching up on their many and not too scrupulous critics. The villagers were usually ignorant of the efforts being made on their behalf, because they were seldom told in intelligible terms what the Government was trying to do for them. So a department in which I took pains to meddle was the Publicity Department, and we expanded and livened it up considerably. I believe that in due course I won my officials round to the view that if they didn't tell people what they were doing, no one else would; and in a series of broadcasts and Press conferences I endeavoured to put across,

in simple terms, the principal lines of development in the Province.

Closer contact between the administration and the public was essential in Bengal for a number of reasons that do not apply elsewhere: the non-co-operative attitude towards the Government fostered by the Press, the distrust of Government officials by the public, and the general ignorance and illiteracy of a large section of the population. The task was not an easy one by reason of the difficulty of taking the public into the confidence of the administration in the face of a Press that was very largely hostile, and went to great lengths to distort any public statement into a stick with which to beat the Government or the British.

At first, I believe, there were many pained and cynical head-shakings amongst the senior British and Indian public servants about the Governor's publicity drive, but before I left I had made my point that there was a real need to bring the people more into touch with the activities of the Government. Eventually some of my senior officials were holding Press conferences themselves, a little shyly at first, but with a growing taste for them, and with useful effect from the point of view of public relations. I believe that public relations in India—at any rate in Bengal—should be greatly expanded. The more badly-educated a country, the greater the need for adequate publicity and public information on matters having a bearing on the people's welfare.

In an address to the district leaders of an organisation called the National War Front, in August 1944, I tried to explain what public relations meant to the citizen:

"By its programme of expansion the Publicity Department is making available a body of individuals whose duty

it is to be acquainted with all the measures which are being taken by the Government to produce those better conditions of living which is our common aim. You will find, in each of your districts, agents of that Department willing and anxious to give you all the help they can, and I hope you will not hesitate to take full advantage of the material with which they can provide you, if you so desire. Because these Publicity Organisers are at your disposal. It is their duty, with your help, to tell the public the facts they should know.

"On the other hand, the officers of the Publicity Department will, I am sure, be very glad of any help that you can give them. Through you these officers can reach every outlying village, and I have every confidence that you will help them to do so.

"The aim, of course, is not the regimentation of public opinion on fixed and determined lines, nor is it the elimination of any point of view other than the governmental. That idea is intolerable, and has no connection with what I have called democratic progress.

"So far as the expanded Publicity Department is concerned, the aim is the factual instruction of the people—a people who hitherto have had few sources of information open to them, and who are largely ignorant of the many material advantages which the administration is in course of endeavouring to make available—and hopes further to make available on a very much larger scale—in the way of better agriculture, improved public health, irrigation and in many other directions.

"So far as you are concerned, the aim which I conceive you should set yourselves is the encouragement of co-operation between the public and those who are trying to produce better conditions in Bengal. Such co-operation

is, of course, impossible unless the members of the public are fully acquainted with the broad lines of the measures which will produce those better conditions. Co-operation follows confidence, and confidence, in its turn, is born of knowledge. It is in this sphere that I look to the National War Front, in collaboration with the expanded Publicity Department, to play a most useful part.

"Well, I have spoken to you to-day in very general terms, for I see that you have followed a programme of detailed instruction. In the course of my tours I hope that I shall meet some of you in your own districts and learn something of your work. There is one thing of which I feel sure, and that is that your work is not easy—if it were, it would not be worth while doing. So do not be discouraged by difficulties—rather let them encourage you. I wish you every good fortune in the work that is ahead of you."

Although I was critical of the Bengal administration, I was also very conscious of the tremendous difficulties under which it worked. The number of public servants was ludicrously small to administer a Province of 65 million people. (There was an average of under 100 administrative officers of the Indian Civil Service, British and Indian, in Bengal in 1944–45, to administer 65 million people.) The climate is atrocious. I know what even two years' work in the Bengal climate means—it puts a considerable strain on one. Many of the British officials had been without leave for many years because of the war, in a climate where regular leave is essential for Europeans, and they had worked on in conditions of increasing economic and administrative difficulty, under continual abuse by an influential section of the Press, and they were blamed for everything. Consequently, many of them

were tired and dispirited, and I was not at all surprised that they were. One of my preoccupations was, therefore, keeping up the morale of the services, which I endeavoured to do by all the means that were available to me.

Looking over one's shoulder into the past, the I.C.S. in Bengal has had a heavier burden to carry than their fellows in any other part of India. Their numbers per million of the population are substantially lower than in any other major Province, in spite of what is universally admitted—that the problems of Bengal in peace, and more particularly in war, are more difficult and intractable than elsewhere in India. The war has thrown much greater burdens on Bengal than on any other Province, with the possible exception of Assam. The temperament of the people of Bengal provides a more difficult administrative problem than in other Provinces. They tend to sit down under difficulties and wait until the administrative staff solves problems for them, rather than make an effort to help themselves, which means a much greater output of effort and energy for any given degree of achievement than is necessary elsewhere. All this applies, of course, equally to both the British and the Indian members of the I.C.S. in Bengal.

As I have said, Bengal had been unnerved and demoralised by the impact of war and famine, and this had had its effect on the standards of public conduct and morality. I admit that I was appalled by the hold which bribery and corruption had taken on the public and on the subordinate ranks of the administration in Bengal.

When certain commodities are in short supply in wartime, one method of control to which Governments in India were driven by circumstances was to issue licences to individual firms to trade in these commodities. The

reason for this was that reliable staff to run a widespread scheme of rationing did not exist and could not be improvised. The possession of such a licence to trade in a particular commodity became a thing of considerable value, and unscrupulous persons did not hesitate to offer bribes of considerable size to secure such licences. The power to grant such licences was in the hands of petty officials, who were thus provided with unexampled opportunities of making money on the side, which is politely termed "illegal gratification". This is one—and by no means the worst—of the many types of corruption that beset India. I was often told that it wasn't much worse in Bengal than in other parts of India and in Eastern countries. Anyway, it was more than bad enough, and I spoke my mind on the subject publicly on several occasions. This created a flutter, because I subsequently gathered that a personage such as a Governor is either not supposed to know about such things or, if he does know, he is not supposed to mention them. I followed this up with an anti-corruption drive, which I think slowed up the worst of the practices, although I do not claim that it had much permanent result. The general public feeling against the evil was not sufficiently strong. For example, a batch of young recruits to the food organisation were given a course of training. At the end of the month, when they got their pay, their instructor tried an experiment on them. He asked each of them to give him ten rupees without giving any reason, and each of them paid up without a murmur, no doubt thinking this was some form of graft, and that they would lose their jobs if they didn't pay up. They were then called back, had their ten rupees returned to them, and made to realise that they had been made fools of.

There is a saying in Bengal, "The heat of the sun can

be borne, but the heat of the sand heated by the sun cannot be borne". I was told that this was an oblique way of saying that the authority of the Governor could be tolerated, but that the iniquities of petty officials (who derived their authority, at several removes, from the Governor) were too much.

There is another Bengal saying, rather more complacent, "A man oils his own spinning wheel first".

I saw in Bengal the depths to which the anti-social evils of black marketing and corruption can go—to the complete and absolute disregard of the public interest. It represents the pursuit of the profit motive taken to the limit. Besides religious and political tolerance, India has to develop some sense of public responsibility in place of the anarchic pursuit of personal interest which now prevails over an appreciable range of her population.

Another general feature which did not make for good administration was Hindu-Muslim rivalry and distrust. I will not here go into the reasons why this rivalry should exist—the reasons are many, but in their modern form I believe that they are primarily economic. The Muslims in Bengal outnumber the Hindus, but the Muslims are generally poorer and less well educated than the Hindus. The Muslims are very energetic in their efforts to improve their economic position, and this means that they are abnormally active in their search for jobs, particularly in the Government service. When a popular and predominantly Muslim Ministry was formed in 1937, one of its early acts was to frame a set of rules defining the proportions in which the several Indian communities should be recruited to Government service, and the proportion of jobs in each service that each community should have. The Communal Ratio Rules which emerged made this

definition on the rough basis of population. The Muslims were to have 50 per cent of the jobs, the Scheduled Castes (or "Untouchables") 15 per cent, and the rest (mostly Caste Hindus) were to have the remainder, or 35 per cent, of the jobs.

These Communal Ratio Rules gave rise to a certain amount of feeling amongst the Caste Hindus, and they did not increase the efficiency of the administrative services. However, there was a reason for them, and so long as they were fairly applied, I think they were right, in the circumstances. The reasons for their retention given me by my Muslim Ministers were many, the most convincing being that the people looked for a fair proportion between Hindus and Muslims amongst the administrative officers, and that the Rules were gradually achieving this. Before the Rules were instituted, there was a big preponderance of Hindu officers, although the Muslims were in a majority in the Province.

I mention this subject to show that there are many considerations that are exceptional to India—and that do not make things easier.

Indeed there are many things in India that seem a little unusual to an Australian, although I hope I never showed signs of surprise. For instance, a Governor is sometimes addressed by deputations and the like as "the embodiment of justice", "wise and noble satrap", etc. This was a little hard to take at first, until I realised that such epithets are not meant to describe what you are, but what you are expected to be—which puts it in quite a different light.

I was new to the Indian Civil Service, and the I.C.S was new to me. I discovered that there were words and phrases that had become part of their official language,

and of which I had never heard. The members of the I.C.S. were unconscious of their originality. "This paper may be read", was one of them, which means that if you want to know anything of the subject under discussion, you have *got* to read it. The word "emergent" is in daily use, the adjective of "emergency". I never failed to admire the word "infructuous", which is very popular in I.C.S. circles. It is more or less self-explanatory—"unfruitful", or "useless". There are many more.

Then, again, an occasional good "babu-ism" came my way, by which I mean a quite logical but wrong use of the English language by Indian clerks and others whose grasp of English is incomplete. An entry on a file dealing with the dismissal of an obvious malefactor in the public service ended with the pithy note: "For the reasons given, he was fired with enthusiasm". And again, a nice *non sequitur*: "It is about 65 miles, as the cock crows".

I was delighted with a letter of thanks that I received from a minor Indian official after he had received a decoration:"I heartily congratulate your Excellency for appreciating my public service".

"Most becile Sir" took a little working out, until it became clear that "becile" was designed to be the opposite of "imbecile", which was very civil.

Although I made a point of touring the Province fairly extensively, the pressure of business kept me most of the time at my headquarters in Calcutta. I don't know how the Caliph Haroon-al-Rashid managed it in the Arabian Nights, but I found it most difficult to get anywhere informally and unknown. Whistles would blow, policemen would bob up from nowhere, and what I had hoped would be a simple expedition always became a cavalcade. However, I got a good distance into the Calcutta slums

and the slums of the neighbouring industrial areas. Conditions in these slums are appalling—overcrowding and lack of ventilation, sanitation, drainage and water-supply combine to create living conditions of the most filthy and degrading sort, and to make these warrens hot-beds of disease. I made it clear that these conditions were intolerable, and I enacted a Slum Improvement Bill to make it possible to secure some betterment of these awful slums by the compulsory provision of drains, latrines, water supply, pathways, and so on. I intended this to be a short-term measure preparatory to a more radical attack on the problem, which would mean pulling down the slums altogether and the rehousing of many hundreds of thousands of people.

There is, unfortunately, very little good to be said on the subject of health in Bengal. It is probably the worst in the world. All one can say is that in some parts of Bengal it is easier not to die than in other parts. The Province is malaria-ridden. It has recurrent epidemics of smallpox and cholera, as well as a great deal of leprosy and tuberculosis. Bengal has a very few thousand doctors to serve its 65 million people. The best thing we did in 1944–45 was to stimulate the preventive side by means of mass inoculation. About 50 million vaccinations and inoculations were given in those two years—a great achievement. The other forward move was the purchase of a considerable number of British and American Military hospitals after the war ended, thus adding some thousands of hospital beds to the hospital equipment of the Province.

India is notable for personal cleanliness and corporate filth. Even the humblest villager washes his clothes and his person at least once a day, but the surroundings of his village or of his home are beyond belief. The flies do the rest.

There is a great deal of political passion in India in these days. High political feelings in India tend to express themselves in parades and processions and clashes with the police, which can quickly degenerate into riots, stone throwing, burning of cars and buildings, and so on. However, we had no outbreaks of any consequence during my Governorship until the last few months. Then we had two outbreaks of rioting in Calcutta, both arising out of the trial by court-martial of some Indian deserters who had joined the Japanese. Fanatical and inflammatory speeches had so worked on the feelings and passions of the University students of Calcutta that they came out in procession and tried to march through a prohibited area. They clashed with the police, which resulted in stone throwing, police charges, some shooting, followed by the situation getting out of hand and spreading throughout the city. For three days in each case the life of the great city of Calcutta was paralysed. We eventually damped it down, but not until considerable casualties had been suffered. They were tragic incidents, but not, I am afraid, the last of such outbreaks that India will experience.

I believe that Bengal suffers from some basic and fundamental disabilities. The first is that the maximum possible revenues of the Province under to-day's conditions are wholly inadequate to support the work that should be done, even on most meagre standards, in health, education and the revival of agriculture through irrigation projects, let alone the manifold other matters of public consequence on which government should be active. Under to-day's conditions, the income of a large percentage of Bengal's 65 million people is so close to the subsistence level that they cannot contribute towards increased revenues, and, in fact, they represent a net drain on the resources of the Province.

This is another way of saying that poverty is the greatest single disability of Bengal. How can this situation be improved? The vast majority of the population is engaged in growing rice, which occupies them for not more than half their time, owing to their dependence on the annual rains (the monsoon). If there is a "good monsoon" they get a good crop, and if the monsoon is not "good" they get a bad crop. They are the slaves of the weather. If they had perpetual irrigation water they would be able to grow double the crops that they grow to-day, and they would be largely independent of the monsoon. They could then feed themselves on a decent nutritional basis and with something to spare, and they could contribute reasonably towards the revenues of the Province.

But at present, and for some years ahead, the tragic fact is that the tens of millions of farmers of Bengal are doomed to idleness for about half their time—the greatest under-employment problem in the world, the greatest waste of potential human effort.

The Bengal population is increasing at the rate of about a million people a year. Production is not keeping up with the increase in population. There is not enough land—and consequently not enough food—to go round.[1] I believe that unless the possibilities of irrigation, drainage and river control are most energetically pursued, the prospects of Bengal are, to put it mildly, indifferent.

Fortunately there is immense scope for improvement. Modern science and modern methods of development

[1] It is said in the Floud Commission's Report on Bengal—"We are forced . . . to the fundamental fact that there is not enough land to go round. There is now slightly less than an acre of cultivated land per head of the agricultural population. As population increases, the available land per head of the population decreases. We consider that the pressure of population on the land is the ultimate cause of Bengal's economic trouble."

have as yet hardly been applied to Bengal's natural resources. For example, the fishing industry is capable of very great expansion. Properly organised it could add considerably to the nourishment of the people, all of whom like fish, and need it to balance their present unsatisfactory diet. I therefore encouraged by every possible means the activities of the Fisheries Department, which we doubled or trebled in size and scope. Also I actively encouraged the expansion of the Agriculture Department and of the facilities for agricultural research and education. One of our large-scale experiments was the establishment of a dairy and livestock breeding farm and research station (at a total cost of well over £500,000) on about 6,000 acres of reclaimed land that had been semi-derelict and malaria-ridden. We managed this with the help of two capable agricultural officers from New Zealand, whose services I was fortunate enough to obtain.

At one stage, when we were trying to enliven the agricultural side, a fertile-minded Indian official produced the slogan: "Let us make the people of Bengal manure minded". I had to clamp down on that one.

Bengal's greatest possibilities lie in the development of its huge water resources. The control of the Province's great rivers could provide irrigation water for millions of acres of agricultural land throughout the Province, and would enable double the number of crops to be grown. Great quantities of electrical power could also be generated with wide and beneficial consequences. The face of Bengal could be changed vastly for the better—and to the enrichment of the inhabitants—by the controlled use of Bengal's great natural asset—water.

By the time I left a great number of projects to this end were taking definite and practical shape. I believe that

their execution is essential to Bengal's welfare, and I hope and trust that they will be pursued.

During 1945 we were busy drawing up plans for a wide range of post-war reconstruction works. It was estimated that we could count on about £125 millions sterling over the first five post-war years from our own and Government of India funds, both revenue and loan monies. Without going into detail, we worked out plans for spending £23 millions on agriculture, fisheries and forestry, £26 millions on irrigation projects, £30 millions on roads, £10 millions on education, £11 millions on public health and the balance of £25 millions on a variety of smaller matters (police, statistics, technical training, etc.).

Before the war, Bengal had never spent more than the equivalent of a few thousand pounds a year on developmental projects. Now, £25 millions a year is going to be spent. Much head shaking. Can we afford it? The more appropriate question is, "Can we afford not to?" Money is the fertilizer that Bengal needs most, and there is no soil in the world that will respond quicker than the soil of Bengal.

Whatever mark I may or may not have left on Bengal, I claim to have left a few Australian expressions behind me. My personal secretary, a most capable British member of the Indian Civil Service, was a man wholly unfamiliar with the expression "a fair cow". However, in the course of time he accepted it, and many other Australian expressions, as being pungent and descriptive. So much so that when I had once sent him to Delhi on a job, he sent me a telegram in cypher in which he said that "he now agreed that so-and-so was a fair cow". My personal office staff withheld the telegram from me in the belief that it was a corruption, and asked for a repetition

of the message. The repetition came: "So-and-so is a fair cow—repeat fair cow". This was then brought to me by a bewildered subordinate. I felt that my time in India had not been wasted.

I have spoken of many of the matters that absorbed me and my Government in my two years in Bengal. There were many more, but I have given a typical cross-section. On my wife's side there was a full range of other activities touching the development of women's work in the Province and the welfare of Servicemen and, later, of returning prisoners of war.

Side by side with all this there was a constant stream of people passing through Government House. We had to get to know all the local people of consequence, both Indian and British, through informal contact at lunch or dinner with us. There were large numbers of senior officers of the fighting services and of other administrations constantly passing through Calcutta, and many of them stayed with us. I suppose there were always four or five visitors staying in the house, and, I expect, a dozen others to various meals each day.

Calcutta was a great terminal and a cross-roads during the war years. People from England, from China, America, Australia, from New Delhi and other parts of India were constantly appearing, and we were glad to see them and hear their news.

When Mr. Churchill asked me to go to Bengal in late 1943, I hadn't the least idea what it would mean. My previous interests had not included India, and I'm afraid that, like many others, I knew little about it. However, the life of Bengal unfolded itself very quickly before us. We had to learn it all without delay. We had no time for relaxations of any sort. It was hard slogging all the

time, as it has been throughout the war for countless people.

Not the least thing that we gained through our two years in Bengal was an ever-growing knowledge of the Indian people and the beginnings of understanding of them. The people of Bengal are sensitive, most intelligent and of quick sympathies. We like to believe that we made many friends amongst them. Unless one likes the people amongst whom, and for whom, one is working, life very quickly becomes a burden, and we did not find it a burden at all.

The popular conception of the life of a Provincial Governor in India is far removed from reality. I have the impression that he is regarded as a rather elegant personage who runs a reluctant pen over heavily-embossed stationery for a few hours a day. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Governorship of Bengal is to-day a task of great anxiety and toil. There is very little glamour about it for either the Governor or his wife. However, we would not have missed our two full years in Bengal for a great deal, and, in spite of many ups and downs, we left Calcutta with great regret and with the greatest goodwill and sympathy for the people of the Presidency.

All-India politics are not directly the concern of the Governor of an Indian Province. His task is to govern his Province. However, the Governor of Bengal lives in the midst of provincial political controversy which is a microcosm of the political controversy of all-India. It is going on all round him all the time, in the minds and mouths of half the people he meets, and in the columns of the fiercely controversial Press. It is impossible to run a Province such as Bengal without acquiring a working knowledge of the larger aspect of the facts and points of

view that concern India as a whole. Things may be otherwise in Indian Provinces other than Bengal, but I am convinced that one would come to many wrong decisions in Bengal if one did not acquire some reasonable acquaintance with what was happening in the rest of India. Hence what follows.

Chapter Three

POLITICS AND PERSONALITIES IN INDIA

"BRITISH INDIA" (and I will omit the quotation marks from now on) is, at present, a loose Federation of the eleven Provinces, with a Constitution which allocates powers and responsibilities between "the Centre" (the Government of India at New Delhi) and the Provinces. The form of Constitution—and the relationship between New Delhi and the Provinces—is not unlike that of Australia.

The Provinces of British India comprise 55 per cent of the total area of India, and include 76 per cent of the total population. The Indian States account for the balance.

The Governments of the many Indian States are autocratic. There is little or no representative Government. Power resides in the person and family of the Ruler. The beginnings of Democratic Government are beginning to be conceded. Some of the States are extremely well run, others not so well. There is little or no "politics" in the Indian States. The Rulers see to that. The result is that Hindu-Muslim antipathy (an outstanding feature of political life in British India) is practically absent.

The Rulers of the principal Indian States derive their authority from treaties made with the British Government a few generations ago. The smaller States have no treaties but rely on "usage"—the fact that their ruling families have been regarded as the rulers for a long time.

The three legs of the stool in India may be said to be

the Congress Party, the Muslim League[1] and the Indian States. The world hears a lot about the Muslim League and the Congress. Less is heard of the Princes, because they have less nuisance value. They don't want anything except to be left alone as much as possible, and to preserve their heritage.

As regards the other two legs of the stool—the Congress Party and the Muslim League—there has always been rivalry, even antagonism, between Hindus and Muslims in India; but the past generation has seen a sharp increase in feeling, until it can be described to-day as a feud of some intensity.

So the present position is that India is "run" in two watertight compartments—the Provinces of British India and the Indian States. It is generally recognised (but, of course, only admitted with reservations by the Princes) that in due course Princely India must come into the general comity of India. The Hindu-Muslim feud, however, has raised the problem whether in fact there can be a real comity of India. The Muslims are so distrustful of the Hindus that they are (or appear to be) insistent on Pakistan, that is, the creation of units of Muslim rule in

[1] The Congress Party and the Muslim League should be briefly explained.

The Congress Party (its full description is "the Indian National Congress") was founded in 1885 and is the oldest and best organised political party in India. Its executive is called the Working Committee of the Congress. The Congress stands for "Purna Swaraj", or complete independence for India. For 25 years, whether as a member of the Congress Working Committee or not, Mr. Gandhi has dominated its Councils.

The Muslim League ("The All-India Muslim League") was formed in 1906 to look after the political interests of the Muslims. The League stands for separate electorates for the Muslims, as against the Congress stand for general electorates in which all members of all-Indian communities elect a representative, no matter what community he belongs to. The Muslim League and the Congress have become increasingly antagonistic over the last 25 years.

the areas where there is a Muslim majority, which will be completely independent of the rest of India—lest in the federal unity of India they be swamped in the Hindu majority.

Looking back over the history under British rule, it has always been recognised that the day would come when India would rule itself. For a hundred years things have been shaping themselves in that direction—but, from the Indian point of view, too slowly.

In the early 1900's "nationalism", "unrest", and "terrorism"—all directed against the British—began to appear on the Indian scene, as a reflex of the impatience of sophisticated India at the slow speed of the advance towards the goal of self-government. Britain's answer to this growing and increasingly vocal demand has been a series of "Constitutions", each a considerable advance on what had gone before.

I will not complicate this short account by dealing with developments prior to 1900. Since 1900 India has, so far, proceeded through three "Constitutions", and it is now the aim to produce the fourth and final one. These constitutions have been steps—first, towards representation; then from representation to partial responsibility; thirdly, from partial responsibility to much greater responsibility; and, lastly, from great responsibility to what we all hope will be full responsibility.

The first of these Constitutions was that of 1909. It provided for the election of a proportion of the members of the Central and Provincial Councils. But, while this provided political representation, it did not involve any control of the Government.

The next Constitution took form in 1919. It followed the Montagu-Chelmsford report on Indian Constitutional

Reforms and was inspired by the British Government's announcement in 1917 that their aim was "the progressive realisation of responsible government in India". Under the Constitution of 1919, authority over a number of subjects was devolved from the Centre to the Provinces, and, within the Provinces, a system of partial responsibility known as "dyarchy" was introduced. Dyarchy meant that some of the duties of Government were "reserved" for the Governors of Provinces to carry out as before (responsible only to the Governor-General and through the Governor-General to the British Parliament), while others were "transferred" to be carried out by Ministers responsible to elected majorities in the provincial legislatures.

But this did not satisfy those who were impatient. The Congress Party had become a revolutionary body, and in 1920 it resolved that "Swaraj", or self-rule, must be attained within one year by means of "non-violent non-co-operation". They would have no hand in "dyarchy" or "partial responsibility." They wanted the whole of the cake at once, and not merely a large slice with a promise of more to come. In 1928 Indian nationalists produced their own plan (in the shape of the Nehru Report). In the words of an authority on the subject (R. Coupland), "It was the first attempt of Indian public men to build a Constitution of their own on a foundation of national unity". But the plan did not satisfy the Congress extremists who were by then looking beyond Dominion status to complete independence of the British Commonwealth, and it was repudiated for other reasons by the Muslims.

Almost simultaneously the British started their re-examination of the problem. A Commission of the

British Parliament—the Simon Commission—was established in 1927 to undertake this task. The Commission produced a report which, with many changes, led to the Constitution Act of 1935, under which India is now governed. The Simon Report was an advance of the 1919 position to the extent that it advocated further devolution of power from the Centre to the Provinces and the abolition of partial responsibility of dyarchy in the Provinces. But it did not contemplate responsible government at the Centre. A Round Table Conference was then called in London. It was representative of the whole of India—both British India and Princely India. Their deliberations (which were spread over three years and which achieved, if not complete agreement, at any rate much work of great value) were followed by those of a Joint Select Committee of Parliament. Eventually emerged the Government of India Act of 1935, which came into force at the beginning of 1937.

The Government of India Act of 1935 was a big step towards self-government, and it went considerably beyond the recommendations of the Simon Commission. In the Provinces, responsible government was established over virtually the entire field of subjects ordinarily falling to a province in a federation. In nearly all matters the Governor was bound to act on the advice of his Ministers. In a few matters he could legally act against advice. In still fewer matters he could act even without advice. These "safeguards" were very few, and the Governors were particularly enjoined not to exercise their powers so as to relieve Ministers of proper responsibility. In fact the over-ruling powers were very little used.

The second part of the Government of India Act 1935 was designed to secure the federation of the whole of India, and to introduce responsible government at the Centre. But it has never come into force, because the Princes refused to join a federation. So the Centre carried on as before.

The Government of India Act of 1935, as a whole, was a great advance on anything that had gone before. It was the first act that sought to apply to all India, to the Indian States as well as to the Provinces. As such, it marked a definite transition from successive measures of decentralisation under a unitary system to (or towards) the idea of federation.

However, it did not provide for powers to enable the Constitution to be amended or developed otherwise than by another Act of the British Parliament, and to this extent fell short of Dominion status. In this same regard, the 1935 Act did not alter the fact that federal legislation (and some provincial legislation) continued to be liable to disallowance by the King on the advice of a British Minister responsible to the British Parliament.

Casting back quickly over the generations, we began in India with a state of affairs in which the Government of the country was one and indivisible, and the "local" Governments scarcely more than agents of the Government of India. The system was, in those days, little more than an administrative system. The early legislative bodies were not recognised as possessing individuality distinct from the executive. Then followed the stages of increasing association of non-officials with the Government: then the attempt to make the legislatures more "representative" by introducing an elected element.

Next the promise of "responsible" Government made during the war of 1914–18, with dyarchy in the Provinces and increased powers for the legislature at the Centre.

Even the 1919 reforms were a break with the past in the way of the new life that they gave to the Provinces, but that step was carried much further with the conception of the 1935 Act, based on the creation of units that were very largely self-governing in an All-India Federation.

Under the 1935 Act, the legislative fields of the Centre and of the Provinces were regulated by lists of the powers to be exercised by the Centre and the Provinces, together with a list of concurrent powers. At the same time, the 1935 Act largely wiped out the "superintendence" by the Central Government over the Provincial Governments, except as regards the authority of the Governor-General in respect of the "special responsibilities" of Governors.

Let me carry the tale a little further. In 1937 responsible ministries were formed in all the Provinces. But in 1939, on the outbreak of war, all the Congress Party ministries (that is, the ministries of seven out of the eleven Provinces) resigned and would take no further part in the government of the country. These Provinces had, therefore, to be governed without responsible ministries. In 1942 the Cripps offer, which contemplated full Dominion status after the war and meantime Indian control within the existing constitution of all Government power except defence, was rejected.

I believe that the rejection of the Cripps offer by the Congress (which was inevitably followed by its rejection by the Muslim League) was a major error of judgment,

for which a section of the Working Committee of the Congress has to take responsibility. The Cripps offer was a clear-cut, specific and generous proposal. It envisaged the "earliest possible realisation of self-government in India" as an Indian Union in common allegiance to the Crown as a Dominion. The subsequent right of the Indian Union to contract out of the British Commonwealth was unrestricted.

The probable real reason for the rejection of the Cripps offer was that the Working Committee of the Congress (and possibly also the Working Committee of the Muslim League) believed that we were down and out in the first two precarious years of the war. Mr. Gandhi is commonly reported to have said that the Cripps offer was a "post-dated cheque on a bank that was obviously crashing". Even if Mr. Gandhi did not say this, I believe that this remark fairly reflects the attitude of mind that was general amongst his followers in 1942.

I have widespread and conclusive evidence that the rejection of the Cripps offer was greatly regretted in 1943 and 1944, when it was clear that we were going to win the war.

A few months after the rejection of the Cripps offer, in August 1942, some underground groups endeavoured to seize power by revolution. The effort failed, but the war effort was impeded and the country was thrown into an appreciable state of confusion.

In 1944, discussions between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah revealed that the gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League was as great as, or even greater than ever.

In 1945, the Viceroy held a conference at Simla in

an endeavour to persuade the principal parties to accept office as members of his Executive Council, and as Ministers in the Provincial Governments, but the attempt failed.

Hitherto it has been a melancholy story—a story of hope and sincere endeavour frustrated by fear and suspicion. If the Congress Party had given the 1919 Constitution a fair chance for the ten years before its statutory review; if the Muslims had not repudiated the Nehru Report in 1928; if the Princes had not refused to join a federation in 1937; if the Congress Party had not resigned office in 1939; if the Cripps offer had been accepted in 1942; if the Congress Party had not rebelled later in 1942; if Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah had agreed on the form of an Indian Government in 1944; if the Congress and the Muslim League had agreed jointly to accept Central and Provincial office in 1945—if any of these had happened, I believe it would have been for India's good, and that Britain's declared intentions would have been very much easier of fulfilment.

We have not been dilatory in India by way of constitutional reforms. We have pressed on with all the speed that was wise and practicable—indeed we have pressed on probably in advance of the ability of the country to take advantage of the progressive steps towards self-government that we have made possible.

Let me include a quotation from a speech in 1936 by Sir William Hawthorn Lewis (then Adviser on Constitutional matters to the Viceroy—subsequently Governor of Orissa):—

"I would like, in conclusion, to leave one thought

with you. We are told that the normal span of a man's life is three-score years and ten. It is only four-score years since, with the repeal of the Charter Acts, the responsibility for the administration of India was formally assumed by the Crown. Study the constitutional history of these few years, and you will find in India an epitome of the progress of public and personal liberty which has carried us through the centuries of our own history. Under the safe ægis of the British Crown, political institutions have been set up in India, and have been expanded and developed on lines parallel to institutions of our own country. Do not look to me for an anticipation of events before they occur. But remember that we stand now at the start of a great historical development; and when you consider the political changes on which we are embarked, be sure of this, that this general plan of self-governing units and a federation embracing the whole continent has been constructed with a fine and splendid purpose. The traditions of the British Empire and its strength are bound up with the progress and liberty of all its elements. That is its purpose, inexorably sure and eternally true."

All India politics to-day are sharp and clear cut. There are only two parties of India-wide consequence—the Congress Party and the Muslim League. The Congress Party is almost entirely Caste Hindu and the Muslim League is entirely Muslim.

The Congress Party claims to represent all communities, but it is clear (from the results of the recent elections and from other evidence) that it represents, in effect, only the Caste Hindus. However, even this means a considerable body of support. There are nearly 220

million Caste Hindus in the whole of India, of whom about 160 millions are in British India.[1]

There are probably nearly 100 million Muslims in the whole of India, of whom about 84 millions are in British India.

There are roughly 52 millions of scheduled Caste Hindus (depressed classes or "untouchables") in all India, of whom about 42 millions are in British India. They have no clear-cut India-wide political party. Their leader, Dr. Ambedkar, makes savage and hostile references to Mr. Gandhi and to the Congress Party from time to time. On the other hand, Mr. Gandhi makes soothing and sympathetic remarks about the Scheduled Castes, which may be expected to have some political effect.

The Congress Party seeks an undivided ("un-vivisected") India, with an all-India Government and Constitution, and they say they will have nothing less.

The Muslim League wants autonomous States (Pakistan) with full and complete sovereignty composed of what are at present the Muslim majority provinces in North West and in North East India, and they say they will have nothing less.

[1]For those who (like the writer) prefer their figures in tabular form, the Indian population figures are as follows:—

	Caste Hindus	*Muslims*	*Scheduled Castes*	*Others*
British India	160 million	84.1 million	42.3 million	27 million
Indian States	58.5 million	13.4 million	9.7 million	15 million
Totals	218.5 million	97.5 million	52 million	42 million

These figures are from the 1941 Census, adjusted reasonably for net population increase since.

It is interesting to note (by reference from the 1931 and 1941 Census reports) that the total number of British civilians in India in the inter-war period was about 155,000. This, of course, excludes the Army and excludes Anglo-Indians.

The Congress Party holds that a divided India is unthinkable. They claim to speak for 75 per cent of India, and they ask where it would be possible to find a bigger majority than this on any major political question in any country. They go on to ask, in effect, for British India to be handed over to them, and for the right to deal subsequently with the minorities as a domestic problem. They say they realise quite well that India cannot have orderly government with a permanently dissatisfied minority of a hundred millions in their midst, and that it will be up to them to solve this problem.

The Muslim League, on the other hand, insist that they will not in any circumstances come into an all-India Government working an all-India constitution under which the Muslim representation would be swamped by that of the Caste Hindus. They affect to believe that no constitutional safeguards for the Muslims in an all-India Constitution would be any protection for them against the ambitions of the Hindus.

It would be difficult to conceive more irreconcilable political aims than those of the Congress Party and the Muslim League.

This is the unenviable situation that the British Government has to resolve—quite the most intractable major problem of its kind that any Government has ever had to face.

The situation is frequently compressed into slick slogans: "Quit India" and "Split India"; "United we stand, divided we fall", and the reverse.

The political leaders of the two great communities have talked themselves into diametrically-opposed and hostile camps. It would, of course, be foolish to deny that there is, and has been for a long time, considerable

antagonism between Caste Hindus and Muslims. However, I believe that there is much exaggeration in the case now presented to their followers and to the world by the leaders of each of the parties. The ordinary run of Hindus and of Muslims do not feel anything like as strongly on the subject as the political leaders who affect to speak for them.

I venture to believe that even if the Hindus and the Muslims were blood brothers, the present tempo of mutual criticism and mud-slinging from the platform and in the Press would produce a situation of potentially explosive violence. As frequently happens in political campaigns, the facts and merits of each case have long ago receded into the background, and their place has been taken by passion and invective.

I believe that it has become quite impossible for the Congress Party and the Muslim League to come to voluntary agreement on any matter of consequence, and still less on the major issue of the future of India.

The further one is from India, the less difficult do Indian politics appear. It is very hard to realise, other than by day-to-day contact with representative Hindus and Muslims, how extremely difficult, if not impossible, it is to effect any compromise between the views of the Congress Party and the Muslim League.

If I am right in this view then the solution will have to be imposed by Great Britain. Unfortunately, there is very little room for compromise between the ambitions of the Congress Party for a United India and those of the Muslim League for an autonomous Muslim State, or States. The British Government will have to come down on one side or the other. Whichever way the British decide, the decision will be fiercely resented by

the other party. One can only hope that the resentment will not take the form of resort to violence—but it is difficult to believe that it will not.

An intelligent and well-informed Indian put the situation to me in a nutshell in conversation a few months ago. He said, "You British have as pretty a problem as could be found. I can imagine you looking at the Congress Party and at the Muslim League and asking yourselves which you will choose between. On the one hand you have Congress, which undoubtedly represents the majority of the people of India, but who have been rebellious and difficult from your point of view for a generation. They now want the right thing, a united India. On the other hand you have the Muslims, who represent a very much smaller proportion of the Indian people. They have co-operated with you loyally for a long time, but now they want the wrong thing, a divided India. The difficult majority want the right thing, the loyal minority want the wrong thing. Whichever way you decide you will be frightfully wrong in the eyes of a great many Indians. And, for once, it won't be your fault."

By far the most outstanding and interesting individual that I met in India was Mr. Gandhi. Although I believe he is 76 years old, he shows no outward sign of the weight of years.

His personality is real and lively and he has great charm. He is not, on ordinary standards, a good-looking man; yet his bearing and his appearance warm one to him. You feel that here is a human being of consequence, and likeable as well.

Mr. Gandhi gave me the unusual feeling, the first time I met him, that he was a man with whom one could

discuss one's most intimate personal problem, and get wise and understanding advice.

He is innately courteous, tactful and a good listener. He has a good sense of fun and I think, probably, also a good sense of humour. His physical gestures are simple and dramatic. A discussion with him is enlivened by a good deal of relevant and entertaining reminiscences.

Like many another, I believe that Mr. Gandhi trusts those who trust him. I would believe him to be much influenced by sympathetic personalities. I am reminded of the remark attributed to Bismarck, "When I'm dealing with a gentleman, I'm a gentleman and a half. When I'm dealing with a crook, I'm a crook and a half." The same general idea has recently been expressed by Mr. Henry L. Stimson, the ex-Secretary of War of the United States, when he said: "The chief lesson that I have learned in a long life is that the only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him, and that the sure way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him and to show your distrust."

Mr. Gandhi is a lawyer by profession, but not, as he takes pains to point out, a man of great learning. His command of English is very good, almost perfect, but slightly coloured by the almost universal Indian habit of pronouncing certain words differently from the way we pronounce them.

Mr. Gandhi is credited by many of his followers with being a Saint and a Statesman. Whilst I have a considerable regard for him, I do not believe he is either. He has protested for many years against being called "Mahatma" (holy man), but in vain. He is almost universally referred to in the Congress Press as Mahatma or Mahatmaji, the respectful and affectionate diminutive.

Mr. Gandhi is an intensively religious man. Apart from his spiritual convictions he has made more than a passing study of all religions. His daily evening prayers are attended by thousands of people, and have something of the flavour of open-air revivalist meetings. To emphasise his universal approach to religion, he introduces Muslim prayers in Arabic, hymns in English, and selections from other religions.

What claims has Mr. Gandhi to statesmanship? There is a simple criterion for determining whether a man is a statesman; the passage of time should show that he was right in his major political decisions three times out of four. I do not think Mr. Gandhi can claim this record.

Perhaps one might say that amongst saints he is a statesman, and amongst statesmen a saint.

Mr. Gandhi's greatest asset is his warm humanity, which must be the basis of his remarkable hold on the hearts and affections of the great mass of the people of India. I have personally, on two occasions, had dramatic evidence of the great strength of his influence.

I once asked him when his astonishing power over the people of India began to manifest itself, and he said that it was about a year after he returned to India from South Africa, about 30 years ago. Whether by reason of modesty or for whatever other reason, he made no effort to explain how he got where he is, other than to say that the story of his work in South Africa on behalf of his fellow countrymen must have preceded him to India. I have asked others and have got no more satisfactory answer than that his following was due to his obvious integrity and sincerity. But others have had integrity and sincerity and the lightning of almost

universal popular acclaim has not struck them as it has struck Mr. Gandhi.

I would not say that he has a businesslike or methodical mind. I cannot see him entering into a discussion on a number of matters, dealing concisely with each one in turn, arguing it through, reaching a decision, ticking it off, and then passing on to the next. His mind, for better or worse, does not work that way. He likes taking his time, mentioning a point when he thinks of it, whether it concerns the matter immediately under discussion or the one before or the one after. His is the mind of the artist rather than of the executive. The result is that it is rather a business summing up the result of a discussion with him on a number of subjects. I have had many such discussions with him, in which I wanted him to do certain things and he wanted me to do certain things. I was out to do as many of the things that he wanted as I possibly could, but—with the best will in the world—I landed into misunderstandings with him and we had some pretty rapid cross-fire correspondence on the several subjects subsequently, with each of us a little irritable.

By the way, Mr. Gandhi adopted the pleasant habit of addressing me, at the start of his letters, as "Dear Friend". When he wrote in a hurry it seemed to get perilously near to "Dear Fiend", especially in some of our slightly acidulated correspondence. But I may have been unduly sensitive.

Like all of us, I suppose, Mr. Gandhi has some fixed ideas. It is a waste of time, as I discovered, trying to argue against his views on the subject of home spinning and weaving. He is convinced that the salvation of India lies in the spinning wheel and the hand loom, and no amount of argument on what I liked to believe

were logical lines, had any effect on him at all. He defeated one by merely repeating his premise, as if one had never said anything at all.

Another subject was the excise tax on salt. Mr. Gandhi has held for 30 years that there should be no tax of any sort on salt. No matter how cogently one argues about the necessity for public revenues, and the microscopically small contribution that each individual pays in the form of salt excise, he relies on his original premise that the whole thing is wrong and should be abolished, and that that's all there is to it.

When I venture to deny Mr. Gandhi the right to be called a statesman, I do not want to be taken to mean that he lacks political sense. I believe that he has this useful attribute in high degree. He knows when to use his undoubted influence with the people, and he knows when not to. He has a keen appreciation of the use of words. He can be clear-cut and specific in his public statements, and he can command expressions that mean something different to each group within his following that reads them. He can make his point publicly with an opponent and yet leave his opponent without any feeling of bitterness—when he likes. He knows those things which will advance his cause and those that will not. He knows when to leave a matter to his colleague or his subordinate, and when to deal with it himself.

Mr. Gandhi seldom, if ever, speaks ill of any man. I discussed several men with him who had used him harshly, but he managed to find some good to say of them and no ill.

Although I have met Mr. Gandhi many times and have had a good many hours with him, I don't pretend to understand him at all fully. He is of the East and I am

not. But of this I am sure—that he is the most important figure in India to-day, and I believe he will continue to be.

It is not too much to say that Mr. Jinnah is the only outstanding Muslim of all-India stature in Indian politics to-day.

He is a successful lawyer of Bombay and a man of considerable wealth. He was educated and called to the Bar in England. He usually wears the most immaculate English clothes and carries an eyeglass. Only on great Muslim occasions does he wear Muslim clothes. I believe that only a generation or two back his family was converted from Hinduism. I believe that he married a Parsee. So that, from an orthodox Muslim point of view, he would seem to have little to recommend him. In spite of all this, he is the idol, although the very remote and austere idol, of the vast majority of Muslims of India.

He is tall and very thin. He is over 70, but carries his years well, though he has a look of frailty. His English is perfect and precise. He has a distinct and dominating personality. He appears to have the legal mind: he holds his cards very close to his chest. He is not a "warm" man. I have never heard him address a great audience, but I find it difficult to believe that he could ever sway a crowd through their emotions.

However, there is something in his eye that hints at a sense of humour and, deeper down, at the memory of human enjoyment. But he is a man of iron discipline, and he has denied himself the luxury of any qualities which might loosen his concentration upon his purpose. He is dogmatic and sure of himself; I would believe that it does not ever occur to him that he might be wrong.

(I am reminded, most irrelevantly, of Senator "Happy" Chandler, lately of the United States Senate, who recently made the splendid admission: "I may be wrong but I am never in doubt.")

Mr. Jinnah's ability and personality are such that it is not much of an exaggeration to say that he *is* the Muslim League. His views are accepted by his colleagues without question and without much analysis. If he says the watchword is to be "Pakistan" the watchword *is* Pakistan. He is a man whose judgment and authority are not questioned lightly by his colleagues.

It is possible, even probable, that if Mr. Jinnah were to resign from the leadership of the Muslim League, the demand for Pakistan would before long die down and disappear and that the Muslims of India would be content to come into an all-India Constitution, provided that it contained adequate safeguards in respect of their religion, education, social customs, and their representation in the legislatures and in governmental instrumentalities.

Mr. Jinnah once belonged to the Congress Party, 30 years or so ago. He was a great admirer of the late Gopal Krishna Gokhale, then an outstanding figure in the councils of Congress. I have heard Mr. Jinnah quoted (on what I believe to be very good authority) as saying that he would be a member of the Congress Party to-day if Gokhale were still alive. I have also heard him quoted (again, I believe, reliably) as saying that Mr. Gandhi had prostituted the Congress Party by encouraging the worst elements in Indian politics into it and letting them ruin it by extremism and communalism.

Mr. Jinnah is credited with ruling the working

committee of the Muslim League with a rod of iron. He is said to tell them what's what, and that they invariably fall into line. At any signs of intransigence on what he considers a major point he is said to threaten resignation, after which the argument ceases. He must know that he has no rival in the Muslim League. For some reason, Muslim India has thrown up very few figures of India-wide political significance. It would be very hard to find a successor to Mr. Jinnah if he resigned from the leadership of the Muslim League. He knows this and uses it to get his own way.

There must have been many who have believed over recent years that Mr. Jinnah was using the threat of Pakistan as a legitimate bargaining counter, and that at some moment of his own choosing he would ask Congress what their alternative was, what they had to offer. Or perhaps it would be more in character for him to let it be known what *his* terms were, in the shape of Himalayan safeguards for the Muslims in an all-India constitution. But he has not done this. He has kept on demanding Pakistan and nothing else. Perhaps now it is too late for him to admit that there is any acceptable alternative to Pakistan in the eyes of the Muslims, he would lose too much face. If this is so—then . . .

On a wider field, Mr. Jinnah is credited with the ambition to achieve an entente between the Muslims of India (the Muslims of Pakistan, he would say) and the Muslims of the Middle East. It is indeed strange that there is so little mutual sympathy and liaison between the 65 million Muslims in the Middle East and the 100 million Muslims of India. (Still less, by the way, is there any link between the Muslims of India and the 65 million Muslims of the Netherlands East Indies and South East Asia.)

Admittedly there is some sentimental feeling on the part of the Muslims of India towards the birthplace of their religion in the Middle East, but I do not believe that the feeling is reciprocated. It is true that when there is some natural calamity in the Middle East, the Muslims of India send what financial contribution they can, but I have heard of no reverse tendency. I believe Mr. Jinnah will have a good deal of difficulty in creating a link of any consequence with the Middle East.

A vast responsibility rests on the shoulders of Mr. Jinnah. He is a man well accustomed to authority and responsibility. His followers realise very well that the stakes are high, and they have every faith in his judgment and in his strength. He is blunt and direct and no one has any doubt what he means when he speaks. A very great deal depends on his handling of affairs over the next year or so—the biggest case he has had.

Mr. Nehru is apparently to succeed Mr. Gandhi as the leader of the Congress Party—if, indeed, he is not in fact already leading it to-day.

Mr. Nehru is by far the most anglicised of the members of the Working Committee of the Congress. He was at school and university in England, and in manner and speech—and even in appearance—he conforms quite closely to the regular pattern of those who have been through these institutions. But, on the other hand, there is no one in India who speaks in such unmeasured and unbridled terms in fierce condemnation of the British.

Mr. Nehru is about 57, although he looks considerably younger. He is rather above medium height and is slight in build. He inherited considerable wealth from

his distinguished lawyer-father, Pandit Motilal Nehru. He invariably wears the "Gandhi" cap of white home-spun.

He has written several successful books, and has spent a good many years in detention as a political prisoner.

There is no doubt of the fact that Mr. Nehru bitterly resents the continued presence of the British on Indian soil. He has been fiercely nationalist since soon after his return from his educational period in England. He went through a stage of adherence to Socialism, but he now apparently has come out on the other side, although rather on the Left side. His fervent nationalism remains —and is understandable—although his passion and fury on the subject, both in public and in private, are not so understandable. They would appear to have their origins in a personal psychological background.

Mr. Nehru's ability and wide experience are undoubted. His capacity for expressing himself, both in his writing and on the platform, is of a high order. His comments on public affairs are very much to the point. He has the gift of oratory, and can hold great audiences. His kindliness and sympathy to individuals in distress are well known. He has the confidence and affection of Mr. Gandhi. Next to Mr. Gandhi he is, without doubt, the most respected public figure on the Congress side. And yet one hesitates to call him a popular figure. He is reliably said to be intolerant of opposition, or even of critical comment, even from his friends. It may be that, in spite of his many gifts, this intolerance will make it difficult for him to command the full co-operation and loyalty of his colleagues over a period of time.

Dr. Ambedkar is the most distinguished member of

the Scheduled Castes in India. He was once the Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council responsible for the Labour portfolio.

He was educated overseas, I believe in both England and the United States. He is a man of about 55, robust and sensible, and without the slightest diffidence in speaking of his community. I greatly enjoyed and profited by my many meetings with him. He is a man of wide knowledge, culture and sensibility, and a most determined fighter in the great task of improving the lot of the 52 millions of Scheduled Caste Hindus in India.

Dr. Ambedkar has written many books, the latest (1945) being a formidable indictment of the social structure of Hinduism, called "What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables". The title almost speaks for itself. Dr. Ambedkar hits out at the Caste Hindus—in no uncertain way—and gives chapter and verse. The burden of his argument is that the Congress is a Caste Hindu organisation dominated by a Brahmin-Bania (i.e. top aristocratic caste plus the merchant caste) combination led by Mr. Gandhi, and that they are determined to obtain and maintain Caste Hindu rule of India, involving the continued enslavement of the untouchables as a servile class ordained to do the dirty work of their Caste Hindu masters.

Dr. Ambedkar maintains that the Congress—and particularly Mr. Gandhi—find it politically expedient to affect periodical concern for the untouchables, lest their 52 millions should form an important opposition to the goal of Congress rule.

He believes that the Caste Hindu despises the non-

caste Hindu, and that he is not, generally speaking, in the least interested, except as a political expedient, in seeing the non-caste Hindu raised to an equal footing with himself, whether as a measure of social or political justice or for any other reason.

He holds that the spirit of separatism is endemic in Hinduism. "The real genius of Hinduism" he says "is to divide . . . for what else do caste and untouchability stand for? Obviously for separation, for caste is another name for separation, and untouchability typifies the most extreme form of separation of community from community."

In rebuttal of Dr. Ambedkar's charges against Mr. Gandhi and the Congress, I have heard it said that he is thinking back to the conditions of a generation ago, and that he ignores the advances that have been made in at least diminishing the worst of the caste inequalities in the last decade or so. This may be so. I don't know. The caste system is least in evidence in Bengal, although I believe it thrives unhealthily in other parts of India. But even though a large proportion of Caste Hindus in Bengal do not object to sitting down to a meal with an untouchable, they would, even to-day, be horrified if one of their sons wanted to marry one of them.

Untouchability may be on the wane in India, but it is an unconscionable time a-dying. If I were a member of the Scheduled Castes, I would be very content to have Dr. Ambedkar working and fighting for me. They need someone who isn't afraid of anyone.

Chapter Four

PAKISTAN

THE troublesome parts of India are in the right and left-hand top corners—or, as you might say, under the two armpits of India! The all-India garment is a bit tight under the arms.

Mr. Jinnah wants self-determination for the Muslims of India, who live predominantly in those left and right top corners. He wants independent countries or States to be made of those areas where the Muslims are in a majority over the Hindus. This conception is known as "Pakistan". For practical purposes, it can be said to have originated in 1930, but it was not taken seriously for a number of years afterwards, even by the Muslims. In recent years it has gained increasing impetus from the realisation that the final form of India's self-government must shortly be determined, and from the fact that the Muslims have unpleasant memories of their taste of Congress governments in the Hindu majority Provinces from 1937 to 1939.

The word "Pakistan" (which happens to mean "land of the pure") is a coined word made up from the names of the Muslim majority areas in the North-West of India —Punjab, North-West Frontier Province (or Afghan Province), Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan. The present idea is to form one Muslim country in North-West India composed of the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Provinces; and another in North-East India, composed of Bengal and Assam. Mr. Jinnah appears to claim the whole of these Provinces as they now stand, although there are Hindu majorities

in many of their boundary districts. But it is possible that he would forgo this extreme claim and, although with the loss of some rich industrial areas, be content with smaller but more purely Muslim regions.

The question of the geographical boundaries of Pakistan has a considerable bearing on the problem, particularly as regards Eastern Pakistan (Bengal and Assam). Mr. Jinnah has, quite understandably, not shown his hand in this regard, other than to stick to his opening bid, which was his claim to all of Bengal and Assam and all of the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan. However, it is not generally believed that, even if the two wings of Pakistan were to eventuate, they could possibly include the whole of all these Provinces.

In the case of Eastern Pakistan, Bengal contains markedly Hindu majority areas in the shape of the great city of Calcutta and at least six contiguous districts in South-West Bengal, in which the important coal deposits of the Province are located. In the case of Assam, not much more than a third of its area has a Muslim majority.

If Eastern Pakistan were to be confined, as logically it should be, to the Muslim majority areas of Bengal and Assam, I am not at all sure that it would represent the sort of Pakistan that the Muslim League would want, particularly if it were to exclude Calcutta and the coalfields. The Muslim League is not seeking a sylvan retreat—and that is what it would be, shorn of Calcutta and the coalfields. It would be a poor rural area, practically without any industry, and not even able to feed itself. Such a truncated Bengal would not sound at all enticing to the Muslims, who are seeking to advance themselves economically in the world.

A somewhat similar situation, as I understand it, exists in respect of North-West Pakistan, where the presence of an indigestible Sikh population in the Punjab complicates the problem.

There are about 97 million Muslims in the whole of India. Of these, between 50 and 60 millions would find themselves in Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan. The large balance (30 to 40 millions) are so situated that neither Mr. Jinnah nor anyone else could give them self-determination. They are scattered about India, in the Hindu-majority Provinces and in the Indian States.

The vast majority of the 50 or 60 million Muslims in the Muslim majority areas are cultivators leading modest lives and tilling the soil under no better and no worse conditions of life than their Hindu or Scheduled Caste neighbours. It is not these people who have raised the cry of Pakistan, or proclaimed the impossibility of being part of India along with the Hindu.

The cry of Pakistan is raised in the towns and cities amongst the relatively small number of Muslims who think politically and who are mortally afraid that as a community the Muslims will be swamped by the more astute, better educated, wealthier and more numerous Hindus.

Of course, when an educated political Muslim in a decent black coat goes out into the country districts and tells the uneducated Muslim cultivator, in round-sounding political speeches about his manifold disabilities, from which the magic of Pakistan will free him, they would be more than human if they did not believe it and go about shouting "Pakistan" with all their might. The Indian cultivator, Hindu or Muslim, is no more proof against propaganda than the small farmer in any

other country—particularly when a new heaven and a new earth are promised to him if he will only vote a certain way.

It has been well said that you might solve one minority problem, on paper at least, by the creation of Pakistan, but only at the expense of creating other minority problems, only just less real than the one you solve. In other words, by the creation of an autonomous Pakistan you place something like 50 millions of non-Muslim (mainly Hindu) population at the mercy of a Muslim-dominated government, and so create another minority problem that does not now exist. While Mr. Jinnah claims the right for Muslim majority areas to secede from the rest of India, he denies the 50 million non-Muslims in his Muslim majority areas any alternative but to live under a Muslim-dominated government. He says he will give such Hindus adequate "safeguards", but at the same time he denies the efficacy of safeguards for the Muslims of India generally as any substitute for Pakistan. The Hindus in Pakistan must be content with something that is not good enough for Muslims in India.

The Muslim League have worked themselves up into a state of mind that can only be called Hindu-phobia. Not that there is not some justification for this. The Caste Hindus have dealt with the Muslims with the minimum of warmth and generosity—or even fairness. When and where the Hindus have been in the saddle the Muslims have had the rough end of the stick. The Caste Hindus have given the Muslims little evidence that they believe in a fair deal—and they deny them a fair deal.

It may well be asked at this stage: "What is it that is

bothering the Muslims? What is the reason for their intensity of feeling towards the Caste Hindus? There must be something of real importance to explain the Hindu-phobia of the Muslims, which makes them so passionate and so uncompromising; so determined not to be dominated by the Caste Hindus."

It is essential to answer these legitimate questions, if the present state of high tension in India is to be understood, and if disaster is to be averted.

I believe that the present state of mind of the Muslims can be analysed into two principal factors—one that can be called "the memory of past humiliations", and the other "the lack of present economic opportunity". Each of these needs some explanation.

Firstly, it has to be realised that for the last fifty years at least the Caste Hindus have been the "haves" of India, and the Muslims have been the "have nots". By this I mean that in all intellectual pursuits, in wealth, in education and in the ability to lead reasonably comfortable and sophisticated lives, the Hindus have been on top and the Muslims some distance below.

This came about by reason of the fact that the Caste Hindus took much earlier and more widespread advantage of the facilities of Western education when it began to be available 100 years ago, and more definitely 50 years ago.

In those days the Caste Hindus were convinced in their own minds that they were socially, and in every other way, superior to the Muslims and, of course, to their own non-caste (or untouchable) fellow religionists. The Caste system was rigid and unbending. The non-Caste Hindus and the Muslims were definitely below the salt. The position of the Caste Hindus in the life of India in those days enabled them to make their superiority felt in a

wide variety of ways. One was in the schools, which, in effect, were for Caste Hindu boys, and in which Muslim boys (and, of course, non-Caste Hindu boys) were only allowed on sufferance.

A great many Muslims who are now of middle age have bitter recollections of the humiliations that they suffered at the hands of the Caste Hindus in their early days, 30 years ago and more, when the Muslim boys and the non-Caste Hindu boys were herded together on the verandahs of the school houses, not allowed to pollute the school-rooms occupied by the Caste Hindu boys, and had to pick up what education they could from what floated out to them through the open windows. Stories of this and similar humiliations have been told to me by many distinguished Muslims in and out of the Muslim League, and one can well believe that they are difficult to forget. This has created what one can only call a spiritual revulsion against the possibility of their community ever again being dominated by the Caste Hindus.

So much for what I have called "the memory of past humiliations". Regrettable though it was, it is a thing of the past, and will die (except as a story passed on from father to son) with the present generation. It is no longer operative as a disability, although it still rankles as a grievance. The Hindus, even if they wanted to, are no longer in a position to inflict social indignities and humiliations on the Muslims. So now let me go on to explain what I mean by the other reason for present-day Muslim antagonism by the Caste Hindus—what I have called "the lack of present economic opportunity".

Notwithstanding their earlier neglect of education, the Muslims are now coming on fast, but they have left their run rather late. By reason of their several generations of

modern education and sophistication and participation in business and affairs, the Muslims find the Hindus to-day firmly ensconced in practically all the business activities of India, and the Hindu-Muslim feeling is so keen that the Hindu owners and managers of enterprises are careful to employ only Hindus, so that the opportunities for employment of educated Muslim youths are limited. To a very large extent throughout India the mills, factories, workshops and merchant houses are Hindu (or at least non-Muslim) owned and controlled. And it is not too much to say, as regards employment in the great majority of Hindu-controlled businesses, that " no Muslim need apply".

It is easy to understand the resentment that this creates and to appreciate the determination of the Muslims to get a place in the sun and a fair economic chance for themselves and their children.

Hence the determination on the part of the Muslims to get what they regard as their proper proportion of appointments in the Government services in the Muslim-majority Provinces. Hence, at one remove, the tendency of the Ministries in the Muslim-majority Provinces to nationalise as many undertakings as possible, so that they can then dictate the number of Muslims employed in them.

In other words, I believe that the principal present-day motive behind Pakistan is economic, the urge on the part of the Muslims (particularly in the cities) to advance themselves economically in the world and to get away from being the hewers of wood and the drawers of water for the Caste Hindus.

I believe that when the Muslims in a village or a small town think of Pakistan, they think in terms of the little village or town store being owned by a Muslim and not

by a Hindu. When the city Muslim thinks of Pakistan, I believe he thinks largely in terms of the mills and shops and business houses being owned by Muslims instead of by Hindus, with the increased opportunities for employment that would result.

Mr. Jinnah and the leaders of the Muslim League, of course, understand all this perfectly well, although they do not describe it in the terms that I have used. They put it on a much higher plane, they speak in terms of two races, the Hindus and the Muslims, and the wide gulf that separates their history, traditions and ways of life, with the consequent impossibility of their living together in any contentment. But many Muslims have described it to me in the simple and more understandable terms that I have used, and which I believe represent the basic reasons behind the movement.

But the fact remains that, Pakistan or no Pakistan, Hindus and Muslims have got to continue to live together in the same villages, towns and cities in which they are now closely integrated. Pakistan would *not* result in the village store being owned by a Muslim. It would not put the mills and the business houses into Muslim hands. The only way that the Muslims can advance themselves economically is to achieve education and to learn how to compete successfully with the Hindus, which means a vast amount of hard work and the passage of time. It cannot be achieved quickly or by political means. All that can be achieved by political means is to ensure that they (the Muslims) get a fair deal from the point of view of education, percentage of jobs in Government service, and the like. It is for these reasons that I lay such stress on the devising of adequate and watertight safeguards for the Muslims in an all-India Constitution.

Let us look at Pakistan again. Let us say that it would contain 60 million Muslims and 40 or 50 million non-Muslims (mostly Hindus). This would leave the large balance of 30 or 40 million Muslims outside Pakistan, i.e., in the Hindu-majority Provinces and in the Indian States. This means that each side would have a formidable body of hostages in the camp of the other. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that if there were to be discriminating treatment by the Muslims against the Hindus in Pakistan, that this would be quickly followed by reprisals against the Muslims in the Hindu-majority areas. One thing might very well lead to another—such matters frequently tend to become cumulative, and competition in discrimination might well result, with unfortunate and unpleasant results for both sides. There is the definite possibility that Pakistan might result in the lowest common denominator of content for the Caste Hindu population of Pakistan and for the Muslim population of Hindustan.

But unless the Muslims discriminate against the Hindus in Pakistan, how is Pakistan going to result in rapid and increasing economic opportunity for the Muslims? If the Hindus are in almost complete control of, say, the cloth trade in Bengal (as they happen to be), and if the Muslims legislate to ensure that licences to trade in cloth shall be, for the future, on a 50 : 50 basis as between Hindus and Muslims—this means, in effect, running large numbers of successful Hindu merchants out of the cloth trade for the benefit of the Muslims. Are the Hindus in Hindu-majority Provinces going to take this lying down, or are they going to retaliate? The example could be repeated in almost countless other directions.

Another disability from which Pakistan would suffer

would be the fact that it would have a hostile Hindustan[1] on its flanks. If Pakistan were to come into existence, it would only be in the teeth of the most fierce Hindu opposition. The competition and antagonism between Pakistan and Hindustan would translate itself inevitably into trade rivalry. The greater part of Indian industry would be in Hindustan, and the largest part of the Indian market. Hindustan would, at best, be rather unwilling that Pakistan products should share its home markets. Tariffs would rise, inevitably, against Pakistan products, to the detriment of Pakistan industry, and *vice versa*. The stronger party—Hindustan—would be likely to win in a tariff war of this sort.

Then again, when we consider the aspect of loan money for the much-needed physical development of Pakistan—Bengal alone needs the equivalent of hundreds of millions of pounds of public moneys to be expended in the development of its irrigation, hydro-electric power, and in many other directions if this potentially rich, but almost undeveloped, Province is to advance at all—where is this money going to come from? It cannot come from revenue, from the proceeds of taxation. It can only come from the public who have surplus funds to invest in government securities. Muslim Bengal has no such surplus funds for investments. Such loan moneys will only become available if they are raised on all-India credit, either within India or on the London or New York money markets. Pakistan will not have the international credit to raise the large loans that will be necessary, except on crippling or humiliating terms, and so Pakistan-Bengal would not be developed, at least at anything like the speed that it

[1]The name "Hindustan" is frequently used in India to differentiate the "Pakistan" part of India from the rest. If Pakistan were to eventuate then the rest of India would be Hindustan.

should. Its standard of living would stay where it is, and Bengal would continue to be an economic backwater. This is not exaggerated argument. I believe it is hard fact. The public finance aspect is a most important aspect, and I do not believe that it has had adequate attention in the hands of the Muslim League.

I realise very well that a solution of the problems of the Muslims of India has got to be found. But I am very sure that Pakistan is not the solution.

I do not believe that, even to-day, the bulk of the Muslims have given anything like enough thought to the demand for Pakistan. I do not believe that they have analysed the economics of Pakistan objectively. They accept the fact that Mr. Jinnah says he wants Pakistan, and their deep faith in his leadership leads them to accept the idea.

I can only repeat that I am convinced that the solution lies in substantial and effective safeguards for the Muslims in an all-India Constitution and Government, to ensure that the Muslims get a fair deal, and maybe rather more than a fair deal, to compensate them for the disabilities that have been imposed on them in the past and to give them an opportunity of catching up.

It is admitted that no constitutional safeguard will necessarily, or even probably, result in breaking down the present short-sighted and anti-social reluctance of Hindu industry and business to employ Muslims in any numbers. One can conceive legislation designed to secure a reasonable quota of Muslim employees in all Indian business enterprises above a certain size, and one can imagine an all-India communal employment council to police such legislation, composed of all the principal communities proportionately, with a neutral chairman. Such legislation

and such a body might, in the course of time, achieve an improvement, but it does not fill one with confidence.

It may be that the Muslims will never succeed in ousting the Caste Hindus from their dominant position in any large part of Indian industry or commerce, even with all the safeguards in the world. But one can be sure that, in its proper safeguards, they will succeed in occupying a much higher place in the Hindu scheme of things than they do to-day. They will have to find their own level as a community. Given a fair chance, it will be up to them.

But one cannot overlook the important fact that Mr. Jinnah says he doesn't believe in the practical efficacy of constitutional safeguards for the Muslims in an all-India constitution. He asks, possibly with reason, what ultimate sanction or guarantee would ensure that any list of safeguards would be effective in practice and that they would not be evaded on one ground or another. This is difficult to answer. There may even be no answer that would satisfy Mr. Jinnah other than the possibility of a watching brief by some agency of the United Nations, charged with seeing that the constitutional safeguards designed to protect Muslim interests were truly and faithfully implemented in practice, without evasion or equivocations.

However, there are Muslims of considerable consequence who *do* think that constitutional safeguards can be made effective.

Sir Mohammed Zafrulla Khan, a distinguished Muslim Justice of the Supreme Court of India, in an article in the London *Times* (20th March, 1945) has sketched out a scheme of all-India union which, as he says: "may have some chance of securing the support of the Muslims". He envisages the present Provinces of British India, together with groups of Indian States, joining in a loose Federation

in which the Provinces and groups of States would retain as much sovereignty as possible, the Centre[1] functioning as their "agent" in respect of the minimum of matters (defence, tariff, currency and foreign exchange), as well as acting as "co-ordinator" in respect of railways, posts and telegraphs, and the like. He suggests that half the Central Ministry should be Muslim and that the Head of the State should be alternately Muslim and non-Muslim, and that the Muslims should have stated percentages of the Services—one third of the administrative services and 40 per cent of the defence services.

As regards "safeguards", he says:

> "All safeguards relating to religion, culture, education, language, etc., must be so framed as to be capable of judicial determination, so that any breach or contravention thereof may be set right by judicial action. This would make the Supreme Court of India the ultimate guardian of the Minorities, and even of the Majorities, in respect of these matters.
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> "That being so, the composition of the Court would become a matter of vital interest to the Muslims. Here, too, the number of Muslim judges should not be less than half, and the Chief Justice should be alternately a Muslim and a non-Muslim."

The communal problem (Hindu-Muslim friction) exists. It is not possible to brush it aside, or to say (as the Congress Party say) that it is the creation of the wicked British, and that it will disappear once Indians are given full control of their own affairs. I have examined the

[1]The words "Centre" and "Central" need explanation. They are in constant use in India, but probably not elsewhere.

"The Centre" means the Centre of Government—the Government of India, i.e. the Government at New Delhi. The "Central Government" means the same.

evidence on which the Hindus usually base their assertion that the feud was initiated and deliberately encouraged by the British on the "divide and rule" theory, and I believe it is quite clear that it has no foundation whatever. (The "evidence" usually quoted is contained in Chapter 5 of Lady Minto's book: "India—Minto and Morley: 1905–1910"). Two more dissimilar religions and ways of thought could hardly be found—austere monotheism contrasted with polytheistic idolatry: the democratic brotherhood of Islam contrasted with the Caste system of Hinduism.

Nevertheless, strong though the communal[1] feeling is, I do not believe that the differences between the two communities are so great—or perhaps I should say so permanently great—as to require the partition of India between them in order to solve the problem. Anyhow, I am convinced that it would not solve the problem. I believe that the solution of the problem is on the way, by the increasing emancipation of the Muslims through improved and constantly-improving educational facilities, of which they are taking every advantage. The Muslims are in a vastly better position now, relative to the Caste Hindu, than they were a generation ago, and in another generation, at the outside, I believe they will have caught up. Let the Muslims consider the time element, and not be too impatient. If India is once split, it will take generations to heal the breach again.

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[1]It may be helpful, at this stage, to define the words "communal" and "communalism". The words are in daily use in India, but probably not elsewhere. The Hindus and Muslims of India are spoken of as "communities". The friction that unfortunately exists between them is called "communal friction" or "communalism" and the problem it represents is called "the communal problem".

So far as the Congress is concerned, it is to be hoped that they will realise that unless they show the maximum of generosity and liberality to the Muslims, they will lose them, and India will be split in two. Any attempt to force unity on India on terms that are not acceptable to the Muslims may well mean that India may dissolve in civil war on the withdrawal of the British power.

Chapter Five

THE INDIAN STATES

MOST of the Indian States came into existence in the 1700's, on the break-up of the Mogul Empire, although some are of much greater antiquity.

There are well over 500 separate States, with a total population of nearly 100 million people. They vary greatly in size, from Hyderabad (about the size of Italy, with a population of over 17 millions) to States of a few square miles in extent.

The Indian States are not British territory and their inhabitants are not British subjects. Legally they are foreign territories, and British Indian Courts have no jurisdiction within their boundaries. They comprise slightly less than half the land area of India, and include about a quarter of the population of all India.

A certain small number of the Indian States concluded treaties with the East India Company. In 1858 the British Crown took over from the East India Company its treaty relationships with the States. Queen Victoria (in 1858), King Edward (in 1908) and King George (in 1910 and 1919), in proclamations to their Indian subjects, reiterated the undertaking by the British Crown to continue to observe and respect the Treaty rights of the Indian Princes. I believe that none of the treaties provides for unilateral denunciation or modification.

Where treaty relationships with the British Crown do not exist, the Ruler relies on "usage", the fact that his family has ruled the State for several generations at least and that his authority is accepted.

The government of each of the Indian States is autocratic—power residing in the person of the hereditary Ruler, under the sovereignty of the British Crown.

The Indian States vary very widely in the efficiency of their administration. Some are very well administered and the rest, in varying degree, less well. The rulers of some few of the larger States have granted fairly democratic constitutions, with reserve powers in their own hands. Some of the States have built up, or are building up, Civil Services of their own, purely Indian in personnel.

The British Government leaves the internal administration of the States to the rulers, subject to the right of intervention in the case of misrule or oppression, in which case appropriate action is taken, which may amount, in extreme cases, to the deposition of the ruler. British Residents, or Political Agents, are appointed on the authority of the Viceroy to the various States or groups of States.

The Indian States are not subject to the taxation, customs duties or excise (or indeed any other laws) that are operative in British India. Their people are subject only to the taxation and other laws imposed by their own respective rulers, except where agreements have been entered into between the Government of India and individual rulers for the collection of indirect taxation by the rulers at rates which are uniform with those existing in British India. The resulting complications are obvious.

A reform that is gradually being adopted throughout the Indian States (and which is constantly being pressed on the remainder by British authority) is the separation of the rulers' privy purse and his civil list (i.e., the moneys drawn by the ruler from the revenues of the State) from the general budget of the State.

A Chamber of Princes was instituted in 1921, in New Delhi, as a permanent consultative body. It meets periodically to discuss matters affecting the Indian States as a whole, or those of common concern to the States and British India.

There has been very little communal trouble or "politics" in the Indian States. Such activities are discouraged by the rulers. However, these activities are now beginning to seep into the States from outside, particularly, I believe, in Hyderabad (the largest and most powerful of the States), where a predominantly Hindu population is ruled by a Muslim aristocracy, and in Kashmir, where a Hindu rules over an ignorant and poor Muslim peasantry.

However, generally speaking, the Princes are popular in their domains, a fact which reflects the traditional personal loyalty and affection of the Indian masses for those of their own race in high and undisputed and non-political authority. This fact is appreciated by the more enlightened of the rulers, who take pains to maintain personal contact with their peoples and to ensure that abuses do not arise. In the large majority of cases the ruler is of the same religion as the majority of his people and identifies himself with the people at times of great religious festivals, which have come to be regarded as incomplete without his personal participation and interest.

However, it cannot be denied that the existence of autocratic Indian States is anomalous in the world to-day, and constitutes a serious part of the all-India constitutional and political problem.

A Federation of all India, including the Indian States, has been in the minds of the British for a good many years. However, it was not seriously believed that the Princes

would consider coming into such a Federation until the Princes themselves made the suggestion at one of the Round Table Conferences leading up to the drafting of the Government of India Act, 1935. In consequence, provisions for such a Federation were written into the 1935 Act, although it has, in practice, not yet proved possible to implement this portion of the Act owing to lack of agreement amongst the Princes on the subjects that would be included in an Indian Federation.

Mr. Nehru speaks (30th December 1945) in characteristic terms about the Indian States: "Relics of a bygone age, dependent completely on the British power which has deliberately kept them unchanged so as to use them for maintaining their supremacy in India. . . . No responsible person can take shelter behind these treaties of over a hundred years ago. . . . Ultimately it will be for the people of India to decide this, as other problems. . . . The vast majority of the Indian States should be absorbed into neighbouring Provinces, and the rulers pensioned off. . . . The major Indian States, under a reformed and democratic system of administration, can play an important part as autonomous units in the Indian Federation".

The most recent advance—and a considerable one—has been an important declaration by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, speaking on behalf of the Chamber of Princes (composed of the rulers of all the principal Indian States), on 18th January 1946. In pledging the Princes to the fullest contribution to any attempt to settle India's constitutional problem on a just and reasonable basis, the Chancellor made the following declaration:

"The Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes is

accordingly authorised to make the following declaration on behalf of and with the full authority of the Chamber of Princes:

"The object is to set up forthwith constitutions in the States in which the sovereign powers of the rulers are exercised through regular constitutional channels without in any way affecting or impairing the continuance of the reigning dynasty in, and the integrity of, each State.

"There shall be popular institutions with elected majorities to ensure close and effective association of the people with the governance of the State.

"It is understood that in framing the detailed constitution of individual States on the above lines, regard shall be had to the special circumstances in each State.

"Most States have already adopted statutory provisions guaranteeing the rule of law and the security and protection of persons and property within their territories. In order to lay down and declare the position in this matter in precise and clear terms, the following essential rights should be guaranteed in States where this has not already been done, with powers vested in the courts of the States to redress any infringement of these rights:

(1) No person should be deprived of his liberty, nor should his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered or confiscated save in accordance with law.

(2) Such rights may be suspended as may be prescribed in case of war, rebellion or serious internal disorder.

(3) Every person should enjoy the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully without arms and without military formation for purposes not opposed to law or morality.

(4) Every person should enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.

(5) All persons should be equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste or creed.

(6) No disability should attach to any person merely by reason of his religion, caste or creed, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, or in the exercise of any trade or calling.

(7) There should be no "begar" (forced labour).

"It is reaffirmed that the administration shall be based on the following essential principles which would be strictly enforced where they do not obtain at present:

(1) The administration of justice must vest in an impartial and competent judiciary independent of the executive, and there must be suitable provision for the impartial adjudication of disputes between individuals and the State.

(2) The rulers in their own States should clearly demarcate administrative budgets from civil lists and fix the latter at a reasonable percentage of the ordinary revenue.

(3) The incidence of taxation must be fair and equitable, and a definite and substantial portion of the revenue must be allocated for the benefit of the people, particularly in the nation building departments.

"It is strongly recommended that the essential measures recommended in this declaration should, where they are not in force, be adopted without delay.

"This declaration, made spontaneously and earnestly, is inspired by faith in the peoples of Indian States and in the future destiny of the States. It represents the will of the rulers to implement these decisions without reservation

or delay. May it lead to increasing freedom from want and fear, and freedom of the mind and its expression! May it grow on the sure foundation of mutual love, tolerance, service and responsibility!"

The difficulties of the situation created by the existence of the Indian States are obvious. As the map shows, they divide up India into a patchwork quilt. It will be difficult if not impossible, to make and carry out a uniform system of administration or a planned development of India as a whole until the States come into some form of all-India Federation, or even Federations. And, when the British political power is removed from what is now British India, to whom are the States going to look as the representative-on-the-spot of what is now the paramount power—Britain?

Unless the Indian Princes join with the British Government in tearing up their treaties, how are we unilaterally going to deal with the situation? When the British withdraw politically from India, it is difficult to imagine that the majority of the smaller Indian States will be able to maintain their identity. Their rulers will probably be forced by circumstances to allow their States to be merged into the surrounding Provinces, or, in some cases, into larger contiguous States, and themselves accepting positions of only nominal authority over their people. This may well not apply to the larger States, some of which may not prove easy for "India" to absorb except on conditions that are mutually acceptable. We need not necessarily look for a single uniform solution of the problem of the Indian States.

Chapter Six

THE WAR AND THE FUTURE

I AM concerned in this chapter to discuss the financial and economic effect on India of her participation in the war of 1939–1945.

Large numbers of Indian troops (said to exceed two millions) enlisted voluntarily, and fought with great gallantry under British leadership in Burma, in the Middle East and in Europe.

By reason of a financial arrangement entered into between Great Britain and India early in the war, it was mutually agreed that the Government of India should pay for the cost of all Indian troops within the geographical boundaries of India, and that Britain should pay for everything connected with Indian troops employed outside India.

This arrangement was arrived at with a war against Germany in mind, and not with reference to a war against Japan, which was not in sight at the time this financial arrangement was entered into.

However, the arrangement was adhered to, with the result that practically the whole of the campaign on the Burma front was paid for by the British Government and not by the Government of India, by reason of the fact that, technically at least, the Burma campaign was almost entirely fought outside the borders of India.

The whole of the cost of the Indian troops who fought in the Middle East and in Europe, and elsewhere outside India, was paid for by the British Government.

As regards the R.A.F. in, and based on, India, an arbitrary arrangement was made under which India paid

for the maintenance of 51 squadrons out of a total that, I believe, reached a peak figure of over 80 squadrons.

So far as the American Air Force was concerned, their pay (and, of course, their aircraft) was met by the United States Government. India provided fuel and airfields and the like on reverse lease-lend.

The Royal Navy in Indian and all other waters was paid for entirely by the British Government.

The net result of these arrangements (which were very favourable to the Government of India) was that the direct cost of the War of 1939-45 to the Government of India was about the equivalent of £1,000 millions sterling.

By way of comparison, it may be noted that the direct cost of the war to the Commonwealth of Australia was about the equivalent of £1,700 millions sterling, i.e., 70 per cent more than the cost of the war to India.

Taking into account the fact that India has a population of about 400 millions, and that Australia has a population of 7¼ millions, the war cost India about £2 10s. per head, whereas it cost Australia about £234 10s. per head, i.e., the *per capita* cost was nearly 100 times greater in the case of Australia.

In addition to the relatively small cost of £1,000 millions to the Government of India, India benefited by the sale of about £1,200 millions worth of goods and services to Britain for the conduct of the war, mostly in connection with the defence of India. It was this supply of goods and services that has been responsible for the large accumulation of sterling funds held by India in London, which has turned India from being a debtor country to being a creditor country as a direct result of the war.

This situation is a direct reflection of the fact that India

is a very poor country, and that this fact was recognised by the British Government in agreeing to the financial conditions of India's participation in the war. Had India taken part in the war under the same financial conditions as other British countries (i.e., meeting the entire cost of maintaining all her troops in all theatres of war), the Indian contribution to the war would have been much less than it was. By reason of Britain's willingness, in the interests of maximum effort, largely to meet the cost of India's war effort, the United Nations gained appreciably in fighting strength.

The financial and economic effect of the war on India has been striking. The large expenditure incurred by the preparation of India as a base for large-scale warfare has meant practically full employment over the war years for the working population of India. It has meant a ready market at high prices for all the timber, coal, meat, vegetables, poultry, and practically every other locally-produced commodity that was surplus to domestic requirements. It has left new roads, bridges, aerodromes, improved port and harbour facilities, for the benefit of the people of India. It has brought great wealth to the contractors and manufacturers of India. It has left hundreds of millions of pounds worth of war stores and equipment for disposal at bargain prices. It has resulted in an appreciable increase in industrialisation, and in the training of Indian craftsmen. It has resulted in an accumulation of funds in Indian hands that will give India, for the first time, a money market for the financing of Governmental loans and industrial expansion for a good many years ahead.

The war has also had an effect on the financial position of the Indian masses that has greatly improved their

position. To appreciate this aspect, it must be realised that the average Indian cultivator has been traditionally heavily in debt to the local village moneylender. Rural indebtedness has been one of the great curses of India. The extortions of the moneylender have kept the cultivator in heavy financial bondage. The big rise in the price of all products of the land, coupled with the virtual absence of consumer goods on which to spend their money during the war years, has resulted in a large-scale paying off of the cultivator's indebtedness to the moneylender. Probably for the first time in recorded history the rural indebtedness problem in India has contracted to reasonable dimensions as a result of the rise in prices in India due to war conditions.

Although it would be foolish to overlook the adverse influences of the war on India as on any other country even remotely connected with the war, I believe that the people and the Governments of India have emerged from the war in probably better condition, financially and economically, than those of any other country at war.

The official post-war reconstruction plans of the Government of India, and of the Governments of the provinces, entail the spending of probably up to the equivalent of £200 millions a year for a number of years ahead on the improvement of all Governmental services to the people. The expenditure of what are, for India, such large sums of money, should transform a relatively undeveloped country into a fairly well developed one in the course of five or ten years, provided there is a reasonable degree of political calm. The money is to be found from the proceeds of taxation (which presumably means holding taxation at something like wartime levels), and from loan moneys, presumably raised largely within India.

The programme entails substantial extensions in road building, railways, education, public health, agriculture, irrigation, and practically all other avenues of Governmental activity, in addition to the stimulation of essential industries in the hands of private enterprise, or even, if private enterprise hangs back, at the hands of Government.

The framing of plans to these ends has been occupying Governments in India for the past year or eighteen months, and the schemes are now practically complete. In fact, in some directions the work has already started.

However, Governments have not been the only agencies that have been making plans for the development of India. There has been a number of non-official national planners at work in India in the last two years, resulting in the "Bombay Plan" and several others. Each of these plans aims to spend the equivalent of some thousands of millions of pounds sterling over ten or fifteen years on large-scale industrialisation, improvement of agriculture, health, education, housing, communications, etc.

The above "plans" have been worked out by prominent individuals, or groups, and not by Governments. The best known is the "Bombay Plan", worked out by a group of prominent Bombay industrialists in 1944. It aims at the spending by the Government of the equivalent of £7,500 millions sterling over a period of 15 years. Of this total, 45 per cent. is to be spent on the promotion of industry, 12½ per cent on agriculture, and the balance on communications, education, health, housing, etc. The aim is to treble the national income within the 15 years of the plan. The prominence of the sponsors of the Bombay Plan and its boldness have attracted a considerable amount of attention to it.

Vast schemes such as this conflict sharply with the views and ideals of Mr. Gandhi, who has consistently maintained throughout his career that industrialisation is a curse, and that the salvation of India's teeming population lies in the spinning wheel and other home industries in tens of millions of homes. Mr. Gandhi has said: "I am convinced that, without the spinning wheel, the problem of India's poverty cannot be solved. Mills cannot solve the problem. Only hand-spinning—and nothing else—can".

My own view, for what it is worth, is neither that of the Bombay planners nor of Mr. Gandhi.

The problem presents itself to me in this way. The present-day population of India is probably over 400 millions. Of this vast number of people about 80 per cent is composed of farmers and their families and those who serve the farming community in villages and small towns, i.e., people whose lives are directly affected by the prosperity of the farmer. By reason of the poverty of the small farmer (and the overwhelming proportion of the farmers of India are small, and very small, farmers), this 80 per cent of the Indian population varies only from poor to very poor. Their ability to purchase manufactured goods is limited to a little cloth, an occasional few sheets of corrugated iron, a hurricane lantern, a cheap umbrella or two, and little else. Until the life of the average Indian farmer is made more profitable than it is, the ability of India's rural 300 millions to absorb Indian manufactured goods cannot possibly increase. What is the use of offering the average Indian cultivator a good corrugated iron roof for his house if he cannot afford to pay for more than thatch?

In other words, the market for any largely increased

industrialisation in India has to be found, in present circumstances, in the larger towns and cities. Any rapid and intensive industrialisation will do no good to the vast majority of the Indian population because they have not got the purchasing power to take advantage of it.

How is the situation to be remedied? How is the condition of the tens of millions of India's small farmers to be improved, both for their own sakes and so that they can become a potential market for increased Indian industrialisation?

Agriculture in non-irrigated acres in India (the great majority of the country) occupies the average cultivator for not much more than half of the year on a full-time basis. For the balance of the year he potters about, with no serious alternative form of gainful employment. It is not his fault. He is dependent on the monsoon—the slave of the annual rainy season.

The reasons for the poverty of the majority of the farmers in India are fourfold; the small size of the individual farms, primitive methods of farming, the non-use of fertilizers, and the dependence on the vagaries of the monsoon.

I believe that the spear-point of the attack should be irrigation, drainage and river control, the benefits of which are now available only in a minority of Provinces and States and which reach only a very small proportion of the farmers of India. Irrigation water would relieve the farmer from the thraldom of the monsoon, would create conditions under which increased crops could be grown, thus improving the existing low standards of nutrition and the financial position of the cultivators, so that they could make a more adequate contribution to

local rates and national revenues and at the same time increase their purchasing power and, *inter alia*, enable the fertility of the soil to be reinforced by the use of chemical fertilizers, which are now hopelessly beyond their means.

I believe that irrigation, to enable farmers to farm better and more profitably, is the basic necessity of India. I believe that it should be tackled before education, even before public health, and most certainly before any attempts to force large-scale industrialisation on a country that is not ready for it.

(Admittedly, there are other reforms, some of them of a major nature that must also be achieved before the Indian cultivator can be effectively emancipated, both economically and socially. I speak of measures to combat the progressive fragmentation of land holdings; determined action to cope with rural indebtedness; radical reform of the system of land tenure, particularly the so-called "permanent settlement" in Bengal; and certain religious observances, such as the semi-sacred nature of cows to the Hindus, which largely defeats efforts to improve the strain of cattle. Over and above all these matters I believe that permanent irrigation water is by far the most necessary single reform.)

In support of my argument, it should be remembered that India's population is believed to be increasing at the rate of about five millions a year and that India is unable to feed itself, despite the fact that it is a nation of farmers, and that this situation is yearly becoming more pronounced. The pressure on the land is increasing each year. What proportion of the annual net increase of five millions could even the highest pressure industrialism absorb?

(When I say that "India is unable to feed itself", this is no rhetorical statement. I have seen a considered and detailed estimate which can be summarised as saying that India's consumption requirements in the principal foodstuffs total about 140 million tons a year, whilst her production of these foodstuffs is about 90 million tons a year.)

I submit that it is no use putting on the modern garment of high-pressure industrialisation over the threadbare shirt of hopelessly backward Indian agriculture.

The basic need of India is to lift the cultivator to a greater degree of prosperity. I would have no anxieties about industry. Industry will easily keep abreast of demand and purchasing power. It is a great deal easier to step-up factory production than to step-up land production.

As to Mr. Gandhi's abhorrence of industrialisation, and his plea for a reversion to home spinning and weaving and the cottage industries generally, I have no quarrel with this. My only comment is that I fail to see how it has more than a very small bearing on what I believe to be India's greatest disability—poverty. The ability to spin and weave cloth in every home would certainly provide occupation for some of the many idle hours of the average Indian cultivator and his family, but the rate of recompense would be the equivalent of a few pence a day. My argument is that the farmer's job is farming, and that farming can and should be made a full-time and reasonably profitable occupation. Certainly encourage India's home industries, but do not let us pretend that they can provide more than a very lowly paid return for the labour put into them. Village industries, with simple equipment, could be encouraged with advantage.

However, all this national planning of which I have been speaking depends essentially on political calm over the next few years. To an appreciable extent it depends on the continuance of a united India after the British have handed over political power. A division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan would appreciably diminish the scope and effectiveness of these plans for developmental works.

In this connection I think it relevant to point out the extreme difficulty, if not the impossibility, of developing the most backward and undeveloped part of India, Bengal, under Pakistan. Bengal needs the expenditure of not less that £400,000,000 on developmental works over the next ten years if the Province is to be lifted out of its present medieval state. Such a sum could only come in very small part from the proceeds of taxation. By far the greater part must come, as it should, from the proceeds of moneys borrowed from the Indian and international public. I venture to believe that the relatively large loan moneys involved could only be found if Bengal were to continue to be part of a united India, and to have the benefit of getting at least its share of India's national and international credit. The public borrowing capacity of Bengal as part of Pakistan would be very limited and wholly insufficient to provide the moneys required.

There is no country of the world that I know in which an intelligently and forcefully directed developmental policy will bring such dividends as in India; dividends in the shape of a rising standard of living and of increased contentment for its huge population.

However, I have two fears: that the programme may be stultified by internal schisms, or that it may tail off

into frills that are popular in the cities but neglect the basic essential, that of creating conditions under which the fundamental industry of India—agriculture—may be enabled to lift itself out of its present very backward state.

Chapter Seven

INDIA AND THE WORLD

INDIAN mentality, Indian logic, Indian ideals, the way the Indians have their cards stacked, are all quite different from ours. Theirs are not necessarily wrong on that account. We have given them our methods of education, of law, of administration, of democracy and of government—none of which really fits in with their fundamental, unspoken, unformulated idea of the scheme of things, but they accept them and try to work them, although rather uncomfortably and not very successfully, largely because they know no other methods than the ones we have introduced. For our part we have never bothered to question whether we were right in trying to force India into our British mould. We have not spent much time trying to understand the Indian mentality; nor to becoming friendly enough with them to enable them to speak their minds freely.

There are a certain number of Indians who are so anglicised that one is not conscious that one is not speaking to Britishers. There are many more who have absorbed a good deal (but by no means all) of our outlook, and who talk in our terms, I believe largely for fear of hurting our feelings, or because they realise that if they are to make themselves understood and get anywhere, that's the only way. But by far the greater number, who are not at all Westernised, are just polite and silent and rather suspicious. They don't pretend to understand us, and they know we'll never understand them.

And then, of course, below that is the great illiterate

mass of peasants who haven't the vaguest idea what we are all about, and who look at us as we go by in much the same way as we would look at a zebra or a giraffe.

The reason for all this is that we, the British, are not very good at "human relations". Nor, for that matter, is any other race much better than we are. But, apart from the comparative aspect, it cannot be denied that our "human relations" in India have not been good.

For instance, what proportion of the British in India speak an Indian language? A very small proportion indeed.

I am not at all sure exactly why this should be so. The self-interest of both parties would seem to have demanded closer mutual understanding and appreciation in the British-Indian association over the last 150 years. The obvious answer—that between the two are great differences of language, religion, dress, food, family customs and so on—is not sufficient. These differences would have been overcome if there had been the incentive to overcome them. The answer, to my mind, lies in the British character and in the circumstances of the British power in India.

We British are not a very imaginative people, and we have not got the curiosity to search the mind of another race of completely different culture and outlook. "How odd" we tend to say when confronted with the unusual behaviour of "foreigners", and turn back to our own comfortably familiar circle. In short, so far as "human relations" go, the British are congenitally lazy. Left to ourselves we don't make the effort necessary to understand another race.

But if the other fellow makes the first approach and is not put off by the average Britisher's initial reaction

of aloof embarrassment, the two will frequently get along well enough together, and will come to respect each other's qualities and probably even come to like each other.

Unfortunately, in India, circumstances have not compelled the British really to get to know the Indian, and circumstances have prohibited the Indian from bringing his real self to the knowledge of the British.

Sincerely good intentions, combined with lack of imagination, led the British, after their assumption of complete power in India in the nineteenth century, to impose so far as possible on India their own language, institutions, educational system, commercial habits and —later—political system. In other words, they endeavoured to run things in the only way they know, which was the British way, rather than learn to run things in the Indian way, which would have meant getting into the Indian mind and habit of thought. Having adopted an essentially British form of administration they did not have to consider what was going on underneath. And so they were able, lazily, to continue their own incurious way of life in their own small and comfortable circle.

Also, I would guess, they were probably not a little afraid that, as a mere handful of people in a large country with a large population, they might, if they dived too deep beneath the surface, be submerged and lose their identity as the dominant power.

The results, of course, bewildered both peoples. Neither knew why things were not what they were intended to be—the English were surprised that an English education had not produced an English product, and the Indians were surprised that the English should think

it hadn't. Neither knew the other's mind. Eventually (by reason of increasing nationalism) estrangement was added to ignorance, so that to-day the bitter cry "Quit India", answered wearily by "Yes, but how?", seems to ring the curtain down on 150 years of endeavour and achievement—and failure.

I believe that in the immediately existing circumstances it is too much to hope that greater sympathy between the British and the Indians can be achieved. Misunderstanding of each other has gone too far, and the circumstances are not favourable for the removal of this misunderstanding. It may be that if the British, even now, were to make a greater effort to know better the people of the country in which they live, evidence of greater friendship would appear. But this evidence would be slight in comparison with the generally prevailing bitterness, for it is not possible to deny the past and now to create something different from what the past has produced. As for the broken pieces, it is probably too late to "stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools".

Nevertheless, on the attainment of India's independence, I believe that the position may be somewhat different. When this occurs it will no longer be possible for Indians to attribute all the evil of the earth to the British, and for the British to attribute to the Indian the frustration of the British ideal. I believe that only then shall we be able to see the real fruits of the last 150 years. Each race will then come to appreciate the merits of the other. The British will, I hope, agree that the Indian can make a good job of his country on his own responsibility. The Indian, for his part, may well find that he has good cause to be grateful for the very considerable and substantial benefits which, on balance,

have been derived from the British connection. It is in circumstances such as these that I look forward to a greater understanding each of the other.

Whether this, which so many of us hope for, will come about, will depend on how the British political and administrative connection with India is severed; whether amicably or not.

What is the attitude of mind of India towards the great world outside her shores? I think the answer is that the Indians have not got any well defined view. They have not had a great deal of experience of the outside world. I have talked about it to a great many Indians, Hindus and Muslims, and the following is what remains in my mind as an impression.

They regard themselves as having three choices of friends for the future: the British, the Americans, and the Russians. (There is a little vague talk about linking up with China, or with some or all of the countries of South-East Asia, but this idea is not widely held.) They affect not to like any of these choices very much, and, in consequence, the present view of many is that they hope they will not have to commit themselves to any particular link-up. However, at bottom they know well that, especially at their present stage of development, they cannot hope to stand alone in the world as it is. Of the three, if they had to choose they would undoubtedly (although with some misgivings) choose the British, as being the devil they know.

The big Indian industrialists would like to play the British off against the Americans. They would like to have British and American capital and "know him" competing for opportunities for investment in Indian

industry, which they themselves would control, and they are rather surprised that this idea doesn't have universal appeal in Britain or the United States. I believe that India has some disappointments ahead of her in this regard. The general belief seems to be that the capital of the world is waiting impatiently to pour into India. For myself, I believe that this is far from being the case.

There is some apprehension in the minds of Indian industrialists about American economic imperialism. At the same time they are much heartened by the liberal idealism and fellow-mannishness that they associate with the United States. They haven't yet quite sorted this out in their minds, and I think they don't yet quite realise that the editors of the *Nation* and of the *New Republic* do not dictate the policy of American big business. I believe that the group of Indian industrialists who visited the United States in 1945 came away rather disappointed with the results of their American business contacts. It wasn't as easy as they thought.

The presence of American troops in considerable numbers in India during the war did not result in any appreciable tightening of the bonds between the United States and India. Thoughtful individuals amongst American service men learned about India and made real friends amongst Indians, but I believe it is true to say that the great mass of American officers and enlisted men lived in homesick isolation, with little contact with the life of the country.

I do not believe that the Congress Party propaganda in the United States achieved very much. Mrs. Pandit's speeches did not bite very deep. There is a proportion of people in the United States who are ready to believe any evil of Britain, and there are those who are actuated

by a strong political idealism which reacts in favour of all who appear to be struggling to achieve their freedom, even if, as in the case of India, they are pushing at an open door. The great mass of the American people are seldom taken in for long by one-sided and misleading propaganda; they are subjected to a good deal of propaganda of one sort or another; they have become rather connoisseurs on the subject, and have developed an unconscious defensive technique against it, in the shape of a kindly but cynical tolerance. They regard it as one of these phenomena like the weather, that you can't do much about it except not let it affect you more than momentarily. All they remember now about Mrs. Pandit is that she is a charming lady, with a chip on her shoulder.

As to Russia, there is an almost universal fear and dislike of Communism amongst thinking Indians. The two Indian Communist organisations turned the same political somersault in India as did the Communist organisations in other countries. They would not have anything to do with the Imperialist war until Germany attacked Russia, and then they could not help enough. However, the net result of it is that neither the Congress Party nor the Muslim League want to have anything to do with the Communists. Mr. Nehru is quoted as saying: "The Communist Party is not an Indian National Party but a Russian National Party". The Communist parties in India are not numerically strong, but they make a good deal of noise. They attract a certain proportion of the University students to their ranks, and no doubt hold them for a few years. They are not strong enough to do anything very much, good or bad, on their own, but they can, and do, fish in any troubled waters

that present themselves. They exacerbate strikes and they join in any civil disturbances that someone else starts. The one country that the vast majority of thinking Indians do not want a close association with is Russia.

As to the British, the present moment is not a good time to seek an objective view. The air is too full of passion and emotion for the average Indian to be able to form a balanced and considerable opinion.

The position is complicated by a widespread lack of appreciation of what "Dominion Status" means. The generally accepted idea is that it represents something rather more dignified than Colonial Status, but probably not very much. It still has the taint of subservience, in Indian minds. Nothing one could say made any impression on this fallacy. The vast majority of Indians who think about it at all still believe that Britain gives orders on the side to Australia, New Zealand, etc., and that we all touch our hats to Downing Street in private. If they only knew! Anyhow, if these misapprehensions did not exist, if one is working up a political campaign to get rid of an overlord, it would be a little difficult to adjust one's propaganda to the nicety of advocating close and friendly relations with him after he has gone. Such an attitude would inevitably take the edge off one's propaganda.

For my own part I tend to believe that, in due course, self-interest will dictate a close association between India and the British when the present formal link is broken: when the passions have evaporated and people can think more clearly and objectively.

I do not believe that it matters very much whether this association is called Dominion Status or whether it is a treaty relationship. Actually, I believe that Dominion

Status is rather an artificial conception so far as people of another race are concerned. Dominion Status needs the British tribal instinct to make it work.

There is a distinctive difference in the attitude of the Congress Party and of the Muslim League towards the British. The Congress Party has worked itself up into a great pitch of emotional hostility towards us; the Muslim League very much less so. The atmosphere in India to-day is such that it is a sign of grace to abuse the British, and it is evidence of lack of patriotism not to do so. So the Muslim League keeps up a certain tempo of anti-British feeling in the Press and on the platform. But there is no great sting in its fulminations against us.

I have said that I believe that Indian self-interest is likely to result in a close association with the British in the future. My reason for this belief is the resultant of a number of what I believe to be factual considerations.

The only lingua franca of India is English. There is no Indian public man of consequence and but few Indian business men who do not speak English. For practical purposes, it can be said that no other non-Indian language, except English, is spoken in India—nor is it possible to conceive that this situation is likely to change. This means that the literature (in its widest sense) of the British is, and will continue to be, the only vehicle through which the knowledge and the research of the rest of the world can impress itself on the people of India.

The British have a fund of silent goodwill amongst the sophisticated people of India that will not disappear. It is not at present politically vocal, but it is widespread in British India and in the Indian States. I believe

that this friendly leavening will have its influence in the years ahead, when the present political turmoil has subsided.

The British commercial and industrial investment in India is substantial. I believe it is probably somewhere between £300 millions and £500 millions. I have seen a number of unofficial but carefully considered estimates, and the spread of these various estimates is of about this order. The commercial and industrial investment of any other nation in India is immaterial compared with that of the British. The British investment in India will remain. It is inconceivable that anything that could be called expropriation of the British commercial and industrial investment could come about. The commercial and industrial life of India has been, and is likely to continue to be, influenced by British practice. Indian business men have predominantly British connections rather than connections with any other country. For a variety of reasons I believe that this state of affairs is liable to perpetuate itself. The link is mutually useful and profitable, both to the Indians and to the British.

India is in the British Sterling group. This means, in effect, that funds can be transferred freely between India and the British Sterling countries. India has no comparable freedom of transfer of funds with any other country or group of countries, except through London, and then only with the inevitable restrictions that the present state of world economy make necessary, and which appear unlikely to be possible of removal in the near future.

As has been mentioned elsewhere, Britain is in India's debt as a result of the war to the extent of something like £1,200 millions The rate and conditions under

which this large sum can be liquidated are not yet determined, but it would seem clear that it cannot be met except by a gradual process, and over a considerable period of years.

As Mr. K. M. Panikkar[1] (*India and the Indian Ocean* and other writings) has so ably pointed out—"the policy of a State is determined by its geographical position . . . the object of all policy is territorial security, and this is governed predominantly by geographical factors". In many of his writings and from the platform, Mr. Panikkar has effectively developed the argument that whatever the political status of India, a close and intimate association in defence policy between the British Empire and India is no less than essential for the security of India and, he believes, is inevitable.

With the development of the air arm and of long-range weapons, it is becoming less possible each year to defend a country from within the geographical limits of that country. The existence and maintenance of distant bases, the maintenance of research and expertise on a wide scale, all point to the necessity for a close link between India and some great Power, and it is difficult to conceive of any international liaison that would be so relatively disinterested and so effective in practice as a link with the British Empire.

The British Empire already possesses the chain of developed bases in the Indian Ocean (and the approaches to the Indian Ocean) without which the continental defence of India would scarcely be possible. It is indeed difficult to visualise the defence of India outside the British group. One can also say with

[1]Now Prime Minister of Bikaner State after a distinguished career at Oxford and in India. He ranks high among the very able body of men who influence the policy of the Chamber of Princes.

truth that the British regional interest in the Indian Ocean would be incomplete—although not impossible —without Indian participation.

The end of British political control in India will not mean the departure of the British, as individuals, from India. It will not be possible for many years ahead for India to do without a large number of British individuals in government service. They will remain under contract to the Government of India and to the governments of the Provinces and States in a wide range of administrative, legal, medical, police and other professional and technical appointments. It will be many years before India will be able to fill, from amongst her own sons, all the many senior positions under the government that the administration of her 400 million people makes necessary. The Indian system of administration and of law, education, medicine, police and other professional services is very largely based on British practice, and it is, and must continue to be, appropriate and convenient that the Governments of India should continue to engage Britishers under contract to fill positions (mostly senior positions) for which suitably-trained Indians are not yet available.

The reasons that I have given for my belief in the maintenance of the connection between India and Britain may be said to comprise defence, finance and tradition. I believe that these factors are real and potent but, in addition, I believe that high politics will provide the principal cement. I refer to the fact that India cannot stand alone in the world of the future—that she has to make her choice between the few international links that are available to her—and that, on practically all counts, the British link is strongly indicated in her own interests.

I have tried to analyse the attitude of mind of India towards the outside world. What of the attitude of the outside world towards India? India likes to believe that she can sit back and choose her friends at leisure, and that the world is rather breathlessly awaiting India's choice. If I am right in this then I believe India will be disillusioned.

I believe that the main impression left in the minds of the rest of the world is that India is a country of periodical famines, terrorism and political troubles, and that India's friends and associates in the coming generation are likely to be called upon to provide generous help in a wide variety of fields rather than to get much out of it.

The world has taken remarkably little interest in India up to the present. India is a blank on the map in most people's minds. In the United States, India has been of interest almost solely by reason of the opportunity that it has provided to twist the lion's tail—a peg on which, in words at least, to hang the charge of British Imperialism. I believe that India's rejection of the Cripps offer in 1942 had the result of India's forfeiting intelligent sympathy in the United States, and that the Indian political parties have not been taken seriously in America since then.

The business men of the world realise that from the point of view of imports, India represents at present only a small market. Although India's population is staggeringly large, it is realised that only about 10 millions out of her 400 millions have any purchasing power worth talking about, and that it will need a great deal of working capital, many technicians, and the passage of considerable time to improve this state of affairs, and that the working

capital and technicians will have to come very largely from outside India. In other words, it is generally believed that India will be a drain on the world's resources for some considerable time to come. In the long view, as one prominent American business man has said to me, "there is something there"—but people are not inclined, at the moment, to take very long views.

From the point of view of defence, India will be a liability to her friends for many years. She can provide the human raw material in the way of ground troops, and but little else. India would fit easily and usefully into a British or British-American defensive network, but into none other.

I believe that there are about 2,500 Indians in Australia and about 1,200 in New Zealand.

There are varying numbers of Indians in practically every part of the British Empire and Commonwealth; in all the British Dominions, and in the Colonies in Africa and in the East and West Indies. The proportion is microscopically small in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In South Africa there are 220,000 Indians, which is well over 10 per cent of the European population. There are a few thousands in the United States.

In Ceylon and Malaya, Indians represent 12 per cent, or 13 per cent of the total population. In Burma they represent 7 per cent of the population. In Fiji, the population is nearly half-Indian. In the West Indies there is a big proportion of Indians.

I believe I am right in saying that wherever there is any considerable proportion of Indians in the population, there is trouble and resentment on the part of the original inhabitants. But the trouble doesn't necessarily, or

even frequently, arise, by reason of *colour*. For instance, there is a great deal of resentment against the Indians of Malaya, Burma, Ceylon, and Kenya, where the original population is not noticeably of different colour to the Indians.

The resentment and trouble appear to arise from a combination of economic and social factors. The average Indian (particularly those who do manual labour) does not easily fit into the picture in countries outside his own. A great many—if not all—of the Indians who migrate from their own country do so in order to better themselves economically. The charge is made against the Indian in almost all of the countries to which he has migrated that he tends to lower the standard of living of the people amongst whom he settles. Perhaps he is more industrious, perhaps he is ready to work longer hours or for less pay—but whatever the reason or combination of reasons, he tends to undercut his neighbours and to become unpopular with the indigenous people around him. Almost invariably the cry goes up that the Indian is stealing the bread from the mouths of the indigenous population.

Then there is the problem of the social habits which the Indian brings with him from whatever part of India he comes, and which he seems to find it practically impossible to change. These habits almost invariably clash with the customs of the country to which he goes.

As a result of all this, various forms of restrictions have been raised against the Indian immigrant in almost all countries. These restrictions are of various kinds and range from complete prohibition to enter a country, down to the necessity to take out a licence to trade, exclusion from trade unions, segregation into restricted

living areas, exclusion from hotels and cinemas, prohibition on ownership of land, denial of the right to vote, denial of the right to certain social services, etc.

Almost all that I have said above applies principally to the coolie classes of Indians, and not to the educated classes, who much more readily adapt themselves to the social and economic standards of the countries in which they find themselves.

I see no solution to the general problem—at least no solution likely to be acceptable to India. From India's point of view, it seems unfair that even a few of her 400 millions of people should not be able to make their lives elsewhere should they wish to do so, in countries which, to them, must seem very underpopulated. Nevertheless, the considerations which I have outlined make it likely that such migration would be opposed.

The trouble is that there is little or no room in the world to-day for new colonial enterprise—for the migration of people on any appreciable scale to new lands, there to set up their own national standards of living and national ways of life. The development of Australia, among other countries, was determined in this way by our forebears in the last 100 years. We cannot, as Australians, permit our country—now in the twentieth century—to be developed with other standards by other peoples. What is true for Australia, I believe to be generally true.

When Indians look at the vast area of Australia—twice the size of India—and compare the relative populations of India and Australia, they have hard things to say of the Australian migration policy. They do not realise that two-thirds of Australia will never maintain more than the very meagre population that

it now supports. The word "desert" is an unpopular one in Australia, but on any reasonable standards a very great deal of Australia deserves this harsh description. Lack of rainfall creates conditions under which human beings cannot exist—whatever their country of origin.

The area of Australia that has the benefit of a reasonable rainfall is probably appreciably less than the similarly usable area of India. However, even when this is said and accepted, there is still a vast discrepancy between the population density of the reasonably well-watered areas of India and Australia. It is necessary to explain to the people of India why this should be, and how it is defended.

The answer is economic. Australia has built up over the generations a high standard of living for the mass of her people. Australia has no "peasants" and no "coolies". The average standard of living of the mass of the Australian people is so different from that of India that no comparison is possible. It is not unnatural that Australia should want to retain her standards and even improve them. Any appreciable falling off is unthinkable to the Australian. It is believed that the influx of even a few hundreds of thousands of Indians of the peasant or coolie classes would definitely threaten Australian living standards—not to speak of numbers of Indian immigrants that would have any effect by way of reduction of the population pressure in India.

When I have explained this state of affairs to intelligent Indians they have always understood and accepted the position. Indeed, it is easy for them to appreciate the argument in a country where the influx of working population from one Province into another is angrily

resented. Bengal resents the influx of people from the neighbouring provinces of Bihar and Orissa. Assam resents the immigration of Bengalis. The people of one Province are spoken of as "foreigners" in the next Province.

The simple fact is that the population pressure in India to-day is such that no migration that is not reckoned in millions would be the slightest use to India. Migration on anything approaching such a scale is quite impossible by reason of shipping difficulties, and by reason of the social dislocations at the receiving end, whether in Australia or elsewhere.

Still, what of India? Need the growing tide of her millions feel cramped within the limits of her land? Personally, I believe not. India is a very large country. Many of the people are wretchedly poor, but not because the land is worn out, nor because the country lacks resources. India's agriculture is capable of very great expansion. India's resources—if well handled—can make possible a much higher standard of living among the average run of people. It is these tasks to which, I believe, India should turn rather than to such unsatisfactory outlets as exist beyond her borders.

To be fair, I have heard no suggestion that India is seeking new outlets for her people abroad. There is some understandable national resentment at complete prohibition on the entry of Indians into other countries, although when it is the case that the prohibition is imposed on economic grounds, and it is so explained, it is generally accepted.