CHAPTER TWO

THE WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS, 1933
The White Paper on the Round Table Conference discussions published on 17 March 1933, crystallized as precisely as possible the conclusions already reached in principle. They provided that the new constitution should be based on the three principles of all-India federation, provincial autonomy, responsibility and safeguards. Though it was a very fair reproduction of the results achieved, 'it was rather definitely drawn up in order to placate the volume of Conservative criticism which had been steadily growing ever since the conclusion of the first session of the Conference'. (1) The British Government indicated, with greater precision and in fuller detail, their proposals for an Indian Constitution and invited the Parliament to set up a Joint Select Committee to consider those proposals in consultation with Indian representatives, and to report upon them. (2)

CONSTITUTION OF A JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE

On a motion to appoint a Joint Select Committee to consider the White Paper proposals, the House of Commons and the House of Lords debated them for three days each and expressed their views before they consented to the constitution of a committee. The purpose of the White Paper was purely explanatory and no attempt was made to anticipate discussions in Parliament by advancing arguments in justification of the proposals. Though the reference of the

(1) A.B. Keith, A Constitutional History of India 1600-1935 (London, 1936) 308.

(2) Proposals For Indian Constitutional Reform, Cmd., 4268 (1933) 5.
proposals to a Joint Select Committee was not a matter of controversy, the Conservative extremists forced a full-dress debate in Parliament and finally the Government won a three-to-one victory. Still the Right-wing extremists expressed their determination to continue their fight.

Moving the resolution for the constitution of a Joint Parliamentary Select Committee, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare made it clear that there was ferment in the Asian continent and that India could not be isolated. The very objective of the report of the Statutory Commission was the demand for change and the proposals covering the whole field of the Government of India both at the Centre and in the Provinces were put forward in the White Paper. Hoare urged Parliament to take the Indian question out of the welter of party politics and said that only then would it be possible to safeguard both Indian and British interests. He declared that they had been forced to advance the proposals because of irreducible and stubborn facts. (3)

Clement Attlee, the leader of the Labour Opposition, complained that the whole idea of Dominion Status had disappeared even as the ultimate goal, and that there was no provision for progressive advance to full responsible government. He pleaded for the fixation of a date for the inauguration of reforms. The Liberals strongly supported the Government's India policy. (4)

Conservative M.P.s and the Proposals

The real decision remained with the 473 solid Conservative

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(3) Hansard, H.C., 276 (27 March 1933) cols. 695-712.
(4) Ibid., cols. 718-32.
members. They were divided as to the extent to which the reforms were justified and on that they were broadly divided into three sections. The first group which included the Leader of the Party and majority of his colleagues in the Cabinet adopted a liberal attitude, and they were ready to face the issue of Dominion Status and with foresight hoped to have India as a free and contented Dominion in the Commonwealth in future. The next largest group regarded themselves as realists and whole-heartedly supported the Government in its India policy but insisted upon effective safeguards. They thought that the destiny of awakened India must be entrusted to her hands and that the proposals represented the best possible policy. They considered federation to be a necessary condition to bring in the Princes who represented a strong conservative element with a long tradition of loyalty to the British Crown.

Edward Villiers* emphasized the fact that the great body of those who had had recent experience of India were convinced of the wisdom of making such an advance towards self-government as was outlined in the White Paper. (5) Earl Winterton, a Conservative supporter, said that Churchill had got oratorical guns of range and calibre, but that those guns were open to attack from the bombs of the record of their deeds. He made it clear that the difference between those members of the Conservative Party who were supporting the Government in its India policy and those who were supporters of Churchill and his group of extremists was one of degree and of kind, and not of aim. He thought that it was difficult to argue against

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* For a biographical sketch see Appendix I.

(5) Edward Villiers, 'Britain and India', *Home and Empire*, 4 (July 1933) 4.
self-government on racial grounds, inefficiency, inability, nepotism and corruption in administration. This group of Conservative supporters stood by the conclusion, however unpalatable, that the time of tutelage in India was over and that it was impossible to impose a government by force, however preferable that form of government might be to the one that it was desired to substitute for it. John Wardlaw-Milne was their chief spokesman from the back-benches. (6)

Another supporter said that the wise course for them was to accept the proposals. He conceded that there were dangers but thought that there were greater dangers in going back on what had been said and done and in giving much less than they had been led to expect. 'If we did this we should affront the self-respect of India. We should alienate all our friends; and that was a serious matter, for the only permanent cement of the British Raj in India was goodwill between British and Indian.' As it was inevitable that India must get self-government, he felt that it was better to lead India to the goal within the Empire. (7) The supporters of Government's India policy held that the White Paper proposals would be effective to improve the atmosphere and regain friendship and mutual trust. They felt that 'unrest and uncertainty were as potent obstacles to business and development, as friendship and confidence are helpful, the sooner the new proposals are enacted, the better for British industry and British interests'. The scheme reflected all the merits of the

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(6) Hansard, H.C., 276 (23 March 1933) cols. 1059-76. See also Round Table, 23 (September 1933) 548-54.

(7) Sir Charles Innes, The Wise Course is to accept the general scheme of the White Paper, No. 3378 (July 1933).
British tradition. (8)

Thus, the idea of responsibility at the Centre was accepted by the Government in the White Paper proposals, not because of India's demand or the Princes' condition to enter federation, but because they recognized that the 'irresponsible' Centre as advocated by the Simon Commission 'would be even more ineffectual than the present Government of India, and because it would be quite unsuitable as the centre of a federation composed of self-governing and autonomous provinces'. (9)

Right-wing Opposition to the White Paper

The small group of Right-wing opponents was led by that great orator, Winston Churchill. They were prepared to try provincial autonomy in one or two areas experimentally and wanted law and order to be under a nominated minister. Churchill wanted some provinces to be given power, as well as the right to withdraw if the working of the reforms was not found satisfactory to them — and he was never confident of their success. He said that the contented, orderly and loyal provincial units could be woven into the higher synthesis of a federal organization. His general view was that they would betray their trust to the millions if they handed over the country and thus risked economic and political disaster. (10) A member of Churchill's group, Lord Lloyd thought that the White Paper weakened the connection between India and Britain. 'There is no reality in

(8) A. Baille and others, India from a Back Bench (London, 1934) 33-4.


(10) Hansard, H.C., 276 (29 March 1933) cols. 1034-59.
self-government without the transference of law and order, and no
security for anybody if you make it.' Lloyd questioned how effective
responsibility could co-exist with effective safeguards. (11) The
handing over of law and order was an 'unwarrantable gambling with
the interest of every Indian citizen', said another critic. The
opponents said that the proposals 'were an abdication of authority',
'an abdication of Parliament' and that the 'federal system is a
mismner'. (12) Britain's just rights were not safeguarded and the
White Paper proposals were 'a complete surrender'. (13)
The proposals were coloured by circumstances of political
unrest. The proposed federal government would stand in quite
different relations to the States and the Provinces. By transferring
the control of the law courts and the police, 'the political pull'
would be introduced into the administration of justice. (14) Another

(11) Hansard, H.L., 87 (6 April 1933) cols. 398-412; and
C.F. Adam, Life of Lord Lloyd (London, 1948) 240. See also
Lord Lloyd, 'The Problem of Constitutional Reform in India',
International Affairs, 12 (September-October 1933) 593-616.

(12) Hansard, H.L., 87 (4 and 5 April 1933) cols. 275-82 and
326-59.

(13) Macmunn, India - The Real Issues - Faults of the White
Paper, India Defence League (IDL) Leaflet No. 9.

The founders of IDL were men inside the two Houses of Parliament,
opposed to Government's India policy. According to their announcement,
IDL came into existence 'as a result of a widespread apprehension . . .
that the present, proposals of the National Government for the future
of India will lead to disaster'. Viscount Sumner, President of the
Indian Empire Society became the President of IDL also. On his death
in 1934 he was succeeded by Lord Fitzalan. The members of the Indian
Empire Society were to be honourable members of the League.

For other details and for the members of the executive committee,
see Indian Empire Review, 2 (July and August 1933) 5-7 and 13.

(14) IDL Pamphlet No. 14. The White Paper With the Black
Border, 1-20.
Conservative critic, Patrick Donner*, said that federation "has no roots, no tradition, no history, and yet these "Reforms" are to be forced through a distrustful and hesitant Parliament with one-third of the Conservative Party estranged and in vehement protest . . .

Our duty remains to the teeming masses in India, to the hardy, patient, but inarticulate folk, the peasants who are the real India . . . The "ignominious" White Paper forgets our duty to them.' (15) This group of opponents was vocal in their opposition to any relaxation of control over the Indian Empire.

**Baldwin Supports the Proposals**

Stanley Baldwin, the leader of the Conservative Party told them that he was actuated by realism and adhered to the important principle of maintaining the Empire. He said that after mature reflection, he decided that if they went forward, they might save India to the Empire; if they did not, they would lose it. The 'Unchanging East' is changing and there is a new India with its dynamic thought. Baldwin categorically declared that 'whatever faults I may commit, I am not going to adopt a policy of missing the bus everytime'. He stressed that improvement in the situation in India and a practical cessation of civil disobedience could not have been achieved but for the firm policy of the Governor-General and the Secretary of State for India, accompanied by progress in constitutional reforms for India. He declared that the Conservative was no Junker or Fascist but a man who believed in constitutional progress and

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* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.

wanted to serve his country and wished people to be contented and happy. There were dangers and difficulties in the course, but he was profoundly convinced that there were infinitely greater dangers and difficulties if they did not take that step. (16) The House of Commons approved the motion for the constitution of a Joint Select Committee by 449 as against 43.

The three days' debate in the House of Lords revealed the same gradation of opinion as in the House of Commons. The Labour Opposition said that the White Paper represented an inadequate measure of progress. The Right-wing extremists were represented by Lord Salisbury, Lloyd, and Lord Amphil who rejected the proposal to grant responsibility at the Centre in toto and thought that the transfer of law and order into Indian hands, in the Provinces was an unwarrantable gambling. Such expert and influential Peers as Lord Reading, Lord Lothian, Lord Linlithgow, and Lord Strathcona supported the Government's scheme wholeheartedly. Linlithgow could not imagine self-government without law and order. He was certain that the success or failure of Indians in conducting the civil government would be a test by which the British public would judge the fitness of India for self-government. (17) The tenor of the debate which ended without division, went far to allay apprehensions lest the federal scheme should ultimately be blocked by the Upper House.

Meanwhile, speaking at Leeds, Irwin defended the White Paper proposals from the Right-wing critics. He denied that the demand

* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.*

(16) Hansard, H.C., 276 (29 March 1933) cols. 1131-40.*

(17) Ibid., H.L., 87 (4 April 1933) cols. 275-300.*
for India's freedom was confined to a mere educated minority which might disappear in a few years' firm administration as the Conservative critics alleged. He declared that that view was 'not shared by a single Governor of any Province in India, nor by any responsible officials of the great British services nor by representatives of great business houses in Calcutta'. He warned that 'we delude ourselves if we suppose that Indian nationalism today is not strong and will not become stronger. That is the problem!' (18)

The Joint Select Committee of 31 members which represented a fair balance of the various shades of views in Parliament was constituted in April 1933 under the chairmanship of Linlithgow to consider the constitution of the future Government of India with special reference to White Paper proposals. (19)

CONSERVATIVE PARTY MEETINGS AND THE INDIAN REFORMS

The Indian question and the White Paper proposals came up before the Conservative Central Council at its meeting held on 28 June 1933. Baldwin, after explaining the main features of the


(19) Winston Churchill, Henry Page Croft and Lloyd declined the invitation to serve on the Joint Select Committee. They did not join the Committee because they thought there would be real danger of their case being misrepresented, so to arouse the Conservative Party over the issue, they declined the membership and tried their best to rouse the people, specially the Conservatives in the country against the proposals. Lord Croft (Brigadier-General, Henry Page), My Life of Strife (London, 1948) 226.

The action of the critics in refusing to serve on the Select Committee had 'undoubtedly alienated many who sympathized with their views and desired to see them expressed them on the Committee'. Hugh Molson, n. 9, 138.
Government's India policy, commended them to the Council to weigh properly and express their representative views. He refuted the charge that it was a Labour policy and emphasized the fact that at all stages, the Conservative Party participated in the formulation of the proposals and therefore must bear the major responsibility for them. All the men on the spot were consulted in accordance with the old Conservative doctrine: 'Consult and trust the man on the spot'. Further Baldwin made it clear that all those who examined that question were Conservatives as much as anyone of them assembled at the meeting, and that they were nurtured in the same faith and had that slight sub-conscious reluctance to take a long step forward that had made them Conservatives. All of them who started on that investigation had the natural prejudices of their birth. So far as they went, they were led by the forces of reason and of reason alone. He declared the White Paper had the support of the British Cabinet, the Government of India and Chambers of Commerce and provincial Governors in India. All the British officials who had retired after holding responsible jobs in India since 1919 reforms supported the scheme.

Baldwin claimed that the Government's India policy had been the work of patriotic men of all parties who steadily set considerations of party behind them and had striven solely for the good of the Indian peoples as a contented element in a stronger British Empire. He assured the Council that when the Committee reported and anything concrete took shape, then 'this great body will anxiously scrutinize what it is, and when that times [sic] comes
you and I naturally will take counsel together. . . .'

One of the extremists, Lloyd, moved a motion viewing with
great anxiety the proposal to transfer responsibility at the Centre,
judiciary and police in the Provinces. He said that the White Paper
had increased their anxiety and there was apprehension throughout
the country, but many supported the Government out of loyalty. He
pointed out that the scheme involved enormous cost. He posed as a
champion of the masses of India and said that there were safeguards
for every interest but not for the welfare of the Indian people.
He termed the proposals 'hasty and ill-conceived' and announced that
motion did not raise any question of confidence in the leadership.

Supporting the motion, Henry Page Croft considered the
proposals as a great gamble. Churchill told the Council that they
had a right to express their views, 'that a warning signal should be
made, the red light should flash and the danger message should be
sent out before vital points were decided and there was time to
alter and revise the policy'. He said that the White Paper
constitution was unworkable and that it was not accepted by any
representative body in India. (21) Lord Carson* reminded the
Council of the promises made to the loyal British in India, to the
soldiers who contributed to their pensions* and their widows, to
those people who went on under great difficulties in keeping the
flag flying in that country. He told them that they owed the first
consideration to them, because at all events the Conservative policy

* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.

(20) Cleanings and Memoranda, 78 (July-December 1933) 105-7
and The Times, 29 June 1933, 8.* See also Conservative Party Central
Council Minutes, 257-8.

(21) Conservative Party Council Minutes, 258-60 and
Cleanings and Memoranda, 78 (July-December 1933) 105.
was 'Don't be trying to conciliate your enemies at the expense of friends'. (22)

The leadership adopted a tactical line to wait for the report of the Joint Select Committee. An amendment was moved by Thomas White® pleading with the Council to wait for the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee, before any final conclusion was reached. Leopold Amery said that the real danger was not inefficiency in the Provinces but weak and vacillating Government at the Centre. Lord Hailsham® said that the Conservative members of the Cabinet were unitedly committed to the policy of the amendment. The amendment was carried after a ballot, by 838 votes to 356, and Lloyd's resolution was defeated by a comfortable margin of considerably more than two to one. (23)

There was an evident desire to hear with scrupulous fairness the arguments advanced both for and against the policy of the Government and the speakers had been arranged with complete impartiality, so that every shade of opinion could be heard. "The debate, most fairly divided between the supporters and the opponents of the Government's policy, left no room for any suspicion that embarrassing views were being slighted or suppressed." (24) Thus, the Central Council by a majority of two to one put on one side a resolution hostile to the most crucial proposals in the White Paper and decided not to arrive at a final conclusion until the Joint

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* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.*

(22) Lord Carson's speech at the Central Council, reprinted as IDL Leaflet No. 6. Unionists and India: A Great Disaster.*

(23) Conservative Party Council Minutes, 252-50 and Cateings and Memoranda, 78 (July-December 1933) 105,*

(24) The Times, 29 June 1933, 8.*
Committee consisting 'in the main men with a wide experience of Indian administration had made its recommendations'. The critics comforted themselves with the assertion of the strength of the feeling in the Party adverse to the White Paper policy and regarded the challenge as only the first round in what was likely to be a long and arduous struggle. (25)

Commenting on the voting, The Observer said that the victory for Baldwin was decisive and that if the Unionist members, who were members of the Joint Select Committee, had been able to enter into the debate, the majority would have been three to one. The common sense of the whole country knew that they should not base their policy on a Party basis much less upon a section of a Party. (26) The Conservative Party emphatically rejected the policy of pure partisanship and non-co-operation and without committing itself to any proposal decided to wait for the report. There was a steady rallying of informed opinion to the broad solution of the Indian problem represented by the White Paper and the policy of the Government began to emerge 'not as a leap in the dark, but as a statesmanlike course steered between two dangerous rival policies and one upon which there is a growing measure of agreement'. (27)

Significantly, the British Chamber of Commerce in India, for whom Churchill and his friends professed their concern, expressed their decision to support the proposals which they considered as the best calculated scheme to achieve the common purpose of all shades of

(25) Home and Empire, 4 (August 1933) 1. See also Morning Post, 29 June 1933, 13.

(26) Observer, 2 July 1933.

(27) The Times, 29 June 1933.
opinion. (28) Thus though a certain body of opinion denied the need for any further liberalization of Indian institutions and favoured an attempt to put the clock back, the better part of the British opinion was in agreement with the view that a new advance along the path of political evolution was called for, subject to the principle of the ultimate control of Parliament. (29)

**Birmingham Annual Conference, 1933**

In spite of the fact that the Central Council had decided to wait for the report of the Joint Select Committee, the Indian question was raised before the annual conference of the National Union of Conservative Party held at Birmingham in October 1933. Viscount Wolmer* moved a resolution expressing apprehension at some of the proposals. He expressed anxiety about defence problems of India and the police and asked the conference to consider the subject of the welfare of the Indian people which he considered as the crux of the problem. The welfare of Indians demanded economy and efficiency in administration and the new system would not be efficient or economic.

* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix 1.

(28) Ibid.

"Most significantly of all, the whole available body of leaders of the great British Chambers of Commerce in India - the very people for whom Mr. Churchill and his friends profess their deepest concern - are telling us plainly that their Chambers of Commerce, whose interests are vitally concerned in the future of the country, have after deliberate consideration decided to give support to the Proposals of His Majesty's Government, which in their opinion are those best calculated to achieve the common purpose of all shades of opinion in this country - namely, that India should remain a contented partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations". Evelyn Wrench, Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times (London, 1955) 306.*

(29) Daily Telegraph, 18 March 1933, 12.*
He brought forward the dangers of trade discrimination. He feared that the handing over of the country to a legislature to be dominated by the Congress, whose intention was to sever every tie between Britain and India, would have grave results on British trade, and on thousands of people in Britain and in India. Lord Hartington seconding the resolution said that the question of loyalty to the leader or allegiance to the Party was not involved and held that they should express their misgivings about the Indian constitutional proposals.

Thomas White moved an amendment to the effect that they must have trust in the Joint Select Committee and wait for their report. Lloyd said that the Government was going forward at a dangerous speed and that a true federation should have included both Indian people and the British but the proposals excluded the British. 'If we lost India, the Empire would die, but if India lost England, there would be chaos, anarchy and disruption in India within ten years.' Lloyd felt that if federation was created, India could not be prevented from achieving full Dominion Status. Amery said that they were committed by the pledges and by the whole spirit of British institutions to self-government in India consistent with the welfare of the Indian people and the imperial connection. He was convinced that the Government were proceeding cautiously. (30) Page Croft said that they wanted to avoid the position of commitment by an introduction of a Bill and begged the conference to take action.

'India is the keystone of the arch of the Empire, East and West and

* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.

(30) Minutes of the Annual Conference (October 1933) folios 27-31 and The Times, 7 October 1933, 7.
if it should go as a result of any hasty action ... then this will mean the end of the British Empire ... If we wait until the Committee has reported the Pass would be sold. If a Bill were introduced, then the Government would not be able to give way on any single detail.' (31)

Speaking on behalf of the Government, Neville Chamberlain said that the matter had been referred to the Joint Select Committee and the final judgment could be suspended until the Committee reported. He did not dispute the right of the conference to carry such a vote, but he wanted them to keep very clearly before them the fact that 'while the resolution professes confidence in the Government it really amounts to this - a vote of want of confidence in the Government's Indian policy'. He declared that they could not hold down a hostile India by military force and told them that there were safeguards and that the proposals offered the best prospect of increasing their trade. On a show of hands, the amendment was declared carried. A poll was demanded. The resolution was opposed and the amendment was supported by 737 as against 344 and thus by a majority of two to one, Government's India policy not to commit itself to any final conclusion on the matter until the Joint Committee reported, was approved. (32) Though the voting showed a smaller majority than the one at the meeting of the Council in the preceding June, there had been, during the interval, widespread propaganda by

(31) Lord Croft, n. 19, 325-6.

the critics which rose to the peak of its intensity before and during the conference. In some respects, it was more decisive.

India in the Central Council

Apart from carrying on propaganda through meetings and demonstrations, as well as through the Press, the extremists raised the question, at all the Party meetings in spite of the earlier decision to wait for the report of the Joint Select Committee. The question was raised again at the meeting of the Central Council held on 28 March 1934. Oliver Simmonds\(^*\) moved a resolution upholding the decision of the annual Party conference at Birmingham not to arrive at a final conclusion until the Joint Committee reported, and resolving not to consider that matter again. Lord Fitzalan\(^*\) moved an amendment reaffirming the right and duty of the Conservative Party to consider the problem. The amendment was rejected after a ballot, by 419 votes to 314, and the original resolution not to consider the matter till the report of the Joint Select Committee was published was moved and declared carried. (33)

The Times commented that it was hardly surprising that Churchill's resolution should have produced a number of counter-blasts deprecating any further resolutions of the kind till the report was submitted and deplored the continued attacks which were made on the Government. (34) On the other hand, Churchill regarded the voting as encouraging and stimulating. Though the voting was on the resolution to postpone the decision on the problem, the

\* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.

(33) Conservative Party Council Minutes, 267-8

(34) The Times, 28 March 1934
opponents smugly inferred that the marked increase in the proportion of the votes cast to their amendment gave great encouragement to the IDL. (35)

**Bristol Annual Conference, 1934**

The critics of the Government's India policy returned to the attack at the annual conference of 1934 held at Bristol. On the eve of the conference, the *Morning Post* declared that the Conservative conference had the opportunity of saving the Government and the Party from a policy which might ruin both. 'Bristol has the opportunity of saving the Conservative Party from a great discredit and the Empire from a great disaster.' (36) The question came up on a resolution moved by Henry Page Croft, who denied that the question of confidence was involved and declared that they were free to express any fears, and that it was their last opportunity before the 'revolutionary changes' were decided upon. He alleged that the Central Council was persuaded to muzzle itself and told the conference: 'You are the democratic parent of the Council. I ask you sincerely to exercise complete frankness and freedom today. After today it will be too late. It is positively your last chance to influence the situation.' Croft further argued that the White Paper meant the end of partnership of the British and the Indians and he and his supporters were prepared to go so far as to agree to a tremendous experiment with self-government in the Provinces of India on the lines of the report of the Statutory Commission but that they

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(35) *The Indian Empire Review*, 3 (May 1934) 207.

(36) *Morning Post*, 4 October 1934, 10.
could not consent to abdicate at the Centre. Moving the resolution Croft said:

The whole plan is opposed to the instinct, tradition and faith of Conservatives. . . . Why should 460 Conservatives be asked to surrender their principles at the behest of thirty Liberals and ten Socialists? . . . It is proposed to . . . risk the final ruin of Lancashire and the destruction of our greatest market. Why? Because a few agitators with goat and lion-cloth make a row in India and your representatives over there have not the will to rule. There is only one force which can now save India for the Empire, the Conservative Party, and the heart of that party is this Conference. . . . With all the lessons of history staring you in the face, and with your present trust to the masses of India confronting your conscience, I have come to ask you at this eleventh hour to do your duty and save India from the chaos, bloodshed and anarchy which inevitably would follow the policy of the White Paper. (37)

Sir Peter Agnew* seconding the resolution declared that there was no mandate for the policy and that the conference had a right to consider the question. It was a desperate attempt made by the critics of the Government's India policy at the Party conference to upset the White Paper proposals and the attitude of the Conservative Party. The Government supporters in the Party stuck to their tactical method of waiting for the report of the Joint Select Committee. As decided earlier to hold a special meeting of the Council to take counsel with the leader of the Party, an amendment was moved to wait for the report. After a ballot, the amendment was carried by 543 votes to 520, and was subsequently accepted by the conference as a substantive resolution and was carried. (38)

* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.


(38) Minutes of the Annual Conference (October 1934) folios 28-32. See also The Times, 6 October 1934, 19 and Morning Post, 5 October 1934, 21.
Thus the opponents of the India policy of the Government came nearer to success than on any previous occasion. That may have been due, as had been suggested in various Conservative quarters, in large part to resentment aroused by the belief that Conservative opinion was being denied free discussion of the Indian problem while debate flourished outside the conferences of the Party. Yet it was also an expression of the fears that have been so industriously worked upon in a large section of the Conservative Press. (39)

The Times commented: 'Few subjects are less suited to the heated atmosphere of a Party conference than that of Indian constitutional reform, the most difficult and complicated of all the great imperial problems which confront the British democracy.' Page Croft's motion which was rejected by the narrowest of margins, showed 'that there is a large body of Conservative opinion, as there has been in the history of every great reform, which will oppose to the last a policy for which the party will stand in the end and of which in future ages it will be consummately proud. That body of opinion is always, and necessarily, over represented in a delegate Conference; and on the present occasion immense efforts had been made beforehand to stampede the delegates into a false impression that now or never was the chance to make their voices heard.' (40) The political correspondent of the Morning Post reported that the vote


The UBI was an independent organization composed of men 'who had recent experience of administration in India, which gives general support to the main proposals of the White Paper'. It had been formed in May 1933 to counteract the propaganda of the Conservative extremists and to support the White Paper. The UBI started its weekly Bulletin on 8 June 1934 which was continued up to 3 August 1935, see UBI Weekly Bulletin, 1 (8 June 1934) 1-2, and (3 August 1935) 5-6.

(40) The Times, 5 October 1934, 15.
was not only a warning but 'it was an opportunity — an opportunity for reconsideration and for earnestly attempting to find a reasonable accommodation between the supporters of the White Paper and its opponents'. The *Morning Post* safely concluded that the feeling of the Conference was against the Indian policy of the Government. To the *Daily Mail*, 'it was a sensational warning to the Government to modify the policy of scuttle'. (41)

RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS' PROPAGANDA

Meanwhile, the opponents intensified their propaganda in rousing opposition to the Government's India policy. The period between the publication of the White Paper proposals and the special meeting of the Central Council to take counsel with the leader, the Indian problem was the main issue of all discussions among the Conservatives. The critics of the policy played an important part and adopted all methods and seized all opportunities to whip up their campaign against the reforms in the countryside and win over the rank and file of the Party. The critics projected their opposition through three bodies which they had started for the purpose. The Indian Empire Society which was founded on 4 July 1930 by retired Indian administrators, felt that the approach to popular government made by the 1919 reforms did not prove a success, 'that India was not ripe for any great extension of self-government through the medium of democratic institutions, but they had every sympathy with the natural and legitimate aspirations of deserving Indians towards a greater share in the administration. They

(41) *Morning Post*, 5 October 1934, 12. See also Ibid., 7 October 1934, 10; *Daily Mail*, 5 October 1934.
preferred selection to election.' (42)

In order to propagate its views in opposition to the Government's India policy, the Society started a monthly journal, The Indian Empire Review, in November 1931, 'to promote an understanding of the Indian situation which will result before it is too late in saving India for the Crown and Empire'. The members of the Executive Committee 'consisted for the most part of retired officials, some of them with a long and distinguished record of Indian service of bygone days'. (43)

Conservative members of Parliament opposed to the White Paper proposals formed 'The India Defence Committee' and on the day the White Paper was issued 70 members joined it and took a pledge to oppose the Government's India policy, but this played a limited part compared to the two other organizations of the critics. In addition, the Conservative critics inside the two Houses of Parliament formed the most important of their organizations, 'The India Defence League' (IDL) in June 1933. The statement of policy stated that the White Paper publication caused great uneaselessness throughout the British Empire. Though they wanted to honour the Parliament's commitment in regard to India's constitutional development, they thought that the proposals caused profound anxiety and that the establishment of responsible government hazarded the lives of the Indian people. They had no doubt that the transfer of law and order to Indian hands was

(42) Sir Louis Stuart, 'The Story of the Indian Empire Society', The Indian Empire Review, 8 (December, 1939) 466.

(43) The Indian Empire Review, 1 (November 1931) 1.

For the controversy between the Society and The Times, see Ibid., 2 (March 1933) 2-3, 37-43 and The Times, 14 and 19 January 1933.
a step fraught with grave danger. 'To imperil the peace of India, to jeopardize the vast trade that has brought so much benefit and employment to both communities, to strike at the main and central strength of the British Empire by such an experiment would be, in our judgment, a fatal dereliction of duty.' The Indian Empire Review was utilized for propagating the views of the IDL. Owing to its greater resources the IDL conducted its subsequent campaign on a scale that had not been contemplated by the Society. Both were housed in the same premises and the same person was the President (Lord Sumner upto 1934 and then Lord Fitzalan) of both bodies and they worked unitedly for their common objective. The IDL ceased to function in 1936 and the Indian Empire Society was in existence up to the commencement of the Second World War. (44) Geographically the opposition came from the constituencies in the South of England, where retired Army officers had great influence and from Lancashire which was apprehensive of losing still more of its Indian trade. (45)

Apart from the Party meetings, the critics carried on their bitter struggle in the countryside, in the constituencies, notably in Lancashire. Till the middle of June 1933, the Indian Empire Society carried on its attack on Government's India policy. The critics appealed to the emotions and sentiments of the local people and in fact many local constituency associations passed resolutions opposing responsible government at the Centre. For example, the annual general meeting and conference of the Junior Imperial League in May 1933 passed a resolution opposing the setting up of a federal

(44) Louis Stuart, n. 42, 463-72.
responsible government in India until the experiment of provincial Home Rule had been proved to be a success in actual practice. The conference of the Central Women's Advisory Committee of the Conservative Associations passed a resolution on 11 May opposing the setting up of a democratic responsible government for the whole of India.

The India Defence League

To intensify and try an all-out attack on the Government's India policy and to win over the rank and file of the Party, the IDL held meetings, demonstrations, issued leaflets and pamphlets and distributed fake letters (46), claiming large support, and appealed to the emotions of the people all over the country. The critics' opposition was vocal and great orators among them like Winston Churchill carried on a good deal of propaganda among the people appealing to their emotions, against the reforms. They sought to give the impression that the reforms never helped the common people of India, but at the same time harmed the vital interests of Britain. It was easy for them to point out the inherent dangers in any measure of constitutional advance in a large and diverse

(46) "M.P.s received a number of letters from their constituents urging them to oppose the India policy and the similarity of them led to the discovery of their common origin in a circular issued by the Executive Committee of Indian Empire Society. M.P.s were puzzled over the curious similarity of language, and the personal touch in each of them was so palpable that it was difficult to resist their nicely modulated appeal... The worry, the anxiety, the need for reassurance, even the pride in having influenced the last election and the hope for the next—all these emotions... have simply been "suggested" to a number of pathetically contented voters by the Executive Committee of the Indian Empire Society... Their attitude as expressed in the model letters... was purely destructive or at least obstructive... The Society would probably have made their influence better felt by a direct and straightforward statement over their own names than by the under methods of the complete "Letter-writer"." The Indian Empire Review, 1 (March 1933) 2-3 and 37-43, and The Times, 14 January 1933 and 19 January 1933.
country like India, and to appeal to the natural pride of Britain in giving India peace and order. It was really difficult to bring home to Parliament, to English audiences, the political facts of modern India like the influence exercised by the educated Indians upon their illiterate countrymen, the development of the Press, the strength and influence of nationalist political opinion. (47) Owing to the personal interest, zeal and oratory of a few leading members, the propaganda of the IDL had an edge over that of the Union of Britain and India (UBI).

Constituency Associations and India Policy

The average English people who had not visited India and who were unfamiliar with the conditions in India, were bewildered by the dogmatic and contradictory statements made by people, all of whom claimed to speak with special authority. Therefore, it is no wonder that local constituencies passed resolutions against the White Paper policy. Such resolutions came not only from the constituencies represented by members avowedly opposed to the Government's India policy; in some cases they were passed in direct defiance of the views of the sitting members.

The blatant ignorance of these local associations was evidenced when some of them reversed their earlier resolutions and passed resolutions supporting the Government's India policy. The annual conference of the Central Women's Advisory Committee of the Conservative Associations, on 11 May 1933, passed resolutions opposing the Government's India proposals. Baldwin's reply on the following day was full of commonsense and exercised a profound

(47) Round Table, 23 (June 1933) 548-54.
influence. He allayed their fears of a threat to British trade and assured them that the risk of not acting would be greater than the risk of progressing boldly towards the goal of self-government. Therefore, a resolution pledging full support was carried without opposition. (48)

By-Elections and the Indian Problem

The question of India came to the forefront at two important by-elections when the extremist critics set up independent candidates against the official Conservative candidates on the issue of Government's India policy. In February 1931 by election at St. George's Westminster, the official candidate Duff-Cooper was successful. In the 1934 by-election at Wavertree, Randolph Churchill, son of Winston Churchill, made his candidature a direct protest against the Indian Bill. As a result, the Labour Party candidate was successful but the official Conservative candidate got more votes than

* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.

(48) Indian Constitutional Reforms, No. 3372 (London, 1933) 3-8 and The Times, 13 May 1933, 7a.

The Times editorial observation on the earlier resolution of the Conservative Women's conference is revealing. It said 'The campaign has so far entirely been one-sided and it is easy to distort an immensely complicated issue by a catchword and thoughtful opinion is silent ... Too much importance need not be attached to the resolutions by the Central Women's Advisory Committee. Delegates to this kind of gathering are apt in the nature of things to represent extreme and purely Party views especially when they have been excited day after day by a campaign of misrepresentation and there is no reason to suppose that the views were shared by the solid mass of Conservative opinion in the country'. The Times, 12 May 1933.

Similarly at a local association meeting, a resolution was moved expressing concern and opposing the Government's proposals. The man who moved the resolution spoke against it and in favour of the proposals, and explained that after a study he was convinced of the soundness of the proposals. The Times, 28 June 1933, 16a.
Randolph Churchill. All this clearly indicated that the rank and file of the Conservative Party in the country was ignorant and dependent on the leaders for guidance in the matter, and that many of those who understood the problem in its proper perspective supported the Government's India policy.

The Issue of Privilege and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce

With the avowed intention of thwarting the Government's India policy, Churchill charged Hoare and Lord Derby with a breach of privilege in altering the memorandum of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The Committee of Privileges ruled that the charge was frivolous and baseless. When Churchill appealed to the Committee of Privileges in a vain effort to challenge Hoare's integrity, he indirectly confessed defeat on the merits of the case. The debate on the report of the Committee of Privileges afforded 'the most shattering of the misrepresentation of a perfectly proper action on the part of the Secretary of State'. (49) On that issue the Press commented that Churchill was getting wearisome. 'A sense of co-operation was never his strong point, and now he seems to be losing it altogether... Churchill's discovery was a mare's nest. He misunderstood the facts and paid insufficient attention to the attendant circumstances.' (50) In spite of the rebuke administered by the Committee of Privileges, Churchill continued his propaganda at Manchester. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce was mainly

* For a brief biographical sketch see Appendix I.

(49) UBI Weekly Bulletin, 1 (22 June 1934) 1.

(50) Quoted in Ibid. 8.
concerned in trade with India and its interest in political and constitutional question was derivative. The IDL tried to use the genuine concern of the merchants to discredit the Conservative leadership and brought pressure on it. The Chamber refused to be dragged into controversy. However, it succeeded in securing safeguards against any discriminatory legislation on the part of India, but failed to achieve modification of India's fiscal autonomy. (51) The Spectator noted that the terms of the resolution 'represented not merely a defeat for the Churchill policy, but ... a triumph for co-operation as the solution of Lancashire's difficulties'. (52)

**Union of Britain and India**

To counteract the great and to a large extent effective propaganda of the critics of the proposals, the supporters of the Government's India policy thought it prudent to start an organization to bring home the real facts of the Indian problem and to correct the false statement of the critics. 31 Conservative members of Parliament formed the 'Union of Britain and India' (UBI) in May 1933 to

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A special meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce was held on 23 July in response to a requisition which was the direct result of Churchill's speech in Manchester. They demanded interference in the field of fiscal autonomy of India. The Chamber at its special meeting decided on a policy of goodwill towards India and it rejected the alternative of going back on the evidence given by the Chamber before the Joint Committee. The Chamber recognized that the fiscal convention of 1921 governed the situation and the attempts to stampede the Chamber into a policy hostile to Indian aspirations failed. Still, Churchill thought that it was highly satisfactory. UBI Pamphlet (20 and 27 July 1934) 3 and *The Indian Empire Review, 3* (September 1934) 354-8.

(52) Spectator, 153 (27 July 1934) 118.
combat ill-informed propaganda on Indian affairs and to support in general the proposals in the White Paper, with the resolve that all necessary safeguards shall be maintained. They started their weekly bulletin on 8 June 1934 which was continued till after the Bill was passed. The UBI was an independent organization composed of men 'who had recent experience of administration in India, which gives general support to the main proposals of the White Paper, while permitting individual views in regard to all secondary issues'. (53)

At a special meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce Randolph Churchill designated the UBI as 'Upset Britain in India'. Between the two organizations, one supporting the Government's India policy and the other bitterly opposing it, for a long time, the IDL had an edge in its propaganda over the UBI, until the Joint Committee reported when the latter also became active and energetic. As the time approached for the publication of the Joint Select Committee's report, the critics changing their tactics protested that India did not want the White Paper, or that it would not be

(53) Gleanings and Memoranda, 77 (January-June 1933) 422-3, 431. See also Home and Empire, 3 (June 1933) 10-11.

The M.P.s in their letter to The Times stated, 'Those who are anxious to discredit the Indian policy of His Majesty's Government are so vociferous that there is some danger of the opinions of a dissentient minority obtaining too great weight by mere force of repetition. The point of view which we believe is widely held among Conservatives, both inside and outside the House of Commons, has not yet been sufficiently stressed. ...' The Times, 11 May 1933.

The Right-wing extremists were well organized by 1932 and vocal. The necessity for an effective body of Liberal opinion was felt necessary to bring pressure on the Government. Irwin was to head an association sympathetic to reasonable nationalist demands, but he had joined the Government. Derby was sounded with Stanley Reed in the background. See Thomas Jones, A Diary with Letters 1931-1950 (London, 1954) 48-9.
accepted without vital modifications or that it would be used merely as a stepping-stone to the realization of the extreme claims which had been put forward from time to time by more advanced leaders of Indian opinion.

Thus, the critics brought the issue at all meetings of the Party and seized every opportunity to whip up their opposition to Government's India policy. On the other hand, the supporters of the Government's India policy adopted a tactical line of approach, pleading with the Party to wait for the Joint Committee report before they decided on the issue. At all times the Government policy received commendable support except at the Bristol Party conference, where, though India was not on a straight policy issue, the critics were successful in getting 49 per cent of support from the Party. The real test of strength was postponed to the special meeting of the Central Council where the Leader of the Party was to take counsel.