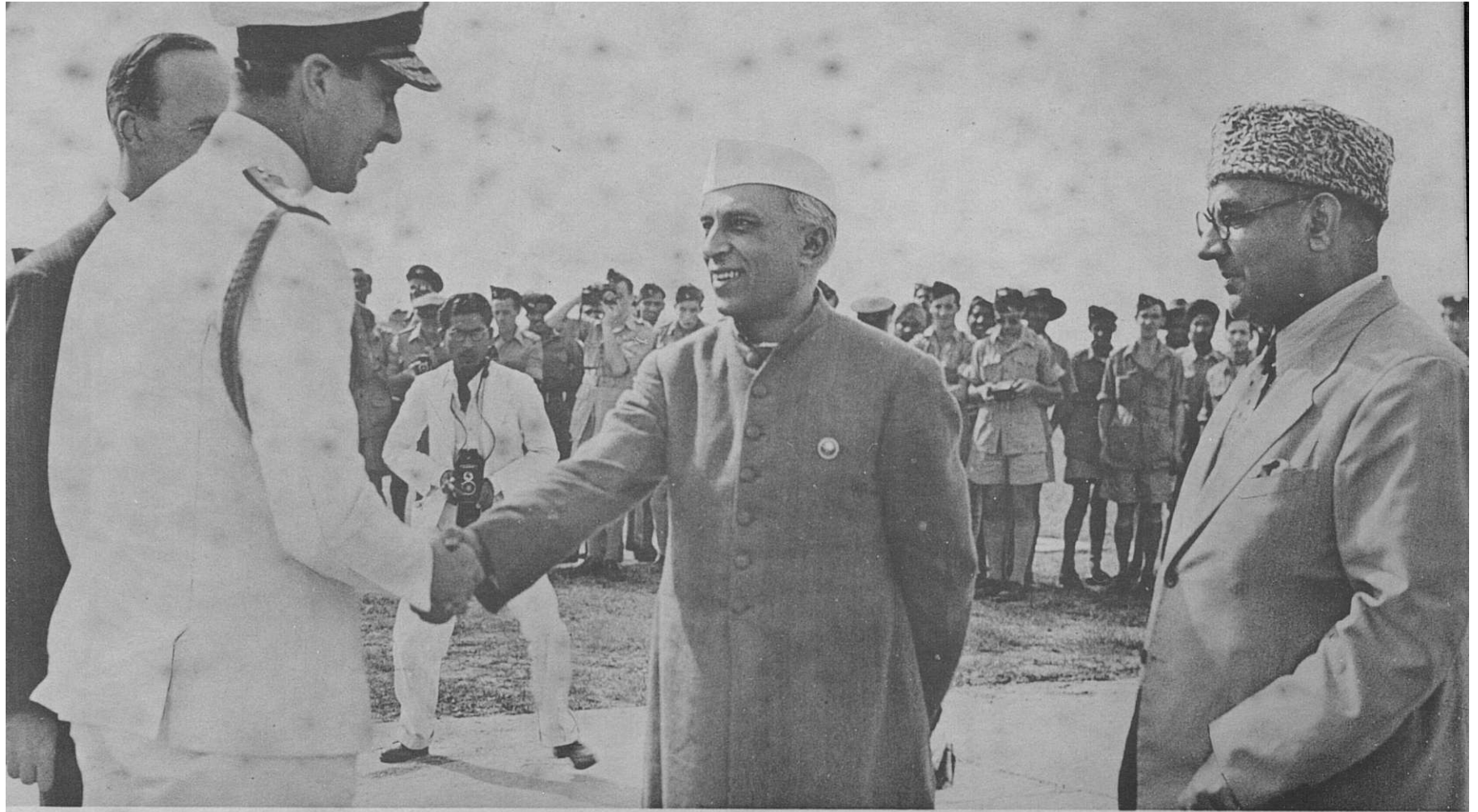


Part One

SPEECHES AS VICEROY
AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA

(Including related addresses)

24 March 1947
to
14 August 1947



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, subsequently Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, greet Lord Mountbatten on his arrival in India as Viceroy designate, 22nd March, 1947.

Swearing-in Ceremony

24 MARCH 1947

ALTHOUGH I believe it is not usual for a speech to be made at the swearing-in ceremony, I should like to say a few words to you, and to India.

This is not a normal Viceroyalty on which I am embarking. His Majesty's Government are resolved to transfer power by June 1948; and since new constitutional arrangements must be made, and many complicated questions of administration resolved—all of which will take time to put into effect—this means that a solution must be reached within the next few months.

I believe that every political leader in India feels, as I do, the urgency of the task before us. I hope soon to be in close consultation with them; and I will give them all the help I can.

In the meanwhile, every one of us must do what he can to avoid any word or action which might lead to further bitterness or add to the toll of innocent victims. I know how very many there are who are determined to work to that end, and I shall do everything I can to support them.

I have many Indian friends. Some were made when I was out here twenty-five years ago—it was here in Delhi that my wife and I became engaged. In the three years that I was with the South-East Asia Command I made many more among the Indian fighting forces, with whom I am so proud to have been associated.

It will be no easy matter to succeed Lord Wavell, who had done so much to take India along the path to self-government. I have always had a great admiration for him, and I shall devote myself to finishing the work which he began.

I am under no illusion about the difficulty of my task. I shall need the greatest goodwill of the greatest possible number, and I am asking India to-day for that goodwill.

Reply to Address of Welcome presented by
the New Delhi Municipal Council

31 MARCH 1947

ON behalf of my wife and myself, I thank you for your kind words of greeting and for the honour you have done us in giving us this welcome to the capital city, which is to be our home in India.

Twenty-five years ago, I wandered among the foundations of this city, and tried to imagine what it would be like. When I returned here in 1943, it was fascinating to see this city, more splendid by far than I could have foreseen.

I can understand your objection to seeing temporary houses lingering on among beautiful buildings with a high artistic standard; and I share your hope that it will soon be possible to proceed with the planned development of New Delhi.

The future of this great city, which is built on the site of historic Delhi, and where at this moment the representatives of many Asiatic peoples are assembled, is inseparable from the future of India, which from ancient times has been the great cultural centre of Asia.

I have been very interested to hear of the various schemes which the Municipal Committee has in hand, and I congratulate you on the high standards which you have maintained, in spite of all the difficulties of the war and its succeeding years. I hope that perhaps later on you will give me an opportunity of seeing something of your work.

During the last few years my wife has felt very privileged to have had close contact with Indian troops, Prisoners of War, and the Medical, Nursing and Welfare Services of India. She hopes to continue working closely with all medical, nursing and welfare activities; and is particularly pleased to hear

that a Nursing College with a University Degree has been established in New Delhi. This will be a great help to the Nursing Profession of India, which is at present so sadly inadequate to meet the needs of the community.

We thank you again most warmly for the welcome you have extended to us both.

Speech by the Chinese Ambassador His Excellency
Dr. Lo Chia-Luen, on the occasion of the presentation
of his credentials at New Delhi

16 MAY 1947

I HAVE the great honour to present to Your Excellency the letters by which the President of the Republic of China accredits me in the character of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Emperor of India. The change in diplomatic designation between China and India is not only a mark of the stride which India has taken towards independence but also an indication that we are entering upon a new era of still closer co-operation.

For over two thousand years China and India have had frequent periods of contact by land and sea. Such contacts have never once led, I am happy to say, to military conflict, but, always to the search for truth and knowledge. I need not repeat here the heroic stories of how as early as in the first century Indian and Chinese priests, undaunted by the necessary perils and hardships of the overland route, made determined pilgrimages to each other's land to seek religious and intellectual enlightenment. Even in China to-day, when we read of the travels in India of that great scholar-monk Hsuan Chuan and the warm hospitable reception with which he was so generously accorded, we are still filled with a lingering sense of gratitude and emulation.

While recalling the past, I have not lost sight of the significance of more recent events. During the years of our struggle against the Japanese aggression, India extended to us not only its sympathy and moral support but also practical aid and collaboration. We are particularly grateful to India for providing us with the necessary sites and facilities for the training of thousands of our armed forces in India. For many months when China's thin airline over the Hump proved inadequate, India offered unstintedly transit passage to many essential war supplies which enabled China to continue her resistance to the victorious end. The Chinese people will long remember these acts of spontaneous friendship. On this occasion, I would also like to recall the visit to India of President and Madame Chiang in 1942, which was followed in its wake by many renewed efforts at Sino-Indian co-operation in the fields of science, education and religion.

I consider it a great distinction to be designated as the first Chinese Ambassador to India. Our people have full faith in the future of India, and are certain that the wisdom of the East will serve to successfully implement the Western art of political organisation. China will labour with India in the common task of the building of a global peace.

Twelve centuries before Christ there flourished in China the State of Chou. In praise of its government and its development of peaceful arts, an old song in the *Book of Odes* runs:

" Though the State of Chou be ancient,
Its destiny is new."

May I, with Your Excellency's permission, present these two lines of an almost forgotten song to the people of India as a token of faith and friendship.

In thus entering upon my task I hope that the ties of friendship which unite my country with India may become closer and further strengthened and that I may always count on the kindness and advice of Your Excellency as well as the assistance of your Government.

Reply to His Excellency Dr. Lo Chia-Luen on presentation of his credentials as Chinese Ambassador

16 MAY 1947

IT gives me the greatest pleasure to receive you to-day, in your capacity as the first Ambassador to India of the Chinese Republic. From time immemorial, as you have said, China and India have been linked by cultural ties and close associations of friendship and trade. Their relations have never been marred by hostility or strife, an almost unique record in history. More recently the two countries passed through a close comradeship in arms against aggression; together they achieved a common victory. Speaking from personal experience I had the honour in my last appointment of having two Chinese Armies placed under my command by the Generalissimo, and they played an outstanding part in the

liberation of Northern Burma and the opening of the land road from India to China. I also had the pleasure of paying two visits to Chungking and of establishing a most friendly relationship with His Excellency the President of the Republic of China. It is, therefore, a particular pleasure for me to welcome you to-day.

For the future I also do not doubt that these many bonds will be strengthened to the mutual advantage of India and China and these two lands, both ancient in history but both on the road to a new and high destiny will strive with energy, in concert with the other United Nations, to establish a lasting era of progress and peace.

On behalf of His Majesty and the Government of India, I extend to Your Excellency a most cordial welcome, and assure you at all times, of our fullest co-operation.

Burma Star Party

2 JUNE 1947

THIS is a party for all those who won the Burma Star, and at this moment a similar party is being given in London. I have received a message from the Chairman of the Burma Reunion in London, General Slim,¹ and my wife and I have sent messages on behalf of you all to the London party.

I was very proud to have such a fine body of men in my Command in South-East Asia, and I am very glad to have been given this opportunity of continuing my association with so many of you.

This is a fateful moment in the history of our two countries. For I have just come back from the meetings with the British Government in London, and am now in the middle of my meetings with the Indian leaders to decide how power is to be transferred from British to Indian hands. May the friendship existing between the British and Indian fighting forces, which we celebrated to-day in Delhi and London, be symbolic of the future friendship between our peoples.

(His Excellency also read this speech in Urdu.)

¹ General Sir William Slim, 14th Army Commander during the Burma Campaign, now a Field Marshal and Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Broadcast

3 JUNE 1947

A STATEMENT¹ will be read to you to-night giving the final decision of His Majesty's Government as to the method by which power will be transferred from British to Indian hands. But before this happens, I want to give a personal message to the people of India, as well as a short account of the discussions which I have held with the leaders of the political parties and which have led up to the advice I tendered to His Majesty's Government during my recent visit to London.

Since my arrival in India at the end of March I have spent almost every day in consultation with as many of the leaders and representatives of as many communities and interests as possible. I wish to say how grateful I am for all the information and helpful advice they have given me.

Nothing I have seen or heard in the past few weeks has shaken my firm opinion that with a reasonable measure of goodwill between the communities a unified India would be by far the best solution of the problem.

For more than a hundred years 400 millions of you have lived together and this country has been administered as a single entity. This has resulted in unified communications, defence, postal services and currency; an absence of tariffs and customs barriers; and the basis for an integrated political economy. My great hope was that communal differences would not destroy all this.

My first course, in all my discussions, was therefore to urge the political leaders to accept unreservedly the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16 May 1946.² In my opinion, that plan provides the best arrangement that can be devised to meet the interests of all the communities of India. To my great regret

¹ See Page 13.

² Command Paper 6821



Meeting on 3rd June, 1947—On the left of Lord Mountbatten are Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, representing the Muslim League. On Lord Mountbatten's right are Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Acharya Kripalani, representing the Congress, and Sardar Baldev Singh, representing the Sikhs. Sir Eric Mieville and Lord Ismay, Principal Secretary and Chief of Staff respectively to Lord Mountbatten appear behind and to the right of Lord Mountbatten.

it has been impossible to obtain agreement either on the Cabinet Mission Plan, or on any other plan that would preserve the unity of India. But there can be no question of coercing any large areas in which one community has a majority, to live against their will under a Government in which another community has a majority. And the only alternative to coercion is partition.

But when the Muslim League demanded the partition of India, Congress used the same arguments for demanding in that event the partition of certain Provinces. To my mind this argument is unassailable. In fact neither side proved willing to leave a substantial area in which their community have a majority under the Government of the other. I am, of course, just as much opposed to the partition of Provinces as I am to the partition of India herself and for the same basic reasons.

For just as I feel there is an Indian consciousness which should transcend communal differences so I feel there is a Punjabi and Bengali consciousness which has evoked a loyalty to their Province.

And so I felt it was essential that the people of India themselves should decide this question of partition.

The procedure for enabling them to decide for themselves whether they want the British to hand over power to one or two Governments is set out in the statement which will be read to you. But there are one or two points on which I should like to add a note of explanation.

It was necessary in order to ascertain the will of the people of the Punjab, Bengal and part of Assam to lay down boundaries between the Muslim majority areas and the remaining areas, but I want to make it clear that the ultimate boundaries will be settled by a Boundary Commission and will almost certainly not be identical with those which have been provisionally adopted.

We have given careful consideration to the position of the Sikhs. This valiant community forms about an eighth of the population of the Punjab, but they are so distributed that any partition of this Province will inevitably divide them. All

of us who have the good of the Sikh community at heart are very sorry to think that the partition of the Punjab, which they themselves desire, cannot avoid splitting them to a greater or lesser extent. The exact degree of the split will be left to the Boundary Commission on which they will of course be represented.

The whole plan may not be perfect; but like all plans, its success will depend on the spirit of goodwill with which it is carried out. I have always felt that once it was decided in what way to transfer power the transfer should take place at the earliest possible moment, but the dilemma was that if we waited until a constitutional set-up for all India was agreed, we should have to wait a long time, particularly if partition were decided on. Whereas if we handed over power before the Constituent Assemblies had finished their work we should leave the country without a Constitution. The solution to this dilemma, which I put forward, is that His Majesty's Government should transfer power now to one or two Governments of British India each having Dominion Status as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made. This I hope will be within the next few months. I am glad to announce that His Majesty's Government have accepted this proposal and are already having legislation prepared for introduction in Parliament this session. As a result of these decisions the special function of the India Office will no longer have to be carried out, and some other machinery will be set up to conduct future relations between His Majesty's Government and India.

I wish to emphasise that this legislation will not impose any restriction on the power of India as a whole, or of the two States if there is partition, to decide in the future their relationship to each other and to other member States of the British Commonwealth.

Thus the way is now open to an arrangement by which power can be transferred many months earlier than the most optimistic of us thought possible, and at the same time leave it to the people of British India to decide for themselves on their future, which is the declared policy of His Majesty's Government.

I have made no mention of the Indian States, since the new decisions of His Majesty's Government are concerned with the transfer of power in British India.

If the transfer of power is to be effected in a peaceful and orderly manner, every single one of us must bend all his efforts to the task. This is no time for bickering, much less for the continuation in any shape or form of the disorders and lawlessness of the past few months. Do not forget what a narrow margin of food we are all working on. We cannot afford any toleration of violence. All of us are agreed on that.

Whichever way the decision of the Indian people may go, I feel sure any British officials or officers who may be asked to remain for a while will do everything in their power to help implement that decision. His Majesty as well as his Government have asked me to convey to all of you in India their sincere good wishes for your future and the assurance of their continued goodwill.

I have faith in the future of India and am proud to be with you all at this momentous time. May your decisions be wisely guided and may they be carried out in the peaceful and friendly spirit of the Gandhi-Jinnah appeal.¹

STATEMENT BY HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

3 *June* *947

INTRODUCTION

1. On 20 February 1947, His Majesty's Government announced their intention of transferring power in British India to Indian hands by June 1948. His Majesty's Government had hoped that it would be possible for the major parties to co-operate in the working out of the Cabinet Mission's Plan of 16 May 1946, and evolve for India a Constitution acceptable to all concerned. This hope has not been fulfilled.

2. The majority of the representatives of the Provinces of Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces and Berar, Assam, Orissa, and the North-West Frontier Province,

¹ See Appendix "A".

and the representatives of Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara and Coorg have already made progress in the task of evolving a new Constitution. On the other hand, the Muslim League Party, including in it a majority of the representatives of Bengal, the Punjab and Sind as also the representative of British Baluchistan, has decided not to participate in the Constituent Assembly.

3. It has always been the desire of His Majesty's Government that power should be transferred in accordance with the wishes of the Indian people themselves. This task would have been greatly facilitated if there had been agreement among the Indian political parties. In the absence of such agreement, the task of devising a method by which the wishes of the Indian people can be ascertained has devolved upon His Majesty's Government. After full consultation with political leaders in India, His Majesty's Government have decided to adopt for this purpose the plan set out below. His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that they have no intention of attempting to frame any ultimate Constitution for India; this is a matter for the Indians themselves. Nor is there anything in this plan to preclude negotiations between communities for a united India.

THE ISSUES TO BE DECIDED

4. It is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to interrupt the work of the existing Constituent Assembly. Now that provision is made for certain Provinces specified below, His Majesty's Government trust that, as a consequence of this announcement, the Muslim League representatives of those Provinces, a majority of whose representatives are already participating in it, will now take their due share in its labours. At the same time, it is clear that any Constitution framed by this Assembly cannot apply to those parts of the country which are unwilling to accept it. His Majesty's Government are satisfied that the procedure outlined below embodies the best practical method of ascertaining the wishes of the people of such areas on the issue whether their Constitution is to be framed:

(a) in the existing Constituent Assembly; or

(b) in a new and separate Constituent Assembly consisting of the representatives of those areas which decide not to participate in the existing Constituent Assembly.

When this has been done, it will be possible to determine the authority or authorities to whom power should be transferred.

BENGAL AND THE PUNJAB

5. The Provincial Legislative Assemblies of Bengal and the Punjab (excluding the European members) will, therefore, each be asked to meet in two parts, one representing the Muslim majority

districts and the other the rest of the Province. For the purpose of determining the population of districts, the 1941 census figures will be taken as authoritative. The Muslim majority districts in these two Provinces are set out in the Appendix to this Announcement.

6. The members of the two parts of each Legislative Assembly sitting separately will be empowered to vote whether or not the Province should be partitioned. If a simple majority of either part decides in favour of partition, division will take place and arrangements will be made accordingly.

7. Before the question as to the partition is decided, it is desirable that the representatives of each part should know in advance which Constituent Assembly the Province as a whole would join in the event of the two parts subsequently deciding to remain united. Therefore, if any member of either Legislative Assembly so demands, there shall be held a meeting of all members of the Legislative Assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision will be taken on the issue as to which Constituent Assembly the Province as a whole would join if it were decided by the two parts to remain united.

8. In the event of partition being decided upon, each part of the Legislative Assembly will, on behalf of the areas they represent, decide which of the alternatives in Paragraph 4 above to adopt.

9. For the immediate purpose of deciding on the issue of partition, the members of the Legislative Assemblies of Bengal and the Punjab will sit in two parts according to Muslim majority districts (as laid down in the Appendix) and non-Muslim majority districts. This is only a preliminary step of a purely temporary nature as it is evident that for the purposes of a final partition of these Provinces a detailed investigation of boundary questions will be needed; and, as soon as a decision involving partition has been taken for either Province, a Boundary Commission will be set up by the Governor-General, the membership and terms of reference of which will be settled in consultation with those concerned. It will be instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. It will also be instructed to take into account other factors. Similar instructions will be given to the Bengal Boundary Commission. Until the report of a Boundary Commission has been put into effect, the provisional boundaries indicated in the Appendix will be used.

SIND

10. The Legislative Assembly of Sind (excluding the European members) will at a special meeting also take its own decision on the alternatives in Paragraph 4 above.

NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

11. The position of the North-West Frontier Province is exceptional. Two of the three representatives of this Province are already participating in the existing Constituent Assembly. But it is clear, in view of its geographical situation, and other considerations, that if the whole or any part of the Punjab decides not to join the existing Constituent Assembly, it will be necessary to give the North-West Frontier Province an opportunity to reconsider its position. Accordingly, in such an event, a referendum will be made to the electors of the present Legislative Assembly in the North-West Frontier Province to choose which of the alternatives mentioned in Paragraph 4 above they wish to adopt. The referendum will be held under the aegis of the Governor-General and in consultation with the Provincial Government.

BRITISH BALUCHISTAN

12. British Baluchistan has elected a member, but he has not taken his seat in the existing Constituent Assembly. In view of its geographical situation, this Province will also be given an opportunity to reconsider its position and to choose which of the alternatives in Paragraph 4 above to adopt. His Excellency the Governor-General is examining how this can most appropriately be done.

ASSAM

13. Though Assam is predominantly a non-Muslim Province, the district of Sylhet which is contiguous to Bengal is predominantly Muslim. There has been a demand that, in the event of the partition of Bengal, Sylhet should be amalgamated with the Muslim part of Bengal. Accordingly, if it is decided that Bengal should be partitioned, a referendum will be held in Sylhet district under the aegis of the Governor-General and in consultation with the Assam Provincial Government to decide whether the district of Sylhet should continue to form part of the Assam Province or should be amalgamated with the new Province of Eastern Bengal, if that Province agrees. If the referendum results in favour of amalgamation with Eastern Bengal, a Boundary Commission with terms of reference similar to those for the Punjab and Bengal will be set up to demarcate the Muslim majority areas of Sylhet district and contiguous Muslim majority areas of adjoining districts, which will then be transferred to Eastern Bengal. The rest of the Assam Province will in any case continue to participate in the proceedings of the existing Constituent Assembly.

REPRESENTATION IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLIES

14. If it is decided that Bengal and the Punjab should be partitioned, it will be necessary to hold fresh elections to choose their representatives on the scale of one for every million of population

according to the principle contained in the Cabinet Mission's Plan of 16 May 1946. Similar elections will also have to be held for Sylhet in the event of it being decided that this district should form part of East Bengal. The number of representatives to which each area would be entitled is as follows:

<i>Province</i>	<i>General</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Sikhs</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sylhet District	1	2	<i>Nil</i>	3
West Bengal	15	4	<i>Nil</i>	
East Bengal	12	29	<i>Nil</i>	41
West Punjab	3	12	2	17
East Punjab	6	4	2	12

15. In accordance with the mandates given to them, the representatives of the various areas will either join the existing Constituent Assembly or form the new Constituent Assembly.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

16. Negotiations will have to be initiated as soon as possible on the administrative consequences of any partition that may have been decided upon:

(a) Between the representatives of the respective successor authorities about all subjects now dealt with by the Central Government, including Defence, Finance and Communications.

(b) Between different successor authorities and His Majesty's Government for treaties in regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power.

(c) In the case of Provinces that may be partitioned, as to the administration of all provincial subjects such as the division of assets and liabilities, the police and other services, the High Courts, provincial institutions, etc.

THE TRIBES OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

17. Agreements with the tribes of the North-West Frontier of India will have to be negotiated by the appropriate successor authority.

THE STATES

18. His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that the decisions announced above relate only to British India and that their policy towards Indian States contained in the Cabinet Mission Memorandum of 12 May 1946 remains unchanged.

NECESSITY FOR SPEED

19. In order that the successor authorities may have time to prepare themselves to take over power, it is important that all the above processes should be completed as quickly as possible. To avoid delay, the different Provinces or parts of Provinces will proceed

independently as far as practicable within the conditions of this Plan. The existing Constituent Assembly and the new Constituent Assembly (if formed) will proceed to frame Constitutions for their respective territories: they will of course be free to frame their own rules.

IMMEDIATE TRANSFER OF POWER

20. The major political parties have repeatedly emphasized their desire that there should be the earliest possible transfer of power in India. With this desire His Majesty's Government are in full sympathy, and they are willing to anticipate the date of June 1948, for the handing over of power by the setting up of an independent Indian Government or Governments at an even earlier date. Accordingly, as the most expeditious, and indeed the only practicable way of meeting this desire, His Majesty's Government propose to introduce legislation during the current session for the transfer of power this year on a Dominion Status basis to one or two successor authorities according to the decisions taken as a result of this announcement. This will be without prejudice to the right of the Indian Constituent Assemblies to decide in due course whether or not the part of India in respect of which they have authority will remain within the British Commonwealth.

FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS BY GOVERNOR-GENERAL

21. His Excellency the Governor-General will from time to time make such further announcements as may be necessary in regard to procedure or any other matters for carrying out the above arrangements.

{Appendix to Statement by His Majesty's Government.}

The Muslim majority districts of Punjab and Bengal according to 1941 census.

1. THE PUNJAB

Lahore Division.—Gurjranwala, Gurdaspur, Lahore, Sheikhpura, Sialkot.

Rawalpindi Division.—Attock, Gujrat, Jhelum, Mianwali, Rawalpindi, Shahpur.

Multan Division.—Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Multan, Muzaffargarh.

2. BENGAL

Chittagong Division.—Chittagong, Noakhali, Tippera.

Dacca Division.—Bakerganj, Dacca, Faridpur, Mymensingh.

Presidency Division.—Jessore, Murshidabad, Nadia.

Rajshahi Division.—Bogra, Dinajpur, Malda, Pabna, Rajshahi, Rangpur.

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI.

3 June 1947.

Press Conference in New Delhi

The Viceroy's Speech together with answers to questions at the Press Conference in New Delhi on 4 June 1947, in respect of the statement by His Majesty's Government, dated 3 June 1947

4 JUNE 1947

(This speech was made extempore and without any notes. The version below, including the subsequent questions and answers was edited from transcripts of several shorthand versions.)

I SHOULD like to begin by thanking the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting¹ for coming here and taking the chair at this Press Conference to-day. I have no prepared address to deliver nor have I any notes. I have already delivered my prepared address on the Radio last night. To-day I propose to confine my few introductory remarks to clear the background and then answer any questions that you may care to ask.

When I suddenly found myself going to India, we had some preliminary discussions in London and we settled on a programme that I should spend the first six months in becoming acquainted with the problems and then I should send my recommendations to His Majesty's Government to enable them in due course to prepare the necessary legislation for introduction early in 1948 in Parliament. But when I arrived out here I discovered almost at once that the one point on which every community was agreed, and on which all the British officials were agreed, and with which I very soon agreed myself, was that a decision at the earliest possible

¹ Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

moment as to how we were to transfer power was a prime necessity if we were to put a stop to communal strife and bring back the atmosphere of peace and friendliness without which no progress can possibly be made. So, I set to work harder than I ever remember having done even during the war. I saw as many people as possible. First of all, I gave them background information and then I asked for their views. My own feeling was that a united India was, of course, the right answer but only if communal feeling and goodwill allowed it. So, while I did my very best to get the Cabinet Mission scheme¹ accepted (a scheme which at one time or another—but never at the same time—had been accepted by every community) the riots and bloodshed throughout the country made the prospects of its acceptance obviously pretty remote.

The Cabinet Mission Plan is not an enforceable plan. It depends on goodwill and mutual co-operation. You cannot *make* the Cabinet Mission Plan work any more than you can *make* a horse drink after taking him down to the water. So, when it became clear that it could not be made to work with the complete free-will of at least one of the major communities, I started to look for an alternative. All the Muslim League leaders to whom I spoke made it absolutely clear that they desired partition. Once that fact was inescapably established in my mind, my next point was to see whether the Congress would agree to abandon the principle of unity for which they had stood for so long to the extent of allowing those areas that did not wish to stand for unity to form a separate Constituent Assembly. I found that they stuck by the principle of non-coercion. They said that any Province or area which did not wish to come into the existing Constituent Assembly could form a separate Constituent Assembly, but they very naturally insisted that no large non-Muslim areas should be brought into the new Constituent Assembly. When I spoke to Mr. Jinnah and the other Muslim League leaders on that point, they were, of course, as much distressed, as were the Congress leaders at the prospect of the partition. Mr. Jinnah then asked whether the same principle would be

¹ Command Paper 6821.

extended beyond the Punjab and Bengal. I accepted that, of course. The idea was that if Assam was to be partitioned, then Sylhet and possibly contiguous areas in which there is a definite Muslim majority should be separated. I felt from every point of view that the people of India should take it upon themselves to make up their own minds what they wanted to do for the future of their country.

The next problem was how to produce the mechanism to ascertain the will of the people. Clearly the adult franchise plebiscite would be the democratic way. But such a process was utterly impracticable at this moment when we wanted a very quick answer and speed was the one thing which everybody desired. Elections were held last year and the Legislative Assemblies appeared to me to be the right people to give a quick decision as to the wishes of the people. And so we devised the scheme the details of which you have read in the statement made by His Majesty's Government. But I want to point out that at every stage and every step when this plan was developed I worked hand in hand with the leaders with whom I was ultimately going to discuss the plan. The plan came as no shock to them and no surprise to them, for although I did not actually produce a written plan, I continued to make notes when they saw me and I asked them whether this was the right way or whether that was, and together we gradually constructed a plan which obviously cannot meet with the complete approval of everybody, because if it did my services would have been quite unnecessary. Ages ago the solution would have been found between the leaders themselves. The only service I can claim has been to try as honestly and as impartially as possible to reconcile the various points of view and find out to what extent the views of one party met the view of the others.

There are two main parties to this plan—the Congress and the Muslim League, but another community much less numerous but of great importance—the Sikh community—have of course to be considered. I found that it was mainly at the request of the Sikh community that Congress had put forward the Resolution on the partition of the Punjab, and you

will remember that in the words of that Resolution they wished the Punjab to be divided between predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim areas. It was, therefore, on that Resolution, which the Sikhs themselves sponsored, that this division has been provided for. I was not aware of all the details when this suggestion was made, but when I sent for the map and studied the distribution of the Sikh population under this proposal, I must say that I was astounded to find that the plan which they had produced divided their community into two almost equal parts. I have spent a great deal of time both out here and in England in seeing whether there was any solution which would keep the Sikh community more together without departing from the broad and easily understood principle, the principle which was demanded on the one side and was conceded on the other. I am not a miracle worker and I have not found that solution. All I have been able to say is that the leaders of the respective communities shall appoint a committee which will draw up the terms of reference of the Boundary Commission which has been suggested in the plan. The Boundary Commission shall have representatives of all the parties. So far as it is humanly possible there will be no interference or dictation by the British Government. If we can be of service in advancing impartial views and helping in this work, we shall not be afraid to do so, but this is your country and it is up to you to decide what to do with it.

The most gratifying part of the whole procedure has been the absolute determination of every responsible leader with whom I have spoken that, whatever the solution finally adopted, it was going to be adopted peacefully and without any bloodshed, and they were going to throw in all their weight to stop any further trouble. Every single member of my Cabinet individually and together has expressed to me the strongest possible wish that the Armed Forces of India should be used to ensure that there is no further bloodshed, and that is the reason and the only reason why the Defence Member, Sardar Baldev Singh, announced last night the transfer of additional troops particularly into the areas about to be par-

tioned—the most important being the move of the Fourth Indian Infantry Division into the areas which are about to be partitioned in the Punjab. I do not need to tell you that this is not a British move.

Now comes probably the most interesting of all the developments in the course of these very high-speed talks. After a while it became apparent to me that next to an acceptable solution or settlement all leaders wanted speed in the actual transfer of power. All leaders were anxious to assume their full responsibility at the earliest possible moment, and I was anxious to let them do so, because once the decision has been taken, why should we wait ? Waiting would only mean that I should be responsible ultimately for law and order, whereas in point of fact, however much you may talk about responsibility, it is never the same thing unless you are really legally and completely in control. How to produce that very quickly was a legal conundrum of the first order. You cannot transfer power to one or two separate Governments unless those Governments have a constitution. One of the Governments was not even in being, nor was it certain it was coming into being. The other Government would presumably take some time in framing their constitution because a constitution is a thing which should not be hurried as it has to be there for all time. Therefore I was faced with the first difficulty: was I to turn over to two Governments without a constitution ? If not, was there any other constitution which could possibly be used for the time being ? I do not think I need tell you, because you have studied this problem very closely, that the Government of India Act, 1935, provided the obvious answer. Some of the best brains had framed that Act. When the Secretary of State, Sir Samuel Hoare, was in the witness box of the Joint Select Committee, he answered up to 15,000 questions on this Act and he was able to answer every one to the satisfaction of the questioner without having to alter the framework of the Act. That is a very remarkable achievement, and that is the Act which, suitably adapted, will ultimately confer Dominion Status. That is the Act under which the Government has been functioning up to date and that is

the Act which, as amended, will be worked until such time as the two respective Governments have made up their minds in regard to what sort of constitution they want. I rather labour this point because I would not be a bit surprised if some of you would get up and say " the British are not going to quit at all; they are just dropping us into Dominion Status ". You are entitled to think that until I have given my explanation. I hope you will not think in that strain after I have given my explanation. I can assure you that it is the only solution of the problem, and if you want a proof of that, do you imagine for a moment that the responsible political parties could accept such a suggestion if it was not the only sound solution on which we could proceed ?

The curious part is, as you know, that independence through Dominion Status is complete, and the different administrations are at liberty to opt out of the Commonwealth whenever they please. Therefore, I mean it most sincerely when I say that power will be transferred as completely this year as it ever would have been by June 1948. It is a true anticipation of the transfer of power and I hope with this added advantage that instead of the British officials and officers having to get out by a certain date, whether the Indians wanted it or not—and I put it to you that although in theory some of the officers might have remained if you asked them, they would have had to resign their commissions if India had left the Commonwealth at once and so would not have been re-employed in the United Kingdom—in practice this solution enables the Indians to pick whom they want to stay here and decide for how long and on what terms of service, etc. The British will leave whenever they are told to leave. It may be we shall all be out by the end of this year. It may be that it may be useful for some of the British to stay on. But the one thing which would have been wrong to say was that we are going out and we are going to leave you in a mess and we are not going to give you any help. That would have been inexcusable. This means that the British will stay so long as they can be of use and when they are not wanted they will go

exactly when they are asked to go. I cannot really put a fairer proposition to the people of India.

Now there is a third party to all these negotiations and that is the party which sits in London, Whitehall, and are legally and constitutionally responsible. I refer to His Majesty's Government. And so I took the opportunity of flying home to see them. I arrived home at lunch time on a Monday, some sixteen days ago. By tea time I was right in the midst of the India-Burma Cabinet Committee going strong. The idea of a Dominion Status solution was completely novel because it had originally nothing to do with this plan, which never contained Paragraph 20. I brought it home as a surprise. The immediate answer was that it would take six or seven months to frame the necessary Act, to introduce the legislation, to pass it through the whole Committee stages and get it accepted. I asked the Prime Minister if he would kindly produce the necessary legislation in this session—that means within the next two months. The session finishes in about two months' time. He said he would do his best and invited me to come back the following day. The Lord Chancellor and the Law Officers of the Crown were there with the first rough outline of the new Act on which they had worked all night. The only thing that will delay the working of this Act is the uncertainty about what the Provinces are going to decide. Until, in fact, the people of India have outlined their own future and the shape of any separate State, the final terms of the Act cannot be drawn. But they can keep the Act already in skeleton form, filling in the bits as information comes. Then by agreement of the Opposition—as you heard in the statement made in the House by the Leader of the Opposition—this Bill will be rushed through in record time. If in fact a complete Act of Parliament of this complexity and importance can be framed and passed into law from start to finish in a matter of two months, I am told it will be a legislative record, and I think it is because of the measure of extreme goodwill that exists among all parties in England to-day and the sincerity of the feeling they have for the good of India that this can be achieved.

(Marginal references in the Questions and Answers refer to paragraphs of H.M. Government's Statement of 1st June 1947, reported on page 13.)

THE Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (Member for Information, and Broadcasting): Anybody can now put questions.

1. CL. Is Your Excellency in a position to say whether Mr. Jinnah has accepted the plan ?

A. The position about Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League is this. By the Constitution and precedents of the Muslim League no final decision is taken until the Muslim League Council has an opportunity of taking that decision. I am not going to say anything to-day to prejudice the free discussion of that Council. I will put it this way. I took full personal responsibility for mentioning about it in my broadcast after my conversation with Mr. Jinnah. I do not want you to twist that in such a manner as to make it difficult for the Muslim League.

2. Q. Profiting by our past experience, we would like to know, in the event of the Muslim League Council rejecting the plan, what would be the fate of it ?

A. That is a hypothetical question. If it ever arises come and see me and I will tell you what I will do.

3. £). We have had past experience of this.

A. You may have, but not of me. Honestly, come along to me if it happens.

4. In view of the recent speeches made in Bengal by Muslim League leaders, including Suhrawardy, the Prime Minister of Bengal, that in the event of the partition of Bengal, if Calcutta goes to the Hindu zone, the city of Calcutta will be reduced to ashes, does Your Excellency consider the necessity of immediately taking over the administration of the Province under Section 93 or setting up a regional ministry ?

A. The answer is, No. That is up to the Governor to decide. As a matter of fact I have spoken to Mr. Suhrawardy and Mr. Kiron Shankar Roy. The last thing either wants is to see Calcutta destroyed.

5. Q. Reference the Indian States, in view of the fact that there are two Constituent Assemblies likely to come into existence, is it open to any of the Indian States to choose to come into either or into neither if they wish to remain units of the British Commonwealth ?

A. The answer is that the policy about the Indian States is contained in Paragraph 18. That is to say, that the policy of His Majesty's Government remains unchanged and that policy has been made clear in the declaration of 12 May 1946, and if you read that memorandum you will see that by the time the date comes to transfer power, it will be my duty to hand back paramountcy to each of the

States. After that the States are free agents to enter either Constituent Assembly or make such other arrangements as they deem necessary.

I think you also asked me whether they could enter the Commonwealth separately as Dominions. The answer is that they cannot, as Dominions. If you ask me whether they can have any relations with the Commonwealth apart from that, that is a hypothetical question, which has not yet arisen. If it does I will have to refer it to His Majesty's Government.

6. May I be permitted to ask another question? If any of the Indian States claims to have taken back paramountcy from the quitting British power and wants to enter into separate treaty with His Majesty's Government, would His Majesty's Government be prepared to enter into treaty with that Indian State either from an economic or military point of view?

A. As far as I know this question has not arisen. If an Indian State were to come to me with such a request, I should refer it to His Majesty's Government. I have already answered the question whether they would be given Dominion Status: but this is a hypothetical question. If you ask me further details I really cannot answer. I have not had enough time to think about everything.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Let us have questions paragraph by paragraph: it would simplify matters and avoid confusion.

7. Q. In the introductory third paragraph there is a sentence which reads "Nor is there anything in this plan to preclude negotiations between communities for a united India". Does that mean that the decision of the British Government can even at this stage be put into the melting pot, if the Indian leaders produce an agreed alternative plan?

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A. It means that in a different way: it is not that it will be in the melting pot. It is the desire of His Majesty's Government to promote agreement among the parties. They can always get together and let us know what they want us to do. That is why that sentence has been put in there. It is a part of the plan.

8. Q- Since the attitude of the parties is also described in the first three paragraphs, may I ask whether His Excellency is satisfied that the measure of support that he has received from Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues is almost the same as he has received from the other parties and that whatever the legal or constitutional procedure may be in regard to ratification the element of uncertainty in the case of the other two leaders and in the case of Mr. Jinnah is the same: or is it different?

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A. I must really stick to my original answer. You are trying to draw me out.

9- Q- I do not want to embarrass Your Excellency. Even the

Congress Working Committee has also to consult the All-India Congress Committee and we find that Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader, has stated that the statement is not very satisfactory. My point is whether His Excellency has received from each of the three leaders the Congress, the Muslim League and the Sikhs, that measure of support which gives him the satisfaction that when these matters are referred to their bigger bodies they will receive satisfactory ratification or whether His Excellency is feeling more satisfied in the case of one and less in the case of the other ?

A. Let us put it this way. I am the person who is carrying the responsibility of going ahead with this business. If I have gone ahead, it is because I feel that that was the right thing to do. If you are trying to find out what was given to me in confidence I am not going to be trapped, for the simple reason that I do not want to prejudice the deliberations that may be carried out by the various parties. The main point is, and I repeat it, that I have gone ahead and I have taken, if you like, the risk in doing so, but I have spent the last five years in taking what you might call calculated risks.

10. Q. Will it be open to any Province which may be participating in either Constituent Assembly to feel free, after the constitution is framed, to vote itself out of one union and join the other or join neither ?

A. The answer is that after discussing this particular point with the leaders of both the parties I find that the leaders do not wish the Provinces to have any other option than to join one or the other of the Constituent Assemblies for the good and sufficient reason that they do not wish this plan to encourage what I might call " Balkanisation

11. Q. The second part of my question is whether any Province participating in either Constituent Assembly will be free after the constitution is framed to vote itself out of one union and join another or join neither ?

A. That again is one of those hypothetical questions which I am trying to avoid answering at the moment, because I am not here to give decisions. I am here to try and help the Indian people to do what they want to do. Let me put it to you this way: supposing a Province having agreed to join a Constituent Assembly or having gone ahead after joining, suddenly turns round and says that it wants to join another Constituent Assembly. It is up to the particular Constituent Assembly to see whether they are going to try to keep the Province against its wish. I cannot believe that Provinces will do such a thing. In fact I am not here to answer hypothetical questions. I am only here to try and help people to make up their mind as to what they want to do.

12. Q. With the Constituent Assembly still functioning under

the limitations of the Cabinet Mission's Plan, will it be free to choose its own course ? For example, will the restrictions relating to voting on communal issues or providing for a strong Centre still operate ?

A. See Paragraph 19, where it is said " The existing Constituent Assembly and the new Constituent Assembly (if formed) will proceed to frame Constitutions for those respective territories: they will of course be free to frame their own rules."

13. Q. May I know why it was not considered necessary to ask the Bengal Assembly or the **Punjab** Assembly to sit together collectively and vote first on the issue of United India, and later on vote whether they want a partition of the Province or partition of India ?

A. It is precisely what they are allowed to do. Paragraph 7 says " Before the question as to the partition is decided, it is desirable that the representatives of each part should know in advance which Constituent Assembly the Province as a whole would join in the event of the two parts subsequently deciding to remain united. Therefore, if any member of either Legislative Assembly so demands, there shall be held a meeting of all members of the Legislative Assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision will be taken on the issue as to which Constituent Assembly the Province as a whole would join if it were decided by the two parts to remain united." 7

As regards the other part of the question, namely, whether they can vote for United India, that question does not merely depend on a vote by Bengal or Punjab. What I do myself feel is that there should be a United India.

14. Q. The process is reversed here. You are asking them to sit separately and vote.

A. No. If you read the paragraph you will find " *Before* the question of partition is decided, etc."

15. Q. Will the vote under Paragraph 7 be by simple majority vote ?

A. Yes.

16. Q. Is not the issue already decided, practically ?

A. I am not here to say that it has been already decided. You and I may have a jolly good idea. We have still got to go by the voting.

17. Q. The statement says in one place that the Boundary Commission will determine the boundaries on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims and on " other factors ". Will you please give us any idea as to what those " other factors " may be ?

A. The term " other factors " was put in for the purpose of allowing the Commission the maximum latitude in dealing with this problem. The British are not going to draw up those boundaries. I am quite sincere when I say this and am not bluffing.

18. Q. With respect to the Boundary Commission there was a statement in your Lordship's broadcast last evening in which it was categorically stated that the ultimate boundaries will be settled by a Boundary Commission and will almost certainly not be identical with those which have been provisionally adopted. Why was this categorically stated as "almost certainly"? Did your Lordship have in mind certain factors that could lead to a different boundary other than the question of majority population according to community?

A. I put that in for the simple reason that in the district of Gurdaspur in the Punjab the population is 50.4 per cent Muslims, I think, and 49.6 per cent non-Muslims. With a difference of 0.8 per cent you will see at once that it is unlikely that the Boundary Commission will throw the whole of the district into the Muslim majority areas. In Bengal, the district of Khulna is the reverse case, by a very small fraction of percentage: it falls into a non-Muslim majority area. So you can't say that the whole of that district will go completely into the non-Muslim area. The point is this: we have adopted these districts for one purpose and one purpose only. It is the only simple way by which you can divide the Members of the Legislative Assembly. I won't labour this point. And I will be grateful for publicity by the press that it should not be assumed that it is a foregone conclusion that they will be going into the area within which their community is not in a majority.

19. Q. Arising out of this question, do you foresee any mass transfer of population from a Province or District?

A. Personally I do not—I am speaking as a prophet—because of the physical difficulties involved which you can visualise. There are many physical practical difficulties. But I equally think that a measure of transfer of population will come about in a natural way, that is to say people will just cross the boundary or the Government may take steps to transfer populations. Once more, this is a matter, not so much for the main parties, as for the local authorities living in the boundary areas to decide.

20. Q. Supplemental to the question as to the basis on which the boundary may be drawn, may I take it that the question of communal majority in the population would be the basic determining factor and that the various other issues raised by other parties, such as property, economic liability and various other such considerations, would not be allowed to be included in the terms of reference—because that will be a source of conflict?

A. I entirely agree. That is a point I raised with His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government could hardly be expected to subscribe to a partition on the basis of landed property—least of all the present Government. I think, therefore, that the question should be left to Indians. I do not want to prophesy what this Com-

mission will decide, but I promise you that it will be free to decide that certain considerations should be taken into account; I think it is absolutely up to them to do so.

21. Q. Is there any time-table fixed for the operation of paragraph 9 ?

A. To begin with, the plan cannot operate until I am absolutely certain that everybody wants to operate it. In the meantime the Governors have already been issued a warning to put this into effect at the earliest possible moment after they are quite certain about it. No time will be lost, I can assure you, to act as quickly as possible.

22. Q. What will be the Administrations of Bengal and the Punjab in the interim period ?

A. That is a matter really for the Legislative Assemblies of those two Provinces to decide in consultation with their Governments.

23. Q. So far as Assam is concerned, there is only one district mentioned. In this Boundary Commission only this one district will be considered and nothing else ?

A. I gave examples of two districts in Bengal and the Punjab to show why I have made the prophesy that the boundary will not be certainly identical with the division of the districts. If you look at the map, you will see. Obviously the boundary must be drawn in the most commonsense, intelligent, human way you can draw it; and the districts you will find are not necessarily drawn like that.

24. I was speaking of Assam. In Assam there is only one district involved.

A. In Sylhet there are some adjacent areas—I am not very clear of the extent—but there are areas in which there are Muslim majority populations. It is only Sylhet itself which will be asked to vote. There will be two Boundary Commissions for the East and the West, and the Boundary Commission for the East will be asked to look into this question because it is a question of mutual adjustment and commonsense. I put it to you that no area which is not wholeheartedly with it will be included by a State within its area. Conversely, the other State to which an area should owe allegiance, will welcome that area. It is a matter of mutual adjustment for the Boundary Commission to look into all these matters.

25. Q. I should like Your Excellency to clear up a point of procedure. The object of the Boundary Commissions is to carry out the wishes of the individual areas concerned. I should have thought that the proper authority for doing this would be the Constituent Assemblies of the two States. It is for them to assume this responsibility.

A. The question is a good one but the answer is " Speed ". To begin with, it is not certain how long it would take to set up Con-

stituent Assemblies for the two parts of India. The function of the Committee which will be set up in this connection is to give instructions. It will not prejudice the issue at all. I should take the Chair at the first meeting of the Committee and I shall probably express no views at all about it. All the way through, what I am trying to do with my staff is to be of service in working the mechanism. I do not like to take the driver's seat myself. I will give you an example. The first thing I did yesterday before broadcasting was to hand round a paper to the leaders which simply showed them the necessary decisions which will have to be taken on points of detail in regard to partition and the subjects which I suggested they should take up. This is in relation to what I may call the administrative consequences of partition, although partition is not yet decided upon. If there is no partition the problem is comparatively simple. I am really trying to get ahead and be of the best possible service to you. I am only thinking out the problems. It is for you to say how you would like them to be solved and we can help you in the process. I want to assure you that there are two reasons why I sincerely want the Indians themselves to settle this problem. The first is that it is your own problem and secondly there is absolutely no desire on my part to interfere in any way with the most suitable method that Indians themselves may adopt for this purpose.

26. Q. Is it not likely that the composition of the committee will be more or less communal in its nature and one community might try to dominate the other ?

A. I do not expect complete agreement but on the other hand, how do you expect me to work the plan ? The main service that a Chairman can give is to sum up the various points, suggesting accommodations and compromises, to shuffle them about, smooth down ruffled feelings and eventually evolve an answer, but the answer that comes out must be the answer that you desire. After all, in this country, if it is not possible for you to settle your own problems without my having to give a judgment every time, it is a terrible reflection on your own country, which I do not share.

27. Q. May I ask if the services of some experts will be available for such purposes. Will you get them from His Majesty's Government on loan or otherwise ?

A. I have been promised the services of two constitutional experts who will be on loan from England. Over and above that, we have a number of experts in this country. I have a number of high class constitutional experts on my own staff who have given me very reliable help all through.

28. Q. May I know whether any administrative arrangements are being set in motion to give effect to the provisional boundaries indicated in the Appendix ?

A. I hope that this boundary will be solely for the purposes of the vote. We have left ourselves the option to use it for any other purpose. We should not mislead people in any particular part of the Province into believing that they are going to come on one side or the other of the partition line. It is all a question of speed. If we had years and years at our disposal, we could go on in a leisurely way but now speed is of such importance that we should like to go ahead as fast as we can.

29. Q. Earlier you said that in the matter of division of the Punjab, it will be done on the population basis but you also say that other factors will be taken into consideration ?

A. What I said was that we could not expect the present Government in England to make a statement now that they are going to partition any Province on the basis of private property! All I said was that that was a matter for the Indians themselves to decide. Every time you ask me whether I am going to decide a question for you I say " No ". If you put the same question in a second and third way, I still say my answer is " No ". I am quite sincere when I say that you have got to make up your own mind.

30. The question is how to keep the integrity of the Sikh community intact. What is the provision that you have made in this plan to keep the integrity of the Sikh people intact ?

A. I must point out that the people who asked for the partition were the Sikhs. The Congress took up their request and framed the Resolution in the form they wanted. They wanted the Punjab to be divided into predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim areas. I have done exactly what the Sikhs requested me to do through the Congress. The request came to me as a tremendous shock, as I like the Sikhs, I am fond of them and I wish them well. I started thinking out a formula to help them, but I am not a magician. I am an ordinary human being. I believe that it is the Indians who have got to find out a solution. You cannot expect the British to solve all your problems. I can only help you to arrive at the correct solution. A lot can be done by a Chairman but he cannot impose a decision on any one. It is up to the Sikhs who are represented on the Committee to take up the case. It is not I who am responsible for asking for partition.

31. d- If the matter of partition is to be settled merely on the basis of population and not on the basis of property, and the Sikhs are uprooted from the place where they have got property, will they not become paupers ?

A. Look, I want to make it absolutely clear. If that was what you wanted,¹ why did you not put your resolution in that form ? Why did you not make the request that you wanted it to be divided

¹ A Sikh had asked this question.

into Muslim and non-Muslim property areas. You have got all that you asked for, but I want to help you.

32. Q. Is it the Congress plan ?

A. Yes, it is the Congress plan. Surely, you have already read the Congress resolution.

33. Q. The Congress did not want the partition of India ?

A. The Congress resolution on the Punjab suggested that it should be divided according to the predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim areas.

34. Q. Paragraph 10. Do I take it that authorities are semi-conscious of the fact that a great deal of our trouble is due to the separate electorates which were imposed on this country ? 10

A. I do not think that has anything to do with the plan that we are now discussing. I will leave it for somebody else to reply to.

35. Q. How is it that in the case of Bengal and the Punjab the legislatures have been asked to decide which Constituent Assembly they should join, but a different procedure has been proposed in the case of the North-West Frontier Province where the electors will have to decide the issue ? 11

A. The reason for that is contained in Paragraph 11 which has been appropriately worded and in addition to that, please remember that in the case of the North-West Frontier Province there is the heaviest weightage for the minority community which is not to be found in any other Province of India. So much so, that out of fifty seats, twelve have been given to the minorities, although they represent only something like five per cent. In fact, you have got a weightage four times greater than the number of minorities. That is one reason. The other reason is that it is a perfectly straight-forward referendum on this particular question.

36. Q. The Congress has already said that they would not like to coerce any area that might like to decide otherwise than to join the Constituent Assembly. Your Excellency knows that in the case of the North-West Frontier Province the party had on the last occasion at the time of the elections tried to clarify the position that they would like to form an independent Pathan State. I do not say that it is official, but it is very much in the picture. If the idea of self-determination was there, why was it thought necessary that a third alternative for a referendum should be adopted. Why do you want to know the point of view of the people and not of the Legislature ?

A. The question of whether a Province could decide her independence was not raised specifically in the case of the North-West Frontier Province when the plan was drawn up. It was raised as a matter of general principle and it was turned down as a matter of general principle by the leaders of both the parties. What you are suggesting is that they, a Province of three million people, want to

stand on their own. I do not know how you expect them to stand on their own. I repeat I do not want to make these rules; I am only trying to interpret the feelings and wishes of the leaders.

37. Q. You did consult the views of both the parties and they unanimously turned it down ?

A. What I said was that we discussed the principle whether any Province should be allowed to vote for independence or whether they should be obliged to vote for one or other of the two Constituent Assemblies. That is what I said.

38. Q. The Frontier Province probably did not know all that. As soon as they came to know that there was going to be a Sovereign Bengal, they thought that a Sovereign Pathan State will also come into being afterwards.

A. I do not think I am divulging any secret when I say that the parties in Bengal were considering that they should join together to form an independent Bengal. In reply to a telegram from the Governor I said that I would agree to anything which the High Command or the Leaders or Parties in Delhi would agree to. But I must work through a particular system. It will be quite wrong for me to go over the heads of the people in India. I am not trying to settle the future of India, and the Congress leaders have decided not to permit " independence ".

39. Q. The Congress Party are supporting the demand of the Frontier people for a Sovereign State. You want both the parties to agree. Is it not enough that the demand of the Frontier people should be put by one party and it should be considered by the rest of the Government ?

A. How is it possible for me to agree to each request of one party ? In that case, where is the basis of agreement ?

40. Q. To avoid the organisation which you are setting up of semi-autonomous units in the two States of Hindustan and Pakistan, may I point out the example of Russia where they used to have a sort of republic ?

A. That question is a question which can only be settled by the Constituent Assemblies of the two States concerned. They have got every freedom to do what they like.

41. Q. May I ask whether the Frontier people are now free to select the issue on which they will vote in the referendum ?

A. Yes; it is very simple.

42. Q. Can they decide whether they wish to remain independent or whether they wish to join some Constituent Assembly ?

A. If the Frontier were to vote for independence and if they can get the two High Commands to agree, I will, of course, agree. If, on the other hand, they want to join one of the two Constituent Assemblies, then we stick to what was originally agreed to.

43- Q- Is not this inconsistent with the principle of provincial autonomy ?

A. Let us get it absolutely clearly. It is for them to say whether they want United India, but other people may want to break it into small parts.

44. Q. The referendum will be held under the aegis of the Governor-General and in consultation with the Provincial Governor. Does the Provincial Governor mean the Governor in consultation with the Ministry or the Governor alone ?

A. It means that I am going to send up officers whom I am going to select myself. I am proposing to select British officers in the Indian Army who speak the language and who never had anything to do with politics; so far as I know, they have no interest in politics. I am trying to get such impartial men to go out to these places to assure a completely impartial referendum.

45. If the result of the referendum in the North-West Frontier Province goes against the Muslim League and the League consequently tries to withdraw its acceptance, then may I know whether Your Excellency would advise the British Government to force this Plan, or alter the same to suit the sweet-will of the Muslim League ?

A. The question as far as I can make out is this: If the referendum in the North-West Frontier Province goes in favour of the Congress instead of the Muslim League, will I agree to the Muslim League then going back on this Plan. The answer is that the referendum in the Frontier Province is a matter of six to eight weeks hence. Long before the referendum in the North-West Frontier Province is finished, the Muslim League will have taken its decision.

46. £). In Paragraph 12 of the Statement it is stated:

" British Baluchistan has elected a member, but he has not taken his seat in the existing Constituent Assembly. In view of its geographical situation, this Province will also be given an opportunity to reconsider its position and to choose which of the alternatives in Paragraph 4 above to adopt."

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Does British Baluchistan mean British-administered Baluchistan ? British Baluchistan proper means Sibi District and Pishin District.

*Mr. V.P. Menon:*¹ So far as those two areas are concerned, they are not included in the British Baluchistan District. They are tribal areas.

47. Q. You say British Baluchistan has elected one member for the Constituent Assembly, but that member was elected by reference to the votes of about seven to eight people.

A. We will devise a method to ascertain exactly the opinion of the people in the same area as we have done under the Cabinet Mission Plan.

¹ Secretary of the States Ministry and late Reforms Commissioner to the Viceroy.

48. Q. My point is this: You want to refer to the people of British Baluchistan now. Will it be to the people of the British Baluchistan proper or the people who elected this one representative ?

A. I am afraid I cannot follow your question at all.

49. Q. Three members out of the present members of the existing Constituent Assembly are to be taken out if Sylhet votes for partition.

A. The ones from Sylhet will be taken out.

50. Q. The representatives from Sylhet will be taken out ?

A. Yes, they will go to the other Assembly.

51. (L Are you going to dissolve the whole contingent from Assam and have new elections for both the Assemblies ? How is it to be determined ?

Mr. Menon: We have still to determine the procedure yet: we have not thought about it so far.

52. Q. Paragraph 16 reads:

" Negotiations will have to be initiated as soon as possible on the administrative consequences of any partition that may have been decided upon (a) between the representatives of the respective successor authorities. . . ."

If they are to be effective, they must be in charge of Defence, Finance and Communications, and so it is putting the cart before the horse.

A. No, it is not so. I cannot give any pronouncement on this because I shall have to consult the leaders of the Interim Government but obviously we have got to set up very soon committees of the Cabinet responsible for future arrangements. Something on those lines has to be worked out, but we have yet to discuss the details. They will begin to negotiate, but they will not reach final agreement until power has been transferred to them and they are completely responsible. Once more it is a question of speed: it is a question of going ahead.

53. Q. Paragraph 16 (c) reads:

" In the case of Provinces that may be partitioned, as to the administration of all provincial subjects such as the division of assets and liabilities, the police and other services, the High Courts, provincial institutions, etc."

What does " etc. ", signify ?

Mr. Menon: We have not exhaustively categorised the matters which have to be considered so we have left " etc." to be understood in that sense.

54. Q. Will " negotiations on the administrative consequences " also include immediate negotiations with reference to Indian States.

A. The Indian States will be given every facility to negotiate as quickly as they desire. In my opinion, for what it is worth, it will

have to be done on the interim basis of a standstill agreement. Let me give you very simple example in history.

The last partition of this sort occurred in Ireland. After the division between Northern and Southern Ireland was complete, you will be surprised to hear that the Irish had not finished making all their agreements. Among others, there was no agreement over the railways. But do you think one train stopped on that account? They ran on. The General Managers rang each other up and said they would go on the basis of a standstill agreement. Gradually agreements were built up. The world is really a sensible place once you get the anger out of it and unless I have a completely wrong estimate of the Indian character, India will be sensible too.

55. If communal strifes in Provinces do not subside in spite of His Majesty's Government's announcement of their plan and Your Excellency's appeal to the people of India, will Your Excellency allow the Centre to intervene for quelling the disturbances?

A. I have already discussed this. With the authority of the Home Member I am in a position to tell you that there has been a unanimous decision in the Cabinet that we shall not allow any more violence or strife. Sardar Baldev Singh broadcast as Defence Member on that point yesterday. Now we know the bad spots, and there the troops are being sent. The Centre has therefore already intervened in the most effective way possible by passing a unanimous decision in the Interim Government not to tolerate any more violence.

56. Q. Do you mean to say that you have been allowing the disturbances?

A. I did not start the disturbances and I do not want them to go on. But till now the distribution of the armed forces has been on a narrow margin throughout India. At this moment we know the places where disturbances are likely to occur and so we are taking the risk of denuding other parts of India of their armed forces to concentrate them in various particular areas. That is really the answer. We are not voluntarily allowing this to go on.

57. Q. Arising out of Paragraph 18 of the White Paper which represents the decisions of His Majesty's Government, are the decisions or any one of them subject to revision on the fundamental issue regarding the division of India? If so, on what conditions?

A. The whole of this paper is designed to allow for the way in which the people of India decide—whether there is to be partition or a union. If there is to be a union, very little of this procedure, except Paragraph 20 applies. But we have allowed for a union to take place at any time. Therefore your answer is that this White Paper legally provides for a union at any stage that the Indians are likely to come together. Paragraph 20 legally provides for that contingency also. That is the one *ve* transfer of power.

58. Q. The political unity of India was ensured by paramountcy. So far as economic integrity was concerned, there are hundreds of agreements between British India and Indian States. And I take it when paramountcy goes, the Indian States will be free and independent to join any one Constituent Assembly. There are hundreds of agreements between British India and Indian States regarding the railways, postal services, coinage, etc., and they ensure the economic integrity of India. Are those agreements to remain intact in respect of paramountcy's dissolution or are they to be dissolved when paramountcy dissolves itself?

A. So far as I know those agreements will in any case be subject to a standstill basis while this is being discussed. I am not a lawyer and I am afraid I do not know the legal terms in which those contracts were drawn up. But if legal authority declares that those contracts are drawn up in terms which make them valid after the handing back of paramountcy, of course they will be in force. If someone says they are invalid then they can continue on a standstill basis until fresh agreements are negotiated.

59. Your Excellency in reply to my question said in regard to the Frontier you could not conceive of a few million people trying to separate into an independent State. In Paragraph 18 the Indian States, at least some of them, have perhaps an area of fifty square miles and they will become independent overnight. Has Your Excellency also foreseen this, where we could prevent Balkanisation of a very bad form in those areas which become independent overnight, when in fact these areas are much less than the areas on the Frontier where you will not allow a referendum on the independence issue?

A. That was an expression of opinion. So far as I am concerned, the Frontier can be independent as soon as the leaders of the two parties say so.

60. Q. Has Your Excellency seen to it that there is no Balkanisation, which will be of the worst form if the Indian States as such become independent without any machinery whereby they can co-ordinate their allegiance to one section or the other?

A. The answer is two-fold. In the first place the decision about the States was taken a year before I came out. There is a vast difference between the legal status of British India and the Indian States. British India is territory over which His Majesty's Government has the complete right to negotiate on behalf of all, and the principle there is to do exactly what the leaders of the communities in those territories want. The Indian States have never been British territory. They have been independent States in Treaty relations with the British. Are you suggesting that we, as our last act, should tear up those Treaties and say we are going to compel them to join this or that new Constituent Assembly? And how are we going to

enforce it? I may say in all sincerity we can only do what it is legally possible to do. The Indian States must be perfectly aware where their interests lie. I, as Crown Representative, during the few months when I am exercising paramountcy on behalf of the King will do everything in my power to facilitate agreement and bring them together or negotiate standstill agreements.

I am going to do what I can. I cannot go back on a pledge given and based on treaties entered into many years ago.

61. Q. If Your Excellency would refer to the 1935 Act, you will appreciate my question whether under that Act a place could not be found for the Indian States legally to come in. I agree that later on they might become independent or certain other arrangements can be arrived at. But during the period in which British India will be under the Act of 1935 cannot a place be found for the States under the Act?

Mr. Menon: Under the 1935 Act, the Government of India negotiated with the States whether they would come in under a particular group of States. Under the revised Act what is the procedure to be adopted is a matter for decision between His Excellency and the British Indian leaders but the point which you are mentioning will certainly be borne in mind.

62. Q. The principle of non-interference in the affairs of States will mean that it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to leave many types of governments in India when they quit. For example there may be Osmania raj in one place, Dogra raj in another, democracy in a third and autocracy in a fourth and so on and so forth.

A. So far as I am aware the Government of the Indian States has been progressing and has progressed more rapidly during the last year than at any other time in their history. I am not quite clear whether you suggest that in the last two or three months of my stay here I should use my paramountcy to impose what must be the will of the British very heavily on the States. I do not think it would be right. Even if in one or two instances it might be right, I do not think myself that it is desirable. I really think that we must stand by the Cabinet Mission's statement of 12 May which I think if you read carefully you will find has not given me the right to do what you suggest.

63. Q. It keeps us absolutely in the dark. We do not know on what basis the negotiations between the Princes and His Majesty's Government are to be carried on. The people are not to be consulted nor any publication is to be made of what transpires at all.

A. There is going to be no negotiation between His Majesty's Government and the States. When we go, we hand back paramountcy, and in the process we offer our services in helping the

princes to make the necessary contacts with the Government of India and with the constituent assemblies to come to an agreement. But we are not actually going to enter into any fresh agreements. We are getting out of all our commitments. In this process of quitting power in India we must try and quit in as legal and correct a manner as possible and that is the position. I would put it to you and it is my belief that I have great faith in the future of the whole of India. I believe that ultimately commonsense will prevail. That is what I feel. This is my sincere belief, for I do not think that there is " no hope ".

64. Q. When you withdraw paramountcy, would you regard sovereignty as thereafter being vested with the princes or the people of the States, because there is the British Labour Party in power ?

A. It is no question of parties in power. It is a question with whom the treaties were made. This is a matter for lawyers. I must know exactly what the legal position is. Please remember that treaties if they are going to be honoured must be honoured in the letter.

65. Qj May I draw your attention to the Raja of Sarawak's example where he claimed to have the popular support and yet he was dethroned ? Are you following two different principles in this instance ?

A. Exactly the opposite is the case. He was not dethroned. He claimed that he had popular support to dethrone himself. In other words he meant " I have got the support of the people to take such action as I believe to be in their interests ". Not only did he consult the legislative machinery, which was pretty primitive, but members of Parliament were sent out to decide whether the wishes of the people of Sarawak were that the Raja should abdicate in favour of a Governor and they decided that that was the wish of the people, and so he abdicated: he was not dethroned.

66. Q. Is it not a fact that His Majesty's Government brought out the Raja of Sarawak and refused to countenance his reinstallation ?

A. Most emphatically not. I personally took him back and put him on his throne.

67. Qj (In Hindustani) regarding Berar.

A. (*The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*) Berar is at present a part of British India.

68. Q. Is it the Congress view or the view of His Majesty's Government ?

A. (*The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*) It is a fact.

69. Q. In view of the fact that speed is the very essence of the plan how are the princes assisted to come to a favourable decision in favour of joining one or the other Constituent Assembly ?

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A. I had arranged to see the representatives of the princes five hours after the decision had been arrived at with the leaders, at which I told them what the plan was and I offered my services and the services of the Political Department to speed up all the negotiations that can be taken in hand. Then I put it into their heads that they should work on a basis of standstill agreements. I do not think much more is possible in a few hours.

70. Q. You are aware that some of the States have joined the Constituent Assembly. What will be their position after this statement of His Majesty's Government, will they be free to join either Constituent Assembly, will they be allowed to do so?

A. The States are at liberty to send their duly qualified representatives to the existing Constituent Assembly or if they so desire to the other Constituent Assembly if formed. If they are already in the existing Constituent Assembly they have come into it to take part in the work of framing the constitution. In passing I would refer to the *Hindustan Times* report to-day on the question whether the Legislative Assembly or the Constituent Assembly would be the body to deal with this matter. In my opinion it can only be the Constituent Assembly. The Legislative Assembly contains European Members whereas the position will not be so in the Constituent Assemblies. The weightage will be in exact proportion to the populations of the territories which form the two States. It automatically provides the same amount of representation for such States as join the Constituent Assemblies. So, I assume that the two Constituent Assemblies will deal with this—I say I assume **because** these things have still got to be considered.

71. Q. Will the representatives of the States participate in legislation?

A. If they so wish. When the Constituent Assembly functions as a legislative body the States' representatives will certainly legislate because they will by that time have made their decision about coming in.

72. Q. Do you think that your advice can be so freely taken? Is there no stronger factor as for instance geographical proximity? If Kashmir wants to join the Hindustan Constituent Assembly, it cannot do so; similarly, if Hyderabad wants to join Pakistan Constituent Assembly it cannot do it.

A. I did not say it cannot do it. I said they are absolutely free to choose. But once more I must say it is a matter for the whole of the Indian authorities to tackle. If they feel that a particular State is better with a certain Constituent Assembly in spite of geographical disadvantages it is for them to decide. I said that normally geographical situation and communal interests and so forth will be the factors to be considered. I am not trying to prejudge.

73. Q. What about paths for such long distances—corridors—from one place to another?

A. Which paragraph are you referring to?

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: We come to paragraph 19.

74. Q. What will be your attitude till June 1948 if the people in certain States like Hyderabad do not like the autocratic rule of the Princes?

A. The date of the transfer of power is going to be much earlier, this year, somewhere round about by August. The date you mean is in this year 1947 and not June 1948. The British including this chap here (*H. E. pointed to himself*) may have left by the end of 1947. We may have booked our berths and be gone.

75. Q. Will paramountcy cease with the complete withdrawal of the British?

A. Paramountcy will recede not later than the day on which Dominion Status is given to the two States. Every Resident and Political Agent will be removed.

76. Q. Will you kindly let us know what is proposed to be done about the Political Department's records?

A. I think the records are of considerable significance and interest. I will have to consult the States and the leaders; I cannot take a unilateral decision. I think it is up to the Department concerned.

77. Q. May I ask whether when you mentioned "this chap here" you meant that British troops also will be withdrawn?

A. So far as I am concerned, the answer to that is "yes".

78. Q. How long will "His Excellency" stay as His Excellency and thereafter as Governor-General?

A. That is a most embarrassing question; I think the transfer could be about the 15th of August.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Let us come to paragraph 20.

79. Q. In view of the decision to leave and to partition India I feel that it is absolutely essential that on the question of Dominion Status there should be a declaration which is more specific than is contained in paragraph 20. In fact paragraph 20 is perhaps the only disappointing paragraph in the plan. It is possible that it is a matter of drafting. It is absolutely essential that it should be made quite clear that in regard to Dominion Status you make no overtures to or accept no overtures from fragments of India.

A. If you people meet together and ask for one single Dominion Status, that can be done. But if you insist on two States, what are we going to do? I do not quite follow. If there is one India, then we can transfer power to one India. If there are two parts, then we must transfer power to two parts. What else can we do?

80. Q. I am sorry I did not make myself clear. There is a great potential for mischief in regard to Dominion Status, once you are

prepared to deal with different parts of India in regard to the final choice about membership of the Commonwealth.

A. What you mean is that as a result of paragraph 20, one part comes in and the other does not.

81. Q. You should reject an offer on the part of any single individual State to become a Dominion. You should not also make any efforts to induce any separate State of India to come into the Commonwealth. You should insist on India as a whole coming to a decision on the question of membership of the Commonwealth or not.

A. That is exactly the point. We won't allow any separate part of India to come into the Commonwealth. But if the whole of India decides to break into two independent States, they could both come in. Before this paragraph was framed I had most careful talks with the Leaders of Parties. It was only then that I discovered that this particular solution was one that commended itself as a fair and just one—the only solution for speedy transfer of power which both parties desired. I must say that I do honestly think that we have done everything in our power to meet the very point you have mentioned.

82. Q. It is said here that the respective Constituent Assemblies have the right ultimately to elect to remain within the British Commonwealth or not. I want to point out that there is mischief in that provision?

A. I absolutely disagree. The British Commonwealth of Nations is a completely free association of peoples. Each State is completely independent. As far as I know, they decide their own future. There is absolutely no sort of power that I know of to force them to stay in if they want to go out. The whole essence of independence is that you must have complete freedom to do what you like. I would again repeat that the British Commonwealth of Nations is a free association of different nations and the British Government have no control over them. The only connecting link is the King. I honestly think that we have done all we can to transfer power and to give each of the Indian States the greatest possible measure of freedom.

83. Q. May I know whether the Congress leaders and the League leaders have agreed, as was pointed out by Mr. Devadas Gandhi in the particular sentence which he quoted*, that the two States can remain members of the British Commonwealth, because Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru very recently made it emphatically clear that they would not like any foreign power to have bases in any part of India? I would like to know whether that particular paragraph in this statement has the approval of the party leaders?

A. It is good that you have put that question. It is known all over the world that so far as the British Commonwealth of Nations

* Question 82.

is concerned you cannot compel any part to remain inside it, if it wants to go out.

84. Q. Has this position been accepted by the party leaders?

A. I took the responsibility of writing this out and we have been trying to get it into a form which will be most acceptable to all concerned. The whole essence of the proposal is to transfer power completely.

85. Q. Nobody objects to interim Dominion Status. Suppose there are two Constituent Assemblies. It is open to one of them to declare itself absolutely independent and the other to declare itself a Dominion? That is the point that Mr. Devadas Gandhi made.

A. If you grant independence and at the same time try to impose restrictions, the independence becomes a mockery.

86. Q. It is quite possible that so far as the interim period is concerned, you have the support of the three groups of leaders. The point I want to put to Your Excellency is this. You know the history of the last few years. The two major parties have been asking for complete independence knowing full well all the implications of the Statute of Westminster. Since you are proceeding with the consent of the parties throughout, what will happen if one party is not a consenting party to what the other party is doing.

A. I am simply amazed at these questions. If you are sincere in your demand for independence, it means that you have got perfect freedom to do what you like. There is no question of imposing any decision on you. There is no question of one party imposing its will on the other.

87. Q. I am afraid we are still at cross purposes on this particular point. If by raising this question we have caused embarrassment to Your Excellency, I sincerely apologise for it because I have had reason to deduce that His Majesty's Government's opinion on this question and perhaps your opinion also has been exactly in accordance with what I myself suggested a few minutes ago. We cannot envisage the independence which we have not yet got. We are looking forward to having it in June 1948. I have at heart the fair name of Great Britain and that of the Labour Party and yourself. If you allow the Dominion Status to become a bone of contention to the rival parties, you are going to be charged with some kind of conspiracy behind it. Therefore, so far as the Dominion Status is concerned, we shall think of it when all sections of India want it. If to-morrow, we come and say that we must be admitted into the Commonwealth of Nations, nobody shall say "no" to it. If you demand that India should have one voice and not two voices regarding the membership of the Commonwealth of Nations, you will surely be furthering your own aim.

A. I do not think you have yourself understood what the Common-

wealth of Nations is. It is not run by His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government represents only one Government and not the Commonwealth of Nations. Before this paragraph could go through, the Dominion Governments had to be consulted. I can assure you there is no sinister motive about. Living as neighbours alongside each other, the two Dominions will have a hundred and one problems that will arise in the course of the partition. If they will feel then that the time has come when one or both should leave the Commonwealth of Nations, they will presumably consult each other. I think it is a sort of a hang-over over-stressing what the British Government in London have done. I myself was surprised how little Mr. Attlee had to do with this. Besides, you are attempting to give to the British Government a power which does not exist there at all. I honestly think that complete freedom remains with you, and I am quite certain that the present Government is not trying to do something which is sinister and I hope you will agree with this.

88. Q. Will the Governor-General be appointed on the advice of the Dominion Governments? If so, is there any bar against there being separate Governors-General for the two States?

A. The moment any State acquires Dominion Status, it chooses its own Governor-General. That Governor-General is chosen by the Prime Minister of the Government or the Dominion concerned. He submits his name to the King, who being a constitutional monarch, may discuss it but finally acts on the advice of the Government concerned. We have many examples on that. It is complete and absolute freedom to do exactly what you like.

There is one more point which I was asked and which I have not yet answered. I was asked whether His Majesty's Government had made no provision for the protection of the minorities, because they are not referred to in this plan. The position about minorities is that since the desire of the British to quit power is now going to be effected quickly, there is no chance for the British to afford protection to the minorities. But I should like to add that on the question of the minorities I have talked to the principal leaders and I am absolutely certain that so long as power rests with them to look after the interests of the minorities they will use it as a matter of conscience, honour and fair play. I have also told them I shall be only too happy if I can help them in any way. I have told the leaders of the minorities that they can see me while I am here and I will do my best to help them. I have got great faith in the future of India and that faith remains. I do believe that the minorities are going to have fair play and a decent chance in the country.

89. Q. May I ask whether each Dominion will have full responsibility for its own defences?

A. Basically, each State, when it gets its independence, is wholly and solely responsible for its own defence. I must tell you that the process of partition of forces, if it is to be done in a way that will not cause the collapse of the morale and the disintegration of the army, must be done in an orderly and well-disciplined manner. When the partition has taken place, the States are absolutely at liberty to get together and have a combined plan for the defence of India or to make their own separate plans. From all the questions that have been asked, there is one thing which I sincerely believe is not yet clear to the people. Somehow people seem to have some doubts about this word " Dominion Status ". It is absolute independence in every possible way, with the sole exception that the Member States of Commonwealth are linked together voluntarily. In effect they look for support from each other and they are pulled together, by mutual trust and in due course affection.

Sir Usha Nath Sen : Your Excellency, I am not going to ask any question. My task is a little more pleasant, and that is to thank you for the courtesy and consideration which you have shown to the representatives of the Press by coming here this morning and giving us elaborate interpretations on some of the points in regard to which there was doubt in the minds of some of the correspondents. This is the second time in our memory that the Viceroy and Governor-General has held a Press Conference to inaugurate reforms as far as India is concerned. It was your distinguished predecessor, Lord Linlithgow, who held a Press Conference in Simla and explained to us the provisions and implications of the Government of India Act of 1935. Some of us were there and we asked many questions and some of our questions were as inconvenient as they were to-day. Your Excellency has taken us a stage further by telling us what the new policy of His Majesty's Government is going to be. Judging from the expressions of opinion given by some of our eminent leaders last night on the All-India Radio, and judging from the expressions used in the debate in Parliament yesterday, particularly by the great Leader of the Opposition, who is not too friendly to India, it leads us to the conclusion that the event which concludes to-day is one of personal triumph for you. We believe that ever since you came to this country you did nothing else than to give a new re-orientation to His Majesty's Government's policy in this country with regard to constitutional reforms. Some of us have felt, at least I have felt, that the way you have handled this question and the skill which you have exhibited, is reminiscent of the strategy of South-East Asia. There were many difficulties, there were many hurdles, but you have handled them like a brilliant Commander. Whatever may be the ultimate result, it is a great achievement not only for yourself but may I add also for your colleagues in the

Cabinet who have helped you right through without any mental reservations.

Sir, we thank you very heartily for showing this courtesy to the Press which we deeply value and deeply appreciate.

H.E.: Thank you very much for the kind words which you have used about me. I hope you will not think from the way in which I have been answering your questions that they were not very valuable. I have valued every single question that has been put. So far as I am concerned, I have absolutely nothing to hide. I do not think that any of you really thinks that any single paragraph in this plan has any ulterior significance whatsoever. It has been a sincere attempt to find a solution which will be as acceptable as possible among the peoples who would use this plan. The way this Press Conference has proceeded has encouraged me very much, because after clearing misunderstandings on some points, I think there is not really a single question which has not been helpful.

I would like to conclude with one more word. I am really sincere in my desire to help the Sikhs; I really believe that the leaders of both the major parties are equally sincere and intend to do what they can to help them. In fact I think there will be a revolution in feelings; whereas before there was mistrust and strife, I think we are going to see the leaders come together in a friendly spirit of co-operation.

One word more. In putting out your news and your leading articles you will all aim at one thing—peaceful, quick and speedy settlement, which all of us so sincerely desire.

Speech made by the American Ambassador, His Excellency Dr. Henry F. Grady, on the occasion of the presentation of his credentials at New Delhi

i JULY 1947

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NEARLY six years ago a representative of my Government presented credentials in this hall and thus established a new and more direct relationship between India and the United States. This ceremony to-day is evidence that the relationship thus established has prospered.

During my previous visits here, I became profoundly impressed with the great personalities, the intellectual capacities, the cultural achievements and the warm hearts of the people. My appointment was, accordingly, welcomed by me, not only as a signal honour, but with a keen sense of satisfaction at the opportunity thus afforded of renewing my contact with persons who have so much to contribute to the peaceful progress of mankind.

At the same time, Your Excellency, I am deeply conscious of the great responsibility of my mission which is to further develop and nourish cordial relations between freedom-loving peoples on opposite sides of the earth. In my endeavours to achieve this objective, I earnestly solicit and confidently expect to receive that whole-hearted co-operation so necessary to the maintenance of friendly relations and mutual effort in development of a peaceful world.

Reply to His Excellency Dr. Henry F. Grady on presentation of his credentials as United States Ambassador

i JULY 1947

IT is with very great pleasure that I welcome you on behalf of His Majesty and the Government of India, as the first Ambassador of the United States of America to India.

You have referred to the establishment, six years ago, of direct relations between the United States and India; your remark that the relationship then established has prospered is both felicitous and true.

Your Excellency is an old friend of India and many remember with pleasure your visit as the Personal Representative of the late President.

President Roosevelt was a statesman whose renown will surely grow as the years pass, and I am very proud to have had the privilege of claiming his friendship.

In the South-East Asia Command I had the privilege of having a great number of Americans, principally Engineers and Airmen, associated with the British and Indian forces.

The good relationship which existed between our fighting forces then is, I feel, a happy augury for continued good relations in time of peace.

I am confident that in the days ahead our countries will continue to work together with all members of the United Nations for the firm establishment of peace and happiness throughout the world.

In extending to you once more a cordial welcome I would assure you of the fullest co-operation of all those with whom your work will bring you into touch.

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NOTE.—After the first two Ambassadors had presented their credentials, the Viceroy decided not to accept any more addresses with the credentials, and thus no further replies to other Ambassadors were made.



Lord Mountbatten addressing the Rulers and Representatives of Indian States in the Chamber of Princes, 25th July, 1947.

Address to a Special full meeting of the Chamber of Princes

25 JULY 1947

(This speech was made extempore and without any notes. The version below was edited from transcripts of several shorthand versions.)

It is a great pleasure and a great privilege for me to address so many Rulers, Dewans and Representatives of the States of India in this historic Chamber of Princes. It is the first and the last occasion that I have the privilege of addressing you as Crown Representative.

I would like to begin by giving you a very brief history of the negotiations I have conducted since I have been out here and the line that I have taken up about the States.

There were two distinct problems that faced me. The first was how to transfer power to British India and the second, how to fit the Indian States into the picture in a manner which would be fair and just to all concerned.

I dealt first with the problem of British India, because you will realise that until that problem was solved it was quite useless to try to start on a solution of the problem of the States. So I addressed my mind to the former.

There had been universal acceptance among the States of the Cabinet Mission's Memorandum of 12 May and when the political parties accepted the Statement of 3 June¹ they fully realised and accepted that withdrawal of Paramountcy would enable the States to regain complete sovereignty. That gave me a starting point from which to try and deal fairly with the States.

But before I got down to dealing with the States there was one other thing that I clearly had to do. I had to address my-

¹ Reproduced on page 13.

self to the problem of the mechanics of partition—a plan against my personal desires. As you all know, it took three years to separate Burma from India, in spite of the fact (as I can testify, as also His Highness of Bundi and others who fought in Burma) that there are no roads running between India and Burma. Nevertheless, it took three years to arrange that partition. It took two years to separate the Province of Sind from Bombay. It took two years to separate the Province of Orissa from Bihar. Gentlemen, we decided that in less than two and a half months we shall have to go through the partitioning of one of the biggest countries in the world with 400 million inhabitants. There was a reason for the speed. I was quite certain that while the British overlordship remained no satisfactory conclusions could be reached psychologically between the parties. So once we got the two Governments set up and separated, they would be able to try and finish off the details in an atmosphere of goodwill.

Now, the Indian Independence Act releases the States from all their obligations to the Crown. The States will have complete freedom—technically and legally they become independent. Presently I will discuss the degree of independence which we ourselves feel is best in the interests of your own States. But there has grown up during the period of British administration, owing to the fact that the Crown Representative and the Viceroy are one and the same person, a system of co-ordinated administration on all matters of common concern which meant that the sub-continent of India acted as an economic entity. That link is now to be broken. If nothing can be put in its place, only chaos can result, and that chaos, I submit, will hurt the States first—the bigger the State the less the hurt and the longer it will take to feel it—but even the biggest of the States will feel the hurt just the same as any small State.

The first step was to set up some machinery by which it was possible to put the two future Governments of India—the Dominions of India and Pakistan—into direct touch with the States. So I conceived the scheme of setting up two States Departments within the future Governments. Please note

that these States Departments are not the successors of the Political Department. They have been set up simultaneously and side by side. While the Political Department exercised functions relating to Paramountcy on behalf of the Crown Representative, the States Departments are to take over those subjects gradually which have nothing to do with Paramountcy but which will be concerned with relations with neighbouring States and also provide the machinery to negotiate in such matters. In India the States Department is under the admirable guidance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel with my own Reforms Commissioner, Mr. V. P. Menon as Secretary. In Pakistan the Department is under Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar with Mr. Ikramullah as the Secretary.

It was necessary to set up two States Departments, one in each Government because the States are theoretically free to link their future with whichever Dominion they may care. But when I say that they are at liberty to link up with either of the Dominions, may I point out that there are certain geographical compulsions which cannot be evaded. Out of something like 565 States, the vast majority are irretrievably linked geographically with the Dominion of India. The problem therefore is of far greater magnitude with the Dominion of India than it is with Pakistan. In the case of Pakistan the States, although important are not so numerous, and Mr. Jinnah the future Governor-General of Pakistan is prepared to negotiate the case of each State separately and individually. But in the case of India where the overwhelming majority of the States are involved, clearly separate negotiation with each State is out of the question.

The first step that I took was to suggest that in the Bill before Parliament—the Indian Independence Act—a clause should be put in which would enable certain essential agreements to continue until renounced by either side. That was only done to ensure that there should be some continuity if in the short time available it was not possible to get the agreement through with every State representative. It does not replace the need for Standstill Agreements; it gives a very slight breathing space.

Now, I think it is no exaggeration to say that most Rulers and Dewans were apprehensive as to what their future would be when Paramountcy lapsed. At one time it appeared that unless they joined the Constituent Assembly and accepted the Constitution when it was framed, they would be outside the organisation and left in a position which, I submit, no State could view with equanimity—left out and having no satisfactory relations or contacts with either Dominion Government. You can imagine how relieved I was, and I am sure you will yourselves have been equally relieved, when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on taking over the States Department made, if I may say so, a most statesmanlike statement of what he considered were the essentials towards agreement between the States and the Dominion of India.

Let us turn for one moment to the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16 May 1946.¹ In this Plan the proposal was that the States should surrender to the Central Government three subjects—Defence, External Affairs and Communications. That was a Plan which, to the best of my belief, every Ruler and every State accepted as reasonable, fair and just. I talked with so many Rulers and everyone felt that Defence was a matter that a State could not conduct for itself. I am not talking of internal security but of defence against external aggression. I submit, that if you do not link up with one or the other of the Dominions, you may be cut off from any source of supplies of up-to-date arms or weapons.

" External Affairs " is inextricably linked up with Defence. " External Affairs " is something again which is outside the boundaries of India in which not even the greatest State can operate effectively. You can hardly want to go to the expense of having ambassadors or ministers or consuls in all foreign countries; surely you want to be able to use those of India or Pakistan. Once more I suggest that " External Affairs " is something that you have not dealt with since the formation of the East India Company. It would be difficult to operate and will also be a source of embarrassment for you to have to take it up and it can only be managed by those who

¹ Command Paper 6821.

manage the Defence of the country. I submit that if you take it up it will be a liability and not an asset.

The third subject is communications. " Communications " is really a means of maintaining the life-blood of the whole sub-continent. I imagine everybody agrees that the life of the country has got to go on. The continuity of communications is already provided for to a certain extent in the Indian Independence Act; and most of the representatives here have come to discuss it as Item 2 on the agenda.

Therefore I am sure you will agree that these three subjects have got to be handled for you for your convenience and advantage by a larger organisation. This seems so obvious that I was at a loss to understand why some Rulers were reluctant to accept the position. One explanation probably was that some of you were apprehensive that the Central Government would attempt to impose a financial liability on the States or encroach in other ways on their sovereignty. If I am right in this assumption, at any rate so far as some Princes are concerned, I think I can dispel their apprehensions and misgivings. The Draft Instrument of Accession which I have caused to be circulated as a basis for discussion (and not for publication) to the representatives of the States provides that the States accede to the appropriate Dominion on the three subjects only without any financial liability. Further, that Instrument contains an explicit provision that in no other matters has the Central Government any authority to encroach on the internal autonomy or the sovereignty of the States. This would, in my view, be a tremendous achievement for the States. But I must make it clear that I have still to persuade the Government of India to accept it. If all of you will co-operate with me and are ready to accede, I am confident that I can succeed in my efforts. Remember that the day of the transfer of power is very close at hand and, if you are prepared to come, you must come before 15 August. I have no doubt that this is in the best interests of the States, and every wise Ruler and wise Government would desire to link up with the great Dominion of India on a basis which leaves you great internal autonomy and which at the same

time gets rid of your worries and cares over External Affairs, Defence and Communications.

The whole country is passing through a critical period. I am not asking any State to make any intolerable sacrifice of either its internal autonomy or independence. My scheme leaves you with all the practical independence that you can possibly use and makes you free of all those subjects which you cannot possibly manage on your own. You cannot run away from the Dominion Government which is your neighbour any more than you can run away from the subjects for whose welfare you are responsible. Whatever may be your decision, I hope you feel that I have at least done my duty by the States.

NOTE.—At His Excellency's suggestion a Small Committee of Rulers, Dewans and Representatives of States was formed to discuss the Draft Instrument of Accession, Standstill Agreements and other matters.

Address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly at Karachi

14 AUGUST 1947

I HAVE a message from His Majesty the King to deliver to you to-day. This is His Majesty's message: " I send you my greetings and warmest wishes on this great occasion when the new Dominion of Pakistan is about to take its place in the British Commonwealth of Nations. In thus achieving your independence by agreement, you have set an example to all freedom-loving people throughout the world.

"I know that I can speak for all sections of opinion within the British Commonwealth when I say that their support will not fail you in upholding democratic principles. I am confident that the statesmanship and the spirit of co-operation which have led to the historic developments you are now celebrating will be the best guarantee of your future happiness and prosperity. Great responsibilities lie ahead of you and your leaders. May the blessings of the Almighty sustain you in all your future tasks. Be assured always of my sympathy and support as I watch your continuing efforts to advance the cause of humanity."

I am speaking to you to-day as your Viceroy. To-morrow the Government of the new Dominion of Pakistan will rest in your hands I shall be the Constitutional head of your neighbour the Dominion of India. The leaders of both Governments, however, have invited me to be the independent Chairman of the Joint Defence Council. This is an honour which I shall strive to merit.

To-morrow two new sovereign states will take their place in the Commonwealth: not young nations, but the heirs of old and proud civilisations: fully independent States, whose leaders are statesmen, already known and respected through-

out the world, whose poets and philosophers, scientists, and warriors have made their imperishable contribution to the service of mankind: not immature Governments or weak, but fit to carry their great share of responsibility for the peace and progress of the world.

The birth of Pakistan is an event in history. We, who are part of history, and are helping to make it, are not well-placed, even if we wished, to moralise on the event, to look back and survey the sequence of the past that led to it. History seems sometimes to move with the infinite slowness of a glacier and sometimes to rush forward in a torrent. Just now, in this part of the world our united efforts have melted the ice and moved some impediments in the stream, and we are carried onwards in the full flood. There is no time to look back. There is time only to look forward. I wish to pay tribute to the great men, your leaders, who helped to arrive at a peaceful solution for the transfer of power.

Here I would like to express my tribute to Mr. Jinnah. Our close personal contact, and the mutual trust and understanding that have grown out of it, are, I feel, the best of omens for future good relations. He has my sincere good wishes as your new Governor-General.

Moral courage is the truest attribute of greatness, and the men who have allowed the paramount need for agreement and a peaceful solution to take precedence over the hopes and claims they so strongly held and keenly felt, have shown moral courage in a high degree. I wish to acknowledge, too, the help of others; of the men who advised and assisted the process of negotiation; of the men who kept the machinery of administration running under great difficulties; of the men who have worked day and night to solve the innumerable problems of partition. All this has been achieved with toil and sweat. I wish I could say also without tears or blood, but terrible crimes have been committed. It is justifiable to reflect, however, that far more terrible things might have happened if the majority had not proved worthy of the high endeavour of their leaders, or had not listened to that great appeal which Mr. Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi to-

gether made, and which the respective future Governments reiterated in a statement made by the Partition Council.

May I remind you of the terms of that Statement? The two Governments declared that "it is their intention to safeguard the legitimate interests of all citizens, irrespective of religion, caste or sex. In the exercise of their normal civic rights all citizens will be regarded as equal and both Governments will assure to all people within their territories the exercise of liberties such as freedom of speech, the right to form associations, the right to worship in their own way and the protection of their language and culture.

"Both Governments further undertake that there shall be no discrimination against those who before 15 August have been political opponents."

The honouring of these words will mean nothing less than a charter of liberty for a fifth of the human race.

Some days ago I went to Lahore. From the reports I had received I expected to witness a scene of unparalleled devastation. Those of you who have not visited Lahore will be relieved to hear that the destruction is far less than I expected. It amounts to not more than eighteen houses per thousand of the whole municipal area. I do not say this in extenuation of the madness which caused even so much wanton damage. Rather I wish to pay my tribute, and ask you to do the same, to those who have saved Lahore from complete ruin: to the police and fire services, to the soldiers and the civil administration, and to all public-spirited citizens, who resisted or prevented the powers of destruction; also to the many who helped to tend and heal the tragic victims wherever these outrages have occurred. The ideal of public service which inspired these men and women, the spirit of co-operation and compromise which inspired your leaders, these are political and civic virtues that make a nation great, and preserve it in greatness. I pray that you may practise them always.

Now the time has come to bid you farewell—on behalf of His Majesty's Government, on behalf of my country, and on behalf of myself, also on behalf of my wife, whose thoughts and prayers will be so much with the women in Pakistan.

This is a parting between friends, who have learned to honour and respect one another, even in disagreement. It is not an absolute parting, I rejoice to think, not an end of comradeship. Many of my countrymen for generations have been born in this country, many lived their lives here; and many have died here. Some will remain for trade and commerce; and others in Government service and in the armed forces who count it an honour that they have been invited to serve you.

During the centuries that British and Indians have known one another, the British mode of life, customs, speech and thought have been profoundly influenced by those of India—more profoundly than has often been realised. May I remind you that, at the time when the East India Company received its Charter, nearly four centuries ago, your great Emperor Akbar was on the throne, whose reign was marked by perhaps as great a degree of political and religious tolerance, as has been known before or since. It was an example by which, I honestly believe, generations of our public men and administrators have been influenced. Akbar's tradition has not always been consistently followed, by British or Indians, but I pray, for the world's sake, that we will hold fast, in the years to come, to the principles that this great ruler taught us.

May Pakistan prosper always. May her citizens be blessed with health and happiness; may learning and the arts of peace flourish in her boundaries, and may she continue in friendship with her neighbours and with all the nations of the world.

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