CHAPTER- VI
DISSOLUTION OF PARAMOUNTCY

No sooner did the defeat for the axis powers became visible and the close of the Second World War appeared imminent, it became quite clear that the Indian nationalists would intensify their struggle for liberation. At the same time the British Government would be under pressure to withdraw the policy, bans and steps to crush the popular movements.¹ The Princes were in touch with these developments. They could anticipate the likely trends. The Maharaja of Bikaner wrote a letter on 29 March 1945,² to the Patiala Ruler that “the period of inactivity necessitated by the overriding consideration of war” was coming to an end. He also indicated that the views in Britain seemed to point out that the British public was impatient for a real move forward that would assure to India the status and powers of a Dominion.³ The changed circumstances required the reviewing and re-examining of their issues by the Princes of Indian states.

The changed circumstances led the Chancellor (Nawab of Bhopal) Chamber of Princes to summon a meeting of the Special Committee of rulers and ministers in Bombay in April 1945.⁴ This Committee studied and examined thread bare the issue of political adjustment between the States and British India. In one more meeting of rulers and ministers held in June 1945, a resolution in detail was adopted, which reviewed the

² Basta No. 2 (hereinafter B/-), V (D) 470, 1945.
⁴ Ibid.
place and status of the Princes in the new political situation. It also realized that the Cripps formula and the developments had already displayed that the British India would become a ‘Dominion’ even without the adherence of the States. The British were not be in a position then effectively to complete its obligations of defense or to safeguard the non-acceding States against economic discrimination or strangulation by the Dominion Government. The resolution ended with the following words:

“For the support of their legitimate claims and aspirations, the States should internally set up their houses in order and externally should align themselves with the forces of progress. Nothing can serve to secure an effective voice for States in the future negotiations unless they establish themselves as well-governed and progressive units, second to none in support of legitimate aspirations of India”.

The Committee too appointed a Constitutional Advisory Committee. It was to prepare the case of the States for use at proper times. It was also to go into the technicalities for the objectives of negotiations when needed. When the Princes were preparing their case for future negotiations, the Viceroy declared in one broadcast the proposal of setting up an interim government to ease the existing tense as well as complex political situation.

The Constitutional Advisory Committee, appointed by the meeting of rulers and ministers held in June 1945, held its meeting on July 10th 1945 in Bombay to consider the implications of Wavell’s proposal

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5 Ibid.
8 The Tribune, Lahore, 16 June 1945.
regarding the States. It recommended the adoption of the following resolution: “It is desirable in the interest of the States, as also of India as a whole, that suitable machinery may be set up for regular consultations between the representatives of Government of India and the States in regard to matters of common concern”. It also unanimously endorsed and highlighted the worth of progressive reforms in the States. It too hoped the Rulers to introduce them as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the leaders of various political parties of British India had a number of talks with Mr. Wavell, but ultimately proved futile on 14th July 1945. Then a few important changes occurred in the political scenario in England. The Labour Party withdrew from Coalition Government. In the General Election that followed, the Conservatives were defeated. As a result the Labour Party was invited and asked to form government on 26th July 1945. Clement Attlee became the Prime Minister; Pethick-Lawrence took charge of the office of the Secretary of State of India.

Wavell, on his return from Britain, made a broadcast regarding Constitutional reforms on 19th September 1945. In this broadcast observed:

“…an announcement has already been made that elections to the central and provincial legislatures, so long postponed owing to the war, are to be held during the coming cold weather. Thereafter His Majesty’s Government earnestly hope that ministerial responsibility will be accepted by political leaders in

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9 B/82, V (D) 470, 1945; also see B/82, III (B) 77, 1946; also see S.M. Verma, *op.cit*, p. 188.
all provinces…It is the intention of His Majesty’s Government to convene as soon as possible a constitution-making body, and as a preliminary step they have authorized me to undertake discussions with representatives of the Legislative Assemblies in the Provinces…Discussions will also be undertaken with the representatives of the Indian States with a view to ascertaining in what way they can best take their part in the constitution making body”.  

Wavell’s proclamation was discussed thoroughly in the Constitutional Advisory Committee. After sometime a special meeting of the Committee of Ministers was held on September 28th 1945, at the behest of the Chancellor. It made the following recommendations: 

(a) the States have made their position clear that they would be happy to make use of this opportunity of taking part with the representatives of British India in the task of framing constitution for the country; 

(b) the states representatives may inform the Viceroy at the appropriate time that the States could take part in the constitution-making body on the clear understanding that: (i) any constitution framed by that body would be subject to ratification by the States in order to be binding on them; and (ii) if the form of governments in the States be open to discussion in that body, the monarchical form and the continuance of the reigning dynasty in each State shall, in no event, be open to discussion.

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12 B/82, V (D) 470, 1945; The Civil and Military Gazette, 20th September, 1945.
13 B/82, V (D) 470, 1945; also cited in S.M. Verma, *op.cit*, p. 188.
It was also decided to invite Viceroy’s attention to the assurances given in the Cripps proposals.\textsuperscript{14}

The Chamber of Princes’ annual routine session was held on 17-18 January 1946. It was chaired by Mr. Wavell. The Princes were assured by the Viceroy that no changes in their relations with the Crown would occur without their consent. He also assured them that the rights, once guaranteed to them by treaties and engagements, would also not be altered without their willingness and consent. He also told that he was confident that the States would be permitted to take active part in the discussions in the constitution making body.\textsuperscript{15} He impressed upon the Princes the need of placing their administration on modern lines as it was essential for their masses’ welfare. In the case of smaller States, the Governor suggested them to pool their resources; he also advised them to form their political entities of big sizes.\textsuperscript{16} After listening, the suggestions of the Governor, the Princes passed unanimously a resolution which read as such: \textsuperscript{17} “The Chamber of Princes desires to reiterate that the Indian States fully share the general desire in the country for the immediate attainment by India of her full stature and will make every possible contribution towards the settlement of the Indian constitutional problem”.

Further, the Chancellor stressed that the basic principles of firm and fare administration should be followed in every State. Moreover, there should be popular institutions. These institutions should be elected by the common men. They should ensure close and effective association

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\textsuperscript{14} S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 188-189.
\textsuperscript{15} V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 59; Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, Delhi, 1946, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{16} Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{17} For further details see S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 188-189; V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 22.
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with the masses. On the other hand, Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, the Secretary of State, declared in the House of Lords on February 19th 1946 that, after fruitful discussion with the leaders of India, the British had taken the decision with His Majesty’s approval to send to India a special mission of three Cabinet Ministers; they were to act in association with the Viceroy. They were also to discuss proposals with the political leaders of that country. He further expressed that he was of the hope that the statesmen of England and India would be able to work out a solution of the problem that was faced by both the parties. Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and A.V. Alexander, First Lord of Admiralty were appointed the members of the proposed cabinet mission Britain’s decision of sending the Cabinet Mission to India to solve the various issues, were admired and hailed by the liberal press of USA and Great Britain.

The news of the Mission was well received throughout India. It was realized that the grant of freedom to India was then a surety. Liberty would not be delayed beyond a period that was absolutely required to complete the preliminary arrangements. Prime Minister’s speech further strengthened the favourable impression in the course of a debate in the

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20 Maulana Azad of Congress Party was very happy with the inclusion of Cripps as he knew him for his sincerity.
21 For example, The Manchester Guardian (Manchester) extolled the decision “a stroke of courage and imagination and a proof of Britain’s eager desire to settle the intractable problem”, 20 March 1946. Similarly, The New York Herald Tribune, New York, March 26, 1946, remarked in its editorial: “The truth of the matter seems to be that the British are reconciled to changing conditions in Asia. They are taking steps which show acceptance of the fact that the age of imperialism is coming to an end”.
Concerning the States the Prime Minister observed: “Before putting forward our recommendations, we turn to deal with the relationship of the Indian States to British India. It is quite clear that with the attainment of independence by British India, whether inside or outside the British Commonwealth, the relationship which has hitherto existed between the Rulers of the States and the British Crown will no longer be possible. Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new government”.  

Cripps, soon after Misson’s arrival, told about the procedure that it would adopt in its talks of negotiations. He made it vivid that in its negotiations it would adhere to the earlier precedents. Regarding the Indian States, Pethick-Lawrence observed, “Indian States which have a great part to play in India’s future, must clearly be invited to join in this task. We are encouraged by the knowledge that many of the Rulers share the general desire for the immediate attainment by India of her full freedom”. Jawaharlal Nehru’s suggestion that the Mission should interview the representatives of the States’ subjects was not acceptable to the Political Department or to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. Moreover, the mission itself did not pursue the question.

On 2nd April 1946, the Rulers of Bhopal (the Chancellor), Patiala, Navanagar, Gwalior, Bikaner, Dungarpur and Bilaspur, the representative

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23 He said, “My colleagues are going India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of Government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide, but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision? I hope that India and her people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that they will find great advantages in doing so”. Majumdar, op.cit., p. 728; B/85, VII(A)107, 1946, p. 131.

24 Ibid., p. 132.


26 *The Hindu*, Madras, 10 April 1946.
of the Smaller States, Nawab of Chhatari, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Mirza Ismail, met the Mission for 75 minutes. The Chancellor made it clear that the States wished to retain the maximum degree of sovereignty; none of the Rulers wanted a constitutional set-up, envisaged in the Act of 1935, but they would support a loose federation. The Chancellor too held that if there were two Indians there could be no cause why a third Indian should not be accepted. He also pleaded that the Paramountcy should not be transferred to a successor government. However, it must lapse, the States should not be compelled to join any union or unions; that there should be prima facie, no objection to the formation of a Confederation of States if the rulers so wanted; and that there should be no intervention in their internal affairs by the British authorities and administration.27

The Mission made efforts to explain the British Government’s future policy with regard to the Princes. It made apt that if “British India became independent, Paramountcy was bound to lapse and the Princes would be released from their treaty obligations. But it did not propose even to mention this matter to the representatives of British India, unless it became necessary. It seemed to them that the position of the States in any parleys with the representatives of British India might be somewhat weakened by a positive statement to that effect”.28

The idea of the confederation, as defined by the Princes, seemed to Pethick-Lawrence a novel idea as well as interesting and apparently a feasible suggestion. But Cripps doubted its practicability for geographical reasons. The Mission also emphasized the necessity of some sort of arrangements-political, economic and administrative-between the States and British India during the interim period. It assured the Princes that

27 B/85, VII (A) 1946, pp. 38, 40, 64.
their representatives would be consulted again before the future set-up of India was finalized.\textsuperscript{29}

There was a strong and enough reaction in the press regarding the Princes delegation’s meeting with the Mission. \textit{The Statesmen} published an article under the caption ‘Course Open to States in the Future Set-up’.\textsuperscript{30} \textit{The Hindu} too wrote that “the Memorandum submitted by Bhopal will represent the consensus agreement among the Princes who are members of the Chamber of Princes”.\textsuperscript{31} \textit{The Free Press Journal} also reported with a caption “And Now a Rajasthan—a New Plan Hatched by Princes”.\textsuperscript{32} It’s correspondent alleged that a section of the officialdom in New Delhi connected with the Political Department had been intriguing with the Indian Princes to ask for a separate arrangement for themselves and demand a Rajasthan.\textsuperscript{33} He further wrote next day that, after the meeting with the Mission, the Princes were in a state of depression.

The correspondent of \textit{The Times}, London, published that in the event of a division of British India into Hindu and Muslim India, the trend of view among the Rulers appeared to be that the only way of maintaining their solidarity order would be to form their strongest possible confederation. Jinnah, for obvious factors, had no objection to that but the Indian National Congress (hereafter INC) would be less enamored of the idea.\textsuperscript{34}

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\item[29] V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 192.
\item[31] \textit{The Hindu}, Madras, 3 April 1946.
\item[32] \textit{The Free Press Journal}, Bombay, 3 April 1946.
\item[33] For example, Conrad Corfield who was Political Secretary to the Government of India had been instigating the Princes to keep themselves separate from the British India to be known as “Rajasthan or Stateistan” to act as a balancing factor between Hindu India and Muslim India (for further details see Conrad Corfield, \textit{The Princely India I Knew: From Reading to Mountbatten}, Madras, 1975, pp. 139-160.
\item[34] \textit{The Times}, London, 5 April 1946.
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The Nawab of Bhopal met the Cabinet Mission second on 2nd May 1946. He sought clarification of few of his time suspicious. The Viceroy too gave a certain ‘suggested points’; he asked the Nawab to express his views as these points were meant to be the basis of agreement and discussion between the INC and the Muslim League. These points were related to the scope of fundamental rights defense, communications, finances, foreign affairs, etc.

The Mission also prepared a ‘Memorandum related to States, treaties and Paramountcy’. It was given to the Nawab of Bhopal on 12 May 1946. But actually it was released on 22 May 1946 to the press. It affirmed that, when a new fully self-governing or independent government or governments came into being in British India. His Majesty’s Government’s influence with these governments would not enable them to carry out the obligations of Paramountcy; nor did they contemplate the retention of British troops in India for that purpose.

Hence, as a logical sequence, and in opinion of the wish told to them on States behalf, His Majesty’s Government would stop to exercise the rights and powers of Paramountcy. This meant that the States rights that flowed from their relationship to the Crown would no longer exist; and that all the rights and powers surrendered by the States to the suzerain authority would come back to them. Political arrangements between the States on the one hand and the British Crown and British India on the other side would thus be brought to an end. The gulf would have to be filled by the States. This could be alone by entering into a federal relationship with the successor government or by entering into special political arrangements, or government in British India. The Memorandum

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35 B/85, VII (A) 16, 1946.
36 B/85, VII (A) 107, 1946.
37 Ibid., p. 6.
38 Ibid., p. 9.
also referred to the States desirability, in suitable cases, forming or joining administrative units large enough. It was to enable them to be fitted into the constitutional structure. It was also to conduct negotiations with British India in regard to the future regulation of matters of common concern, particularly in the economic and financial fields.\textsuperscript{39} The \textit{Hindustan Times} in an interesting and attractive cartoon by Shankar showed Indian Princes as chickens who had been let out of the cage and Jawaharlal Nehru were making an attempt to catch them quick. Its heading was, “The India becomes independent and the British Government could not and will not transfer Paramountcy to an Indian Government”.\textsuperscript{40} The Mission concluded its talks with different parties. It announced on 16 May 1946 its plan for setting up a constitution-making body.\textsuperscript{41}

On 17 May, the \textit{Nawab} of Bhopal (Chancellor of the Chamber) wrote to Wavell and sought more clarification on some points of Cabinet Mission plan. He desired to be certain that the method and manner of States representation in the Union legislature should not discuss or make any recommendations in regard of the type of government in the States or ruling dynasties. He expressed that the decisions or recommendations of the constitution-making authority should not apply to any State without ratification.\textsuperscript{42} Secondly, the existing rights of the States in respect of communications should not be affected.

Wavell, on 29 May 1946, gave a non-committal reply. He conveyed that most of the questions raised by the \textit{Nawab} were matters for negotiations between the States and the British Indian members of the Constituent Assembly. As regards the issue of the selection of the States’

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  \item \textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 9-10; also see V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 66.
  \item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{The Hindustan Times}, Delhi, 24 May 1946.
  \item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{Papers Relating to the Cabinet Mission to India}, Delhi, 1946, pp. 1-7.
  \item \textsuperscript{42} B/85, VII (A)107, 1946, pp. 161-163.
\end{itemize}
representatives, the Viceroy thought that the Cabinet Mission’s any
categorical pronouncement in the sense desired would render not easier,
but more difficult. It would also render free association between the
States and British India that that had been the aim Mission’s to promote. The Nawab of Bhopal found the Viceroy’s letter altogether
dejecting. In the letters dated 2 and 3 June 1946 he pleaded that the
British authorities should not leave the Princes as ‘a kind of no person’s
child’, without protecting their just rights and privileges in the future set-
up of India. The Viceroy asked the Nawab to discuss the matter with
Conrad Corfield, who was the Political Adviser to the British
Government of India.

The Rulers and Princes held a meeting in the Taj Mahal Hotel,
Bombay, on 7 June 1946. Nawab of Bhopal presided over this meeting.
After three days deliberations, the Princes accepted the Cabinet plan
regarding future constitutional reforms and made up their minds to
negotiate with Mr. Wavell the then Viceroy.

Corfield addressed the Constitutional Advisory Committee of the
Chamber of Princes on 8 June. He too addressed the Committee of State
Ministers on 9 June and the Standing Committee of the Chamber of
Princes on 10 June 1946. He told the Princes that the Crown’s
Paramountcy over them would not be transferred. Moreover, it would
terminate at the end of the interim period.

The Standing Committee passed a resolution and accepted the
Viceroy’s invitation for constituting a Negotiating Committee.

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44 *The Hindu*, Madras, 10 June, also of 13 June, 1946.
45 *The Times of India*, Bombay, 11 and 12 June 1946; Jag Parvesh Chander,
46 For further details see S.M. Verma, *op.cit.*; B/85, VII(A)107, 1946, p. 385.
47 ‘Sultan Ahmed to Corfield’, 21 November 1946, Mansergh & Moon, *op.cit.*,
Vol. IX, pp. 120-121; *Nawab* of Bhopal, Rulers of Patiala, Navanagar,
Regarding arrangements during the interim period, the Standing Committee accepted the following proposals suggested by the Chancellor: 48

(a) A special committee may be set up consisting of the representatives of the States and the Central Government. It was to discuss and conclude agreement on issues of common concern;

(b) Disputes of justifiable questions and/or fiscal, economic or financial issues shall be referred to courts of arbitration as a matter of right;

(c) In personal or dynastic questions, the accepted procedure shall be implemented in toto; and

(d) Machinery may be provided in agreement with the States for the early solution of pending cases and for the revision, at the instance of the States concerned, of the prevailing arrangements in respect to subjects like railways, posts, customs, etc.

The Standing Committee also resolved that special cell known as ‘Constitutional Affairs Secretariat’ should be set up as the negotiations of constitutional nature were going to take place from time to time. This cell under the chairmanship of Sultan Ahmed as its Director began to function from 12 September 1946. 49

The press, by and large, admired the resolutions of the Standing Committee. This news-item appeared on the front pages of almost all

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49 B/83, V(D) 518, 1946; for further details also see S.M. Verma, *op.cit*, p. 194
national dailies.\textsuperscript{50} Even almost all the political parties recognized that “In accordance with their best traditions, the Rulers and the representatives of the States had stood by their country at this crucial juncture”.\textsuperscript{51}

The next meeting of the Standing Committee was held on 21\textsuperscript{st} November 1946 in Delhi.\textsuperscript{52} It confirmed the list of the members of the ‘Negotiating Committee’. It too resolved that this committee would meet any representative committee which might be constituted by the British India portion of the Constituent Assembly. It was to negotiate the terms of the States’ participation in the Constituent Assembly. It was to see their ultimate position in the all-India Union. It would also be available to associate itself with such other committees as may be formed by the Constituent Assembly. This was to consider questions which, in the States Negotiating Committee’s opinion might also concern them. This was further decided that the distribution of seats in the Constituent Assembly among the States ‘inter se’ was an issue for them alone to finalize among themselves.\textsuperscript{53}

In one more meeting of the Standing Committee held on 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 1946, it was resolved to accept that the quota of States’ in the Constituent Assembly would be ninety three seats-one after ten lakh population.\textsuperscript{54} It was also decided that the Negotiating Committee would be free to discuss outstanding issues including the terms of States’ participation in the Constituent Assembly as well as their ultimate position in the Union. Their entry in the proposed Union of India should

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\item\textsuperscript{50} The Times of India, Bombay, 12 and 13 June 1946; The Hindu, Madras, 12 June and 15 1946.
\item\textsuperscript{51} The Hindustan Times, Delhi, 12 June 1946. It was by Maulana Azad.
\item\textsuperscript{52} B/6, Chamber II (B) 48, 1947; S.M. Verma, op.cit, pp. 194-195.
\item\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{54} B/85, VII (A)107, 1946, pp. 15-18. For details about the allocation of these seats, see Appendix X; also cited in S.M. Verma, op.cit, p. 195.
\end{itemize}
be only on basis of negotiations. The final decision in respect of their attitude in this matter was to be left to the individual State.

However, here it is worth mentioning that the Cabinet Mission ‘Award’ was not able to bring about a general agreement between the two larger parties i.e. the Congress and the Muslim League. This development was to unsettle the Princes’ decision as well. A function of Princes led by the Chancellor and Sultan Ahmed held that, in the absence of the agreement between these two political parties in British India, the Princes should not join the Constituent Assembly. The Nawab of Bhopal registered great resentment against the ‘Declaration of Objectives’ made by the Constituent Assembly. It not simply suggested the setting up of an independent sovereign Republic. It was to be composed of the Indian States and British Indian. However, it was also maintained that the powers and authority of such a Republic were to be derived from the common men. The Chancellor held that the Cabinet Mission had made it that the States’ entry into the Union was voluntary. However, apt the Declaration had automatically included in the proposed Union all the territories that constituted the Indian States.\footnote{B/82, II (B) 48, pp. 62-63; Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. I, No. 3, 13 December 1946, Delhi, pp. 60-61; Penderel Moon, Divide and Quit, London, 1962, pp. 62-63.} At this stage the Nawab said, “It was incorrect” , to assume that the States had no option but to come into the proposed structure.\footnote{Ibid.; For more detail see S.M. Verma, op.cit, p. 195.}

A Conference of Rulers and Ministers was held in Delhi on 28 January 1947. The opening words of the Chancellor’s address were: “We meet at the threshold of a new era. We told the Cabinet Mission that the Indian Princes would not hamper or stand in the way of the achievement
of complete independence...we are told that we have no place in India...Our people are openly instigated against us…”57

The conference adopted a resolution; it laid down conditions needed for the Princes’ participation in the Constituent Assembly’s deliberation. The resolution maintained that, after the end of the interim period, Paramountcy should revert to the Princes, and not to the new formed Government of India.58 The Union Government should exercise merely those functions as the States urgently assigned or delegated to it. The Union should not intervene in the constitution of any State, its territorial integrity and the succession of its ruling dynasty in accordance with custom, law and usage of the State. Further, any unit thereof; and the existing boundaries of a State would not be tempered or changed except by its free consent and approval. The Constituent Assembly was not to deal with matter/issues affecting the internal administration and constitution of the States. The quote of seats’ distribution among the States, in the Constituent Assembly was indeed a matter for the States to take up and decide among themselves. The method of selection of the States’ representatives was a question for consultation among the States’ Negotiating Committee and the corresponding committee of British India. For further safeguard, it was also provided that the consequences of these negotiations would be subject to the approval of the Constitutional Advisory Committee of the Chamber. It too required ratification by the States.

The publication of this resolution did provoke sufficient controversy. Public opinion was sufficiently agitated over the statement made by some Rulers. They opined that, they would boycott the

57 B/6, Chamber II (B) 48, 1947, pp. 62-63, 243.
Constituent Assembly if the fundamental propositions were not accepted by the Congress.⁵⁹ Among the Rulers, there was a small faction that did not see eye to eye with the resolution passed in Delhi. This faction held that the “Princes should not align themselves with a political party in a dispute with others”.⁶⁰ The Maharaja of Cochin declared that he was in complete agreement with the Constituent Assembly’s resolution and realized that “all power and authority should be derived from the people”.⁶¹ Cochin as early as July 1946 had made up mind to join the Constituent Assembly. It also decided to send to it only representatives elected by the State Legislative Council.⁶² The Ruler of Baroda, at once the Delhi resolution, announced on 8 February 1947 that he did not want the services of the States’ Negotiating Committee to deal with the Constituent Assembly. He too made it clear that he was not bound by the Delhi resolution. He had decided to join the Constituent Assembly on his own.⁶³ The majority of the States yet stood by the Negotiating Committee of the Chamber of Princes.

Negotiating Committee of the States’ first meeting and its counterpart of British India met on 8 February 1947 in Delhi. Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, B.P. Sitaramayya’ Shankara Rao Deo, and N. Gopalaswamy Aiyanger formed the British India Negotiating Committee.⁶⁴ The States’ representatives emphatically expressed that that would not be possible for their Rulers to decide the issue of their entry to the Constituent Assembly until they had received satisfactory assurances on the issue of the scope of matters to be discussed by the Constituent Assembly and also on the other issues

⁶⁰ *The Hindu*, Madras, 10 October 1946.
⁶² V.P. Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 72.
⁶³ Phadnis, *op.cit.*, p. 166.
⁶⁴ B/85, VII(D)6, 200, p. 25.
mentioned in the January resolution.\textsuperscript{65} The British India Negotiating Committee answered that the British Government was not concerned. It was only concerned with the ‘Cabinet Plan’.\textsuperscript{66} Each side thus stuck to its own viewpoint. So there was a deadlock. Next day, i.e. on 9 February 1947, the Maharaja of Patiala as Pro-chancellor intervened. He sought clarifications of the previous day’s discussions. Nehru, on behalf of the Congress, made a ‘persuasive approach to the Rulers’.\textsuperscript{67} He observed that the meeting was proceeding, as it must, on the basis of the Cabinet mission plan. It had been accepted by the Congress in full with all its implications. Nehru further explained that the issue of a monarchical form of Government in the States did not arise from the Cabinet Mission Plan. However, it had been made vivid by representatives from British India that they did not want to come in the way of this kind of government. The Congress had no idea of changing the States’ boundaries. It held that such change must have the consent of the States. It would not be forced on them. Nehru too added that the scheme under the plan was a voluntary one; there would be no compulsion at any stage.\textsuperscript{68}

After Nehru’s speech, the atmosphere in the meeting became conciliatory. The question of filling 93 seats allotted to the States was considered. It was decided that a scheme of distribution should be worked out amicably and jointly by the Secretariat of the Constituent Assembly and that of the Chamber of Princes. Further discussions were to take place in their next meeting to be held on 1 March 1947.\textsuperscript{69} The reconciliation appears to have been promoted by two factors: (i) Nehru

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p. 34; S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit}, p. 198.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p. 35; S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit}, p. 199.
\textsuperscript{67} V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{68} B/85, VII (D), 200, pp. 35-36.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.; S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit}, p. 199.
was interested in securing the cooperation of the Princes to improve the opportunity of success of the Constituent Assembly; (ii) the Princes already had a cleavage among their ranks. The Chancellor did not want to widen the rift.

As the differences and contradiction between the Congress and the Muslim League had brought the British Government at the centre to a standstill; the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee solution found. With the permission of his cabinet, he declared in the House of Commons on the morning of 20 February 1947 that England would handover power to the responsible representatives of Indian by June 1948.70 As regards Indian States, he made clear that: As was clearly stated by the cabinet Mission, His Majesty’s Government did not intend to transfer their powers and obligations under Paramountcy to any government of British India. It was not intended to bring Paramountcy as a system to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power. However, it was thought that for the intervening period the relations of the Crown with individual States might be adjusted by an agreement.

The Chancellor, commenting on this statement, uttered:71

that the States then had their opportunity of playing a vital and an important role in helping to build a new India strong, happy, prosperous and contended. Once more he was really happy to state that a pronouncement had been formally made that Paramountcy would lapse when Great Britain withdrew herself from the scene of Indian administration and that the States will resume their freedom.

The Hindustan Times stated in its editorial entitled ‘The Crown and the States’ that the proclamation contained in the Prime Minister’s

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70 B/85, VII(A)107, 1948.
71 The Times of India, Bombay, 22 February 1947.
statement meant that His Majesty’s Government would not undertake responsibilities of the Indian States that would be directly or indirectly inconsistent with the freedom of India as a whole.\textsuperscript{72} \textit{The Manchester Guardian} also commented: “As far as the Princes, we need not worry. Paramountcy is not the outcome of Law or treaties but of facts. A strong Central Government in India will be paramount, and the Princes will have to come to an agreement with it”.\textsuperscript{73}

The announcement of Attlee, and the appointment of Mountbatten as the Viceroy of India, exercised a great impact upon the proceedings of the two Negotiating Committees. When they met on 1 March 1947 as fixed earlier,\textsuperscript{74} the meeting proceeded with a sense of urgency but responsibility too. It concluded its deliberations on 3 March 1947. The Negotiating Committees issued joint communiqué that laid down that:

(i) the allocation of seats among various States would be fixed by the Secretaries; such minor changes as were regarded essential by the parties concerned were to be carried out. It too was agreed that not less than 50% of the States total representatives should be elected by the elected members of legislatures. Where if such legislatures did not exist they should be elected by members of electoral colleges set up for the purpose. However, the States would continue to increase the quota of the elected representatives to more than 50% of the total number so far as possible;

(ii) Pattabhi Sitaramayya, N. Gopalaswami Aiyanger, V.T. Krishnamachari, Sultan Ahmed, P.N. Rau, Mir Maqbool and H.V.R. Ienger formed a committee. It was set up to consider the

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{The Hindustan Times}, Delhi, 24 February 1947.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{The Manchester Guardian}, Manchester, 28 February, 1947.

\textsuperscript{74} B/85, VII(8)2, 1946, p. 55; S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 199.
changes on matters referred to above and other matters that might arise at different times; and

(iii) the said decisions of the States Negotiating Committees be placed before a general conference of Rulers as well as the representatives of States for ratification.75

Rulers’ general conference was held on 2 April 1947. It was to consider the Standing Committee’s memorandum.76 The Maharaja of Bikaner did not agree with the accepted also acceptable approach of the Memorandum. He questioned the advisability and wisdom of an attitude of ‘Wait and Watch’. He thought that the only safe policy was to work absolutely with the stabilizing elements in British India to create a centre for taking over from the British. The interests of the States’ people lay in joining hands with the British India.77 The views of the Maharaja of Bikaner were too endorsed by the Maharaja of Patiala.78

A decisive split was, however, averted due to last-minute compromise formula drawn up by the Maharaja of Gwalior. It allowed freedom to the member-States of the Chamber of Princes to enter the Constituent Assembly at any stage they might think fit. In the meanwhile, the Maharaja of Patiala also got elected two representatives from the electoral college of his State for the Constituent Assembly.79

It was on 8 April 1947, on Nehru’s invitation certain Princes acceded to work on different committees of the Constituent Assembly. The Nawab of Bhopal made all out efforts to persuade the ‘Progressive

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75 Ibid., pp. 75-77.
76 B/85, VII (A)2, 1946, pp. 63-69.
77 B/86, VII(A)17, 1947, p. 51, For see Letter of Maharaja of Bikaner to the Nawab of Bhopal, Chancellor of Chamber.
78 Ibid., p. 109 (It is to be noted that the group came to be called the progressive group of Patiala and Bikaner).
79 B/86, VII (A)17, 1947, pp. 107 and 109.
group’ not to join the Constituent Assembly, in vain,\textsuperscript{80} and it was on 28 April 1947, the States of Baroda, Bikaner, Cochin, Jailpur, Jodhpur, Patiala and Rewa made up their minds to sent their representatives to the Constituent Assembly.\textsuperscript{81} Also a large number of States decided to join the Constituent Assembly by 10 June 1947. This is evident from the following table:\textsuperscript{82}

1. Eastern State Group: Decided to join Constituent Assembly.
2. Punjab State Group: No decision
3. Kathiawar States
   Group (Western India State Confederation): Decided to Join
4. Gujarat States: Decided to Join
5. Bundelkhand and Malwa States Group: Decided to Join
7. Deccan States Group: Decided to Join

On 15 June 1947, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution it read that the All India Congress Committee welcomes the association of several of the Indian States in the Constituent Assembly’s work expects that the remaining States will also cooperate in this constitutional structure of an independent India. In it the State units will be equal and autonomous sharers with the other units of the federation.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{80} Phadnis, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{81} V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{82} B/86, Chamber VII (A) 31, 2004, 1947, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{The Indian Annual Register}, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1947, pp. 137-150.
Differences amongst the Rulers of the native States almost wrecked the Chambers of Princes and made it impossible for them to function collectively in those crucial days. Some of the Rulers like those of Bhopal, Hyderabad, Travancore, and Mysore continued to favour liberty for the States after the transfer of power without caring about geographical and economic compulsions as well as implications of such a move. Several still hoped to form a third independent unit ‘Sateistan’. 84

The Viceroy in a meeting asked his staff that he had seen the Nawab of Bhopal, the Chancellor; he had given him the outline of the announcement to be made by His Majesty’s Government on 3 June 1947. He had pledged not to leak out this information. When he was conveyed that His Majesty’s Government’s intention was not to grant ‘Dominion Status’ to the States, he felt hurt and remarked”, His Majesty’s Government had once more let the States down”. 85

The British Government was, however, responsible for earlier creating such hopes in the minds of the Indian Princes, like not to allow any intervention in their internal matters in future and freedom if to join Indian union or not. 86 Even after announcement of transfer of power by June 1948, Mr. Attlee, the P.M. instructed the would-be ‘Viceroy’, Mr. Mountbatten “It is not intended to bring Paramountcy as a system to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but you are authorized, at such time as you think appropriate, to enter into

84 See Mountbatten Papers”, Mansergh & Moon, op.cit., Vol. V, p. 206; Bisheshwar Prasad, Freedom and Bondage, Delhi, 1982, p. 598. The ruler of Bikaner once had discussions with the Viceroy about the future of the States and the Viceroy had this feeling that these four States were almost the only ones which were not likely to join one or the other Constituent Assembly.
negotiations with individual States for adjusting their relations with the Crown”.

On 26th February, Ruler of Bhopal furnished Wavell with a Memorandum. It was for the Secretary of State on the “Contraction of Paramountcy”. It also suggested a Residents’ Conference should be called in April to discuss it. Pethick-Lawrence accepted this approach. In his opinion the aim was to enable the States to stand on their own feet and to encourage them to stand to the full with British India. The ‘progressive contraction’ of Paramountcy meant the substantial transfer of power to the Princes some months ahead of the due date for British India. In Corfield’s opinion, expressed to Abell on 21-4-1947 and to Mountbatten on 28-4-1947, the Rulers were absolutely justified in deferring the decision about joining the Constituent Assembly, until its position was clear.

The Congress did not seriously fear the emergence of many hundred independent prince-ling's. However, they had reasonable apprehensions of Universal administrative dislocation and from the direction of the bigger States the “Specter of Princely Ulster's”. To avert these threatened results the Congress might try to frighten the Rulers by mobilizing popular forces. They could try cajoling. They would urge the Viceroy to use persuasion and bend Paramountcy doctrine in favour of coherence. The Congress followed and tried all three methods. On 1 May 1947, Mountbatten himself reported to Listowel that Nehru had recently been taking a keen interest in the future of Indian States, especially from the point of view of the people of States. Nehru further wrote that it was

88 Corfield’s Secret Minute 26-2-1947, Political 27 (R) S, 1947, N.A.I.
an “absurd idea” for any one of the Indian States to regard them free.\textsuperscript{91} On 17 April 1947, Patel remarked that we do not want to destroy the princely order. What we want the princes to do or to give responsible Government to the people though not at once. Gandhiji also denounced the vicious doctrine of the “in-transmissibility of Paramountcy”. He warned the Princes that they were sitting on cracked roofs; it would be in their interest to demolish that structure before it came down over them.\textsuperscript{92}

People’s movements along with Congress in the States’ were too pressurizing the British and also the Princes. Permanent secretary of the AICC in a circular to all Praja Mandals in Indian States on 8-2-1947 wanted to keep the Congress totally informed of happenings in the States. The Secretary Hiralal Shastri of AISPC declared that AISPC stood to follow the policy of Congress with all sincerity.\textsuperscript{93}

Jinnah knew fully well that the easiest path to demolish India was to inspire and encourage the native States to remain within the Indian territories; while only a few of them were geographically adjacent to Pakistan. Moreover, by their independence, the Muslim Nawab such as Nizam and Bhopal would remain as strong and permanent allies of Pakistan within the mainland of India; it would keep India definitely weak. Further, it would Balkanized and strengthens the position of Pakistan. Even Jinnah in one of the meetings argued that “Every Indian State is a sovereign State”. On 15th June 1947, when AICC passed a resolution Jinnah too issued a press statement within two days telling “Constitutionally and legally the Indian States will be independent sovereign States on the termination of Paramountcy”.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., Vol. III, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{92} Amrit Bazar Patrika, 19/4/47 and 27/4/47.
\textsuperscript{93} AISPC Papers, File Nos. 227, 253, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{94} Transfer of Power, Vol. XI, No. 225.
The French also were reported to be having the idea of recognizing Hyderabad’s independence; but the Americans promised to hold off until the negotiations for accession were over.95

On 3 June 1947, Mountbatten declared the decision of His Majesty’s Government as to the way by which power would be transferred from the British to the Indian hands.96 He made it apt that the British would leave power to the two Governments i.e. India and Pakistan, of course, on the basis of ‘Dominion Status’, and that leaving of power would take place much earlier than the fixed time June 1948. The Cabinet Mission’s Memoranda of 12 May 1946 regarding the States would remain unchanged.97 The Viceroy met the States Negotiating Committee on the same evening. He explained the plan to them. It’s Copies were distributed. A general discussion was held. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar appealed to the Viceroy for Paramountcy to be loosened or permitted to lapse before the date of transfer of power came. He told that such a course would enable the States to negotiate on equal footing with the prospective Governments of the two Dominions i.e. India and Pakistan. Questions relating to communications, defense, commercial arrangements etc. were also discussed. With the declaration of this plan, the Nawab of Bhopal submitted his resignation as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the same day i.e. 3 June 1947. He sent it to the Viceroy for his approval.98 He wrote in this letter of resignation:99

As the Viceroy has announced the new plan regarding the future of the States, Bhopal State would, as soon as the

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95 Ibid., Vol. XII, No. 176, 231.
98 Johnson, op.cit., pp. 103-104; B/82, Chamber, V(D), 497, 1947.
99 Ibid., also see Mosley, op.cit., p. 159.
Paramountcy is withdrawn, be assuming an independent status; I consider it desirable that I should tender my resignation of the office of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes with immediate effect. Another reason of my resignation is that the Chamber formed a part of Constitutional machinery which, in my opinion, will now become ‘functus officio’.

In another letter, the Nawab stated:100

The State of Bhopal does not wish to remain associated in any manner whatsoever with the Chamber of Princes or any of its subordinate organizations, it cannot be, therefore, represented by the Standing Committee of that organization.

The Viceroy accepted his resignation, of course, with regret. In a confidential communication to the Secretary of State, he conveyed:101

The Chamber of Princes obviously will lapse with the lapse of Paramountcy. There has been no move by Princes to perpetuate the organization as a common body of their own with suitable adjustments in its constitution and functions….I have been considering whether to suggest formal dissolution of the Chamber involving presumably Royal proclamation or message from His Majesty. I have come to the conclusion that this would not be appropriate…My suggestion is that there should be no formal dissolution and that the Chamber should be allowed to die natural and unobtrusive death.

It is pertinent to mention that the Secretary of State approved the suggestion.102

100 Ibid.
A meeting of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes was held on 5 June 1947 in Delhi. It was to discuss the Chancellor’s resignation and also the implications of the word ‘functus-officio’. The Maharaja of Patiala chaired it. In fact, he had taken over as the officiating Chancellor. The committee realized that since the Chamber’s dissolution would take time, so its members’ approval for its winding up might be taken. A large number of States were in favour of making another effective organization in case the Chamber was dissolved legally.

Before its dissolution, the Maharaja of Patiala consulted legal luminaries about the Chamber becoming ‘functus-officio’. The legal view was that with the dissolution of Paramountcy then announced, the Chamber as an organization that represented the relationship of the Crown with the Indian States would have to undergo an absolute change. It would surely cease to function as a part of the Paramountcy’s constitutional machinery. Therefore, it would be right to tell that it would become ‘functus-officio’ in its then form from the date Paramountcy was fully dissolved. However, it was totally wrong to suggest that before Paramountcy had dissolved or before the Crown had ‘suo-motu’ dissolved the Chamber; it would cease to function in a constitutional capacity. For the time being the Chamber of Princes would not only continue to exist, but must be assumed to function fully in conformity with its constitution’s terms.

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102 Telegram of the Viceroy to Listowel the Secretary of State for India (Confidential No. R/3) 1/138, cit. in Mansergh & Moon, (eds.), op.cit, Vol. IX, pp. 58-59; Also see, S.M. Verma, op.cit., p. 205.
103 B/82, V (D) 498, 1948. The other members present in the meeting were the rulers of Bikaner, Bundi, Dholpur, Dungarpur, Nabha, Navangar, Bilaspur, Tehri Garhwal, Khairpur and Malhar.
104 Mosley, op.cit., p. 160.
105 B/82, V (D) 498, 1947, NAI, New Delhi.
The Maharajas of Patiala as well as Bikaner were of the firm view that it was essential to keep the Chamber alive at least till the transfer of power had completed. 106 The Chamber had records and documents that would be needed for the States’ entry into the Constituent Assembly. Above all, the Chamber would be of great help in the negotiations between the Constituent Assembly and the Princes. Hence, obviously, its dissolution at this crucial time would harmfully the gains of the Princes. 107

The States entitled to separate representation in the Constituent Assembly, known as viable States, were then reassured that there was no threat to their individual existence. This development and change led to awareness among them of a community of interest and joint consultation. Conversation/consultation among them became frequent. 108 The smaller States became suspicious regarding the attitude of the major States. This clash of interests stood in the way of any firm action on the part of the Rulers as a body. 109 The States had a sympathizer and champion of their cause in Conard Corfield, the Political Adviser. From the beginning, he had bias and hate against the Congress leaders. He wanted that Indian States too should have their own ‘Dominion Status’. 110

Corfield told Mosley with absolute frankness that his job was to look after the interests of the Princely States” and not “to make things easier for India”. 111 According to his predecessor Francis Wylie, he had

106  B/82, V (D) 497, 1947, NAI, New Delhi.
107  Ibid.
108  Phadnis, op.cit., p. 181.
109  As a matter of fact the organization was in a state of shock and chaos. The Rana of Dholpur in a letter to Patiala wrote, “The India of Princes that spoke and acted with one aim and voice is also sadly divided today”. Letter dated 23 July 1947, B/86, VII (A) 27, 1947, p. 71.
110  Mosley, op.cit., p. 160.
111  Ibid., p. 162; S.M. Verma, op.cit., p. 205.
“imbibed, perhaps too successfully, the Princely point of views”. On 16 December 1946, he told the Residents Conference “what we contemplated was the gradual reduction of Paramountcy intervention paripassu with a gradual increase in States’ freedom so that the smallest possible vacuum remained at the end of the interim period when Paramountcy would lapse”. While the Indian Princes felt alarmed and confused, Corfield inevitably persuaded them to liberalize their administration. He also asked them to constitute a solid bloc in order to oppose the encroachments of the politicians of British India. He hoped that the Viceroy, who was a Royalist and ‘the cousin of the King’, would assist the Princes. But, later on, to his utter disappointment, he found the Viceroy absolutely unsympathetic towards the cause of the Princes. Corfield then decided to move on his own. He decided to make sure that at least three or four Princely States such as Hyderabad, Bhopal, Junagarh and Travancore should not fall in the lap of the Congress. He began to carry on direct correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Listowel. In fact, in it he bypassed the Viceroy. Listowel displayed sympathy for Corfield’s opinion that “the Paramountcy which Britain held over the Princely States should not, at any price, be handed over to the new Indian Dominion”. When in London in May 1947 Corfield had several talks with Listowel. So he was able to convince him to include one significant clause in the Indian Independence Act, 1947. It read, “the Paramountcy would lapse on the day when India became independent, i.e., 15th August 1947”. It meant that unless arrangements were made beforehand, British India would be confronted with numerous Princely

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113 Minutes of the Residents Conference, 16-17 December 1946, Political Department 113-P(S)47, National State Archives, New Delhi.
States”. However, Nehru denounced this clause as a move for the ‘Balkanization of India.’

Corfield flew back to Delhi by the same plane that was to take Mountbatten to London. He carefully kept away from “Viceroy’s House”. From then on, he noted, “Mountbatten viewed me with suspicion”. The doubt was merited, as Corfield settled down systematically to obstruct what he knew to be Viceroy’s policy pleading subsequently that while doing so he was carrying out the instructions which he had got in London. Of course, he had some justice on his side.

Corfield, after returning to India, at once went to work on the brief that he had received from Listowel. Without telling the Viceroy, he ordered the Political Department to cancel all arrangements that had been concluded between the paramountcy and the Princely States. He instructed his staff to take away from the files all the confidential reports and communications which had taken place between the Political Department and the Princes. He told these papers to be burnt. It was then believed that four tons of papers concerning the Princes were burnt. Some other papers and files were shipped by diplomatic bag to the Imperial Archives in London. The plea that Corfield gave to Mountbatten for the destruction of these papers was that only those papers and documents were being burnt which successor Governments in India and Pakistan could use to blackmail the Rulers.

On 13 June 1947 there was a meeting at the Viceroy’s House. Nehru, Jinnah, Corfield and the Viceroy were present in this meeting. Nehru, in a rage, attacked the Political Department as well as Corfield.

116 The Times of India, Bombay, 7 May 1947.
117 Corfield, The Princely India I Knew, p. 152.
He asked the Viceroy that a judicial inquiry at the highest level should be conducted in connection with the working of the Political Department. However, in this meeting the Congress and the Muslim League acceded to the formation of the States Department. It would deal with the States and the Princes. Corfield objected, but the protest did not bear any fruit because of the Viceroy’s cold attitude.\(^{120}\)

However, relations between the two i.e. the Viceroy and Corfield became cold. The former he noted with some bitterness in a report to London, “No one had given me the slightest indication that the problem of the Princes was going to be as difficult if not more difficult, than that of the British India”\(^{121}\). Corfield asked to hold organize a Conference at which Mountbatten would expound to the Princes the merits they would have from immediate accession. He acted upon but arranged to leave his job and India just two days before the Princes gathered “with a feeling of nausea, as though my own honour had been smirched and I had deserted my friends”\(^{122}\).

The Interim Cabinet accepted the proposal for the creation of the new Department in one of its meetings held on 25 June 1947. On 27 June a press statement was released that Sardar Patel allocated the new Department, with V.P. Menon as its Secretary.\(^{123}\) After its formal inauguration a press release was issued by Patel which pointed out:

\(^{120}\) Ibid., p. 164; also Corfield, *op.cit.*, pp. 155-156, But the minutes record that Viceroy supported Corfield by saying that the he was doing no more than carrying out the policy of the Secretary of State (Transfer of Power, Vol. XI, No. 175).


\(^{123}\) “Mountbatten Papers”-Minutes of the meeting of the Indian Cabinet, Case No. 155/32/47 (Secret), Mansergh & P. Moon, Vol. IX, *op.cit.*, p. 1112. This meeting was attended by the Viceroy, Nehru, Liaqat Hyat Khan, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rab Nishtar, Rajgopalachari, Dr. Mathai, Baldev Singh,
The States have already accepted the basic principle that for defense, foreign affairs and communications they would come into the Indian union. We ask no more of them than accession on these three subjects in which the common interests of the country are involved…I invite my friends, the Rulers of the States and their people to the counsels of the Constituent Assembly in this spirit of friendship to our motherland for the common good of us all.  

A delegation of Rulers and States’ Ministers went to meet Sardar Patel his residence on 10 July 1947. The Rulers of Patiala and Gwalior, B.L. Mitter, K.M. Panikkar, and Hari Sharma were prominent among them. Patel urged them that the States which had joined the Constituent Assembly should at once join India on three subjects i.e. Defense, External affairs and Communication. He too told that such a course would enable them to have a direct voice in shaping Central Government’s policies. The States’ delegation stressed that the matter required very careful consideration. It too needed and cautious approach; it necessitated informal discussions between the Rulers and their Advisors on this issue. Another States’ delegation met Sardar Patel on 24 July 1947. Indeed, this meeting was a crucial and significant one for it displayed that the newly set-up States’ Department was going on with its plans. By this time, several rulers had uttered god by to the Nawab of Bhopal.

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126 Also see V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 108; B/23, III (A) 75, 1947. The others who joined the delegates wee: Rulers of Bikaner, Navanagar, Ramaswami Mudaliai, C.S. Venkatchari.
A special session of the Chamber of Princes was summoned on 25 July 1947.\textsuperscript{127} The Viceroy, Mountbatten addressed it for the first and the last time. In his extempore speech the Viceroy advised the Rulers “to accede to the appropriate Dominion, with regard to three subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications as they have nothing to lose as the States had never dealt with them. Their accession would involve no financial liability and in other matters there would be no encroachment on their sovereignty”. Finally, he suggested that they should join either union before 15 August 1947.\textsuperscript{128}

British officials noted the speech inconsistent with the P.M.’s assurance. The latter had assured that the States would be absolutely free to decide their own future. Attlee had approved a telegram telling the Viceroy that the latter was going too far. Listowel (Secretary of State) wrote to the Viceroy Mountbatten on 1 August that it was correct to urge accession but “We must keep balance and not ourselves add to pressure which facts of the situation place in any case on States”.\textsuperscript{129} The Viceroy explained in his reply on 4 August that the Princes could not afford or even think to delay their accession until the Dominions made their Constitution for after 15 August 1947 they would be compelled to face rebellions of their subjects. “I am trying my very best to create an integrated India which while securing stability will ensure friendship with Great Britain. If I am allowed to play my hand without interference I have no doubt that I will succeed”.\textsuperscript{130} He did succeed and Listowel cabled on 9 August 1947, “We are full of admiration at your success in having

\textsuperscript{127} Also see Gwyer & Appadorai, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 772; Mansergh & Moon, \textit{op.cit.}, Vol. XII, p. 234.

\textsuperscript{128} Johnson, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 140-141. Jonshon says, “The (Viceroy) used every weapon in his armoury of persuasion”; also see Mosley, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 172.

\textsuperscript{129} Transfer of Power, Vol. XII, No. 307; \textit{Attlee Papers}, N.A.I.

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol. XII, No. 340.
overcome the hesitation of so many States about acceptance of the terms of accession offered by Patel”.\textsuperscript{131}

By this time, the States’ Department had established its feet. Patel and Menon were certain that with Mountbatten’s influence in the background, they would have most of the Princes sign the ‘Instrument of Accession’. To quote Mosley, “Menon knew that the time had come to break with Corfield. Through his spies in the Political Department, he came to know that Corfield was trying hard to persuade the Nawab of Bhopal to make a last-ditch stand against accession by urging them (the Princes) to form themselves into a third force of independent States”. “The position is such”, Menon said to Mountbatten, “that I am afraid that a choice must be made: either Corfield goes or I go”. As a result, Mountbatten called Corfield and advised him to pack off and leave for England.\textsuperscript{132}

Now, The Negotiating Committee of the States was split up in order to expedite the work divided into sub-committees to deal, respectively, with the ‘Standstill Agreements’ and the ‘Instrument of Accession’. A collective meeting of these sub-committees was held in Bikaner on 31 July 1947. It finally prepared the draft of the ‘Instrument of Accession’ and the ‘Standstill Agreement’.\textsuperscript{133}

The ‘Instrument of Accession’ was not uniform for all the native States. Only in 140 States’, which were members of the Chamber in their own right, case the ‘Instrument of Accession’ provided the accession for the subjects of Defense, External Affairs and Communications; whereas in the case of Estates, Talukas, etc., numbering 300, another ‘Instrument of Accession’, suitable to their status and needs, was to be signed. This

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., No. 401; S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{132} Mosley, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 175.

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{The Tribune}, Lahore, 1 August 1947 (about 60 Princes attended the meeting).
document, while preserving the form of accession, vested all the residuary powers and jurisdiction in the Central Government.\textsuperscript{134}

The ‘Standstill Agreement’, however, was identical in all the cases.\textsuperscript{135} The States Department assured the Chancellor that “all the personal privileges of the Rulers, as at present existing, whether covered by the ‘Standstill Agreements’ or not, would be respected by the Dominion Government”.\textsuperscript{136}

Mountbatten gave a luncheon to many leading Rulers and their Ministers on 1 August 1947. The Viceroy used the occasion to make it vivid to them that the Government of India had decided that the ‘Standstill Agreements’ would be entered into merely with those Rulers who executed the ‘Instrument of Accession’.\textsuperscript{137} Here, let it be noted that the Rulers of all the States, geographically contiguous to India, with the exception of Junagadh and two small States under Muslim Rulers in Kathiawar, signed the ‘Instrument of Accession’ and the also ‘Standstill Agreements’.\textsuperscript{138} Even last ditchers like Dholpur, Bharatpur, Nabha, Bilaspukr and Jodhpur finally signed. Regarding Hyderabad, special permission was granted due to its peculiar circumstances.\textsuperscript{139} The Viceroy informed the \textit{Nizam} that the offer of accession would remain open in the case of Hyderabad for a period of two months only.\textsuperscript{140}

The Rulers of Bhopal and Indore attempted to negotiate even with some foreign powers, with a view to getting international recognition to

\textsuperscript{134} S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 209; B/86, VII(A)32, 1947.
\textsuperscript{135} It was an agreement for the advantage of the Dominion of India as well as of the Indian States that the existing agreements and administrative arrangements in the matters of common concern should continue for the time being; cit. in \textit{White Paper on Indian States}, New Delhi, 1950, pp. 173-74.
\textsuperscript{136} B/86, VII(A)21, 1947.
\textsuperscript{137} V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 114; Johnson, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{138} V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Ibid.}
their States as independent and sovereign States. However, because of the fear of strong public opinion among their subjects and the accession of other States, they eventually felt that they would not survive for long by keeping them outside the Dominion. So, they signed the ‘Instruments of Accession’.\textsuperscript{141} The Viceroy publicly acknowledged the services rendered by the Rulers of the Bikaner and Patiala in the task of the accession of States.\textsuperscript{142} 

The Rulers, in fact, by conceding three subjects of Defense, Foreign Relations and Communications practically accepted the substitution of the British Government by the Indian Government on the same terms and conditions. Thus, India became one Federation with the Provinces and States as its integrated parts.

The Maharaja of Patiala, the acting Chancellor of the Chamber, too relinquished the reign of his office.\textsuperscript{143} Before relinquishing the charge, however, on Bikaner ruler’s suggestion, he formed a Committee of Privileges. It was to consider matters relating to the privileges and immunities of the Rulers, disputes between States, aggression on each other and passport facilities.\textsuperscript{144} On the other hand, the Viceroy, in a meeting with the Princes on 14 August, suggested that as the Chamber was dissolved, a new organization should be constituted. It should be absolutely non-communal. The Maharaja of Bikaner, in pursuance of this suggestion, suggested a new organization.\textsuperscript{145} He sent a copy of it to all the States for their consideration; but nothing came out of it.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item V.P. Menon, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 120.
\item Viceroy’s personal report no. 17, Confidential, 16 August 1947, Mansergh and Moon (eds.), \textit{op.cit.}, Vol. XII, pp. 767-69.
\item B/82, V (D)498, 1947.
\item B/83, V (D)506, 1947/2004, p. 15. The following Patiala, Bikaner, Indore, Bhopal, Jaipur, Kotah, Alwar and V.P. Menon.
\item The new scheme is given is Appendix XI.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
To argue that “the Princes were doomed to extinction anyhow, but that they should have been coaxed and driven to the slaughter house by the shepherd, they trusted most, is what adds poignancy to the scene”, 146 was not correct. Neither Corfield nor Monotone could advise a better course. And as Zeigler writes, “The wolves got them in the end, but Mountbatten did at least procure them, a few years of reasonable prosperity”. 147 Above all, because of his policies the overwhelming majority of States had joined the new dominions and the constitutional Chaos and insurrectionary violence that might have followed the total lapse of Paramountcy, had been averted. 148

Morris Jones puts it, “The relegation of the States’ problem to a subsiding position continued for too long and the process of bringing the Princes to terms with certain inescapable realities needed much more time and attention then it received. The inattention to the process between the 3 June statement and Mountbatten’s 25 July speech allowed the States’ lobbies to be unimpeded in activity, Congress to become legitimately alarmed and distrustful and the rulers to luxuriate in wild dreams of independent power in an India of many partitions”. 149

Summing up: The formation of the Chamber of Princes in 1921 was not only a turning point, rather it marked a significant stage in the development of relations between the British Government of India and the native States. It involved a definite departure from the earlier policy according to which the British authorities had deliberately discouraged joint action and joint consultation among the Princes. 150 The rise and growth of militant national movement in the subcontinent during the first

147 Zeigler, op.cit., p. 415.
150 Basta No. 2 (hereinafter B/-), V(D) 470, 1945; also cited S.M. Verma, op.cit., p. 187.
two decades of the 20th century, coupled with the loyalty evinced by the Princes and Chiefs towards the Paramountcy during the First World War, impressed upon the British policy-makers the need of changing their attitude in respect of the Native Royalties. They felt that the Chamber of Princes would not only satisfy, in certain measure, the vociferous demand of the Native aristocracy but such an organization would also be exploited to their own merit and used as a bulwark to thwart the growing nationalist forces in India.\textsuperscript{151}

The British statesmen framed the Constitution of the Chamber of Princes so cleverly and cautiously as to impart to this organization ‘glamour with little substance of power’. It was to be no more than only a deliberative body. Its decisions were not to be binding on the Government. At the outset, the Standing Committee of the Chamber could not frame the agenda for its meeting was by the Political Secretary prepared it with the approval of the Viceroy.\textsuperscript{152} After sometime, however, the Standing Committee began prepare the agenda in consultation with the Viceroy. However, the Viceroy had the right of rejecting agenda’s any item. It virtually snatched away initiative in all matters from the rulers and vested it in the Paramount against whom the Princes were to seek the redress of their grievances. The scope of subjects which fell within the Chamber, purview was confined to the discussion of subjects of general nature. Indeed, they were of great interest and significance for the Princes. Issues pertaining to the internal affairs of individual States, their rights, interests and powers as well as privileges and prerogatives of Individual Princes and Chiefs and the members of their families, were

\begin{footnotes}
\item[151] B/82, V (D)470, 1945; also see B/82, III(B)77, 1946; also see S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit}, p. 188.
\end{footnotes}
vividly and absolutely excluded from the defined functions of the Chamber.\footnote{Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 9.}

Regarding the composition of the Chamber, it was laid down in its Constitution of 1921 that 108 major States would send one representative each in their own right. 127 lesser States would elect 12 representatives in all. The Chamber’s Standing Committee initially was to consist of 5 members. They included the Chancellor as its ex-officio member. In the 1930s (it began to be realized) that the Chamber was not proving effective because it lacked representative character.\footnote{B/82, V(D)470, 1945; A.C. Banerjee and A.N. Bose, \textit{The Cabinet Mission in India}, Calcutta, 1946, p. 31.} In 1939, therefore, certain important amendments were made in the Constitution. Consequently, 20 more States were given the right to send one representative each in the Chamber, thus raising the total number of its membership. The strength of the Standing Committee also increased to 33 members. The big States of Baroda, Gwalior, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Mysore were made its permanent members.\footnote{Jag Parvesh Chander, \textit{India Steps Forward: The Story of Cabinet Mission in India}, Lahore, 1946, p. 45.} A permanent Committee of Ministers with strength of 33 to 35 members was added as a new organ in Constitution. Though the Chamber had become more representative in character, the amendments did not bring about any substantial change in its powers and functions.

In spite of its limited powers, the Chamber of Princes played significant role in safeguarding the interests of the Princes and the Chiefs. Since 1858, the British Government’s policy had been marked by an ever-increasing interference in the States internal affairs, necessitated, to a large extent, by the growing needs of the Paramount. The British authorities had imposed gradually, but certainly, new obligations on all
the States in the questions of succession, salt, opium, railways, posts, telegraphs, extradition, State forces, internal administration, employment of Europeans, Princes’ tours abroad, etc. In so doing they had displayed scant regard for the existing treaties, engagements and *sanads*. These were declaredly to be ‘scrupulously maintained’. The Chamber took up most of these issues and passed several resolutions for favorable consideration by the British Government of India.

It was due to the Chamber’s efforts that the British Government of India agreed to pay reasonable compensation to the States for the lands ceded by them for the purpose of construction of railways and tramways. While clinging to its rights to retain full jurisdiction on such lands within the States’ territories, the Government conceded that the accused men within the railway boundaries would be handed over to the authorities in the States concerned without recourse to extradition procedures. In postal matters, the Government did not accede to the States demand to set up their own post-offices. However, it abrogated the rules by which the States had to pay compensation for rail robberies committed in their territories. Again at the Chamber’s instance the Government recognized the States’ right to set up and maintain telephone system within their respective regions and even to extend their systems to the neighboring States. Checks imposed on the Princes and Chiefs regarding the employment of Europeans, visits to foreign countries and acquisition of non-residential property in British India, were either relaxed or done away with as consequences of repeated representation on these issues by the Chamber. Similarly, it was because of the constant efforts of the Chamber the Supreme Government recognized the Princes’ rights in the

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156 B/85, VII (A) 1946, pp. 38, 40, 64.
matters of air navigation, radio-broadcasting, fishing, flotsam and jetsam.\textsuperscript{157} The Chamber questioned the very basis of British interference in the States’ affairs. It was in violation of treaty-stipulations, they thought. It sought a precise definition of the term ‘Paramountcy’. It was in response to the Chamber’s demands that the British authorities had appointed in 1927 the Indian States Committee that was to probe the States’ economic and fiscal interests. It was to report upon the relationship between the Paramount Power and Indian States with special reference to the rights and obligations arising from the treaties, engagements and \textit{sanads}.\textsuperscript{158} The Chamber engaged Leslie Scott to prepare its case and to present the same to Indian States Committee. He prepared the case was in five volumes. It took him eighteen days to explain it. However, the Committee’s findings did not favour the Princes’ point of view. The members of the Chamber felt dejected.\textsuperscript{159}

In Reality, what emerges from the present study is that the Chamber of Princes was successful in getting concessions in small matters. But it failed on vital issues of real significance. Despite all that, the Chamber had been telling, doing and asking for, Paramountcy remained, as hitherto, undefined and without limit in scope. In this regard, the Indian States Committee observed in unambiguous terms, “Paramountcy must remain Paramount”.\textsuperscript{160} In fiscal and economic matters, also, it failed to secure any substantial gains. The questions of salt, opium, etc. which affected the imperial revenues were not even

\textsuperscript{157} B/85, VII (A)107, 1946. \\
\textsuperscript{158} \textit{The Hindustan Times}, Delhi, 24 May 1946. \\
\textsuperscript{159} B/85, VII (A) 107, 1946, pp. 161-163. \\
\textsuperscript{160} \textit{The Times of India}, Bombay, 11 and 12 June 1946; Jag Parvesh Chander, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 161.
permitted to be discussed in its meetings.\textsuperscript{161} The British Government continued to determine arbitrarily the age of termination of minority of a Prince. It was generally 20 or 21 years. It was also to impose a few restrictions on his authority as deemed desirable under the circumstances of each case. In matters of extradition, no reciprocity was permitted. The British Government invariably claimed much more than what they were willing to concede in return. The Europeans and the soldiers of the Indian Army could not, as a rule, be tried by the States’ Courts for the offences committed by them within the territories of the States. The Indian States’ Forces were also organized under the direction and guidance of the British authorities. It also supplied them the requisite sophisticated weapons.\textsuperscript{162}

Thus, the Chamber of Princes’ failures were more conspicuous than its successes. Its failure may be explained as such: (i) by the weakness and inadequacies inherent in its very constitution; (ii) it could only discuss and deliberate on matters of general interest; (iii) it could not execute and enforce its decisions. Lively debates and discussions were held in the Chamber on various matters of common interest and concern for the Princes. However, the speeches delivered and resolutions passed in its meetings were, indeed, no better than petitions or memorandum, and representations that which could be accepted or rejected by the Paramountcy without any rhyme or reason.\textsuperscript{163} The not very creditable performance of the Chamber may also be attributed, in no small measure, to the internal disunity and dissensions existing among the Princes and the Chiefs. Terribly aware of their precedence, dignity, honor and rights, the Princes of bigger States regard themselves much superior to the

\textsuperscript{161} B/85, VII (A) 107, 1946, p. 385; For further details see S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{162} B/83, V (D) 518, 1946; for further details also see S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{163} B/6, Chamber II (B) 48, 1947; S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 194-195.

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Rulers of smaller States. The latter, on their part, were themselves were not less important, where as the bigger Princes were highly jealous of one another. Some of them desired to safeguard the right of the Princes by denouncing the undue interference of the British authorities in their internal affairs and by appealing to the terms of the existing treaties and engagements.\textsuperscript{164} Let it be accepted that others sought to secure their individual rights by playing as sycophants of the Viceroy.\textsuperscript{165} Hence, even in matters of common interest they could not offer a united front.

However, the real cause of the failures of the Chamber may be found in the wisdom and shrewdness of the British statesmen. The above-stated causes are, infect, the offshoots of this most effective conditions. The Chamber of Princes played a role no better than what had been designed and planned for it by the makers of the British policy. Having reduced the Princes to the position of mere ‘feudatories’ of the Paramountcy, the British authorities wanted to keep them satisfied at least to some extent, without giving them substantial concessions involving any sacrifice of the British interests.\textsuperscript{166} So, the Princes were permitted to meet in the common forum and discuss the problems of common interest and express their grievances and needs in the form of resolutions. But all this was executed under the chairmanship of the Viceroy, in the presence and also as well as in accordance with the agenda laid down by the Political Secretary. The issues pertaining to individual States-questions which provided the reason of particular and true grievances-were purposely adroitly excluded from the purview of the Chamber.\textsuperscript{167} It is worth mentioning that even the issues of forced abdication or deposition

\textsuperscript{164} B/85, VII (A)107, 1946, pp. 15-18. For details about the allocation of these seats, see Appendix-X; also cited in S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit}, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{165} B/6, Chamber II(B) 48, 1947, pp. 62-63, 243.
\textsuperscript{166} Phadnis, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{167} B/85, VII (D) 6, 200, p. 25; S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit}, p. 198.

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of the Rulers of Nabha, Alwar, Rewa, etc., were not, as in reality they could not be, taken up for discussion in the Chamber. The British authorities had also taken full benefit of the mutual jealousies of the Princes and Chiefs to promote their Imperial interests and to render ineffective the potential working of the Chamber. As one examines analytically the proceedings of the Chamber for all these years, one is inclined to see most of the Chamber meetings as academic meetings of a debating club presided over by the Viceroy; there arguments were advanced for and against a motion in flowery phraseology.\footnote{B/85, VII (A) 107, 1948.}

This is, however, not to suggest that the Paramountcy had reduced the Chamber of Princes to a virtual non-entity. Moreover it was totally inconsiderate to the interests and demands of the Princes. Despite serious differences among them, the Chamber had been very active during most of its life. It passed many resolutions; some of their demands were conveyed through these resolutions, as already stated, were also accepted by the British authorities. In opinion of the rising tide of Indian nationalism, the British Government regarded it necessary to keep them satisfied. Holding the British interests supreme, they thoroughly made use of the Native aristocracy to check the growing forces of nationalism and democracy in British India.\footnote{B/85, VII (8) 2, 1946, p. 55; S.M. Verma, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 199.}

The question of Indian Federation had come to the forefront in the early 1930s. In the three Round Table Conferences held in London this issue was discussed. It was also discussed in the meetings of the Chamber of princes. The Princes realized that taking part in the federal scheme would involve large sacrifices for them without corresponding merits. The Patiala ruler described the proposed federation as ‘an empty dream and a delusion pregnant with the greatest dangers to the very existence of
the States’. In collaboration with the Rana of Dholpur, he put forth the scheme of ‘Federation through Confederation’ of the Princes.\(^{170}\) This scheme was, however, resisted by the Bikaner and Bhopal Rulers. It caused a serious division among the members of the Chamber. Many of them resigned on the issue. The Princes did not hold it proper and justified to join the federation as envisaged under the Government of India Act 1935, unless additional safeguards were guaranteed to them. The Indian National Congress and the Muslim League were too critical of the federal structure with the native States. These they criticized as a clever attempt of buttress feudal elements to hold in leash progressive and national forces.

By 1939, the proposed federal scheme finally broke down while other provisions of the Act were practically implemented. It may be observed that the Viceroy, Mr. Linlithgow was keen to implement the federal scheme. Even he was ready to throw certain vital concessions to the Princely States. However, the outbreak of the Second World War put a stop to his efforts. During the period of the war the Princes and Chiefs offered blank cooperation to Britain. The intensified and vigorous agitation of the nationalists of India coupled with emphasis from the allies of Britain forced the British rulers to make a number of constitutional proposals at different times, such as the August Offer of 1940, the Cripps Proposals of 1942 and the Wavell Plan of 1945.\(^{171}\) Feared by the prospects of ‘Dominion’, the Chamber sought assurances to the effect that the Princes’ sovereign rights incorporated in the treaties, engagements and sanads would be protected and that any constitution made would be subject to ratification by the States in order to be binding

\(^{170}\) B/86, VII (A) 17, 1947, p. 51, For see Letter of Maharaja of Bikaner to the Nawab of Bhopal, Chancellor of Chamber.

\(^{171}\) B/86, Chamber VII (A) 31, 2004, 1947, p. 87.
on them. Even the thought of a separate union of States with full sovereign status was mooted. However, but it was not approved by the Viceroy as well as the Secretary of State in May, 1946. The Cabinet Mission announced a new plan that affirmed that the States rights which flowed from their relationship with the Paramountcy would no longer exist. All the rights hitherto the States had surrendered to the Paramountcy would be restored to them. Also the States would enter into a federal relationship with the successor Government. According to the Indian Independence Act 1947 two independent Dominions, India and Pakistan were founded with effect from 15 August 1947. Paramountcy suzerainty over the native States at once lapsed. The Princely States were given the right to accede to any of the dominoes i.e. India or Pakistan.

Hence, the dissolution of the Chamber of Princes completed with the end of British rule in India. During its life-period of nearly 26 years, the Chamber of Princes with all its limitations had served very well the cause of the India’s Native Princes as well as of the British Paramountcy and dissolution. Its collapse finally was verily inherent in the emerging situation during 1940-47 in the subcontinent. The agitation for independence spearheaded by the Indian National Congress and also some other political parties was so mighty that freedom of India could not have been delayed beyond 1947. The leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel, in whose hands was the destiny of the nation, were determined to bring about the integration of the Princely States with the Indian Union. The Praja Mandalists within the States had been launching a vigorous and aggressive campaign for the end of the autocratic Princely regimes.

Under these circumstances, it could not have been possible for the British imperialists either to prolong the imperialist rule in India any

longer or to help effectively in the continuance of the Princely regimes in the States. Pending the transfer of power, the British rulers had been giving repeated assurance to it that after the lapse of British Paramountcy the Princes’ sovereign rights would be given back to them. A faction of the Princes had put forth the proposal that a Third Union, ‘Stateistan’-in addition to the dominions of India and Pakistan-be set up to secure States’ interests. Corfield, Adviser to the British Government of India in the Political Department, was a strong supporter of this proposal. But the advocacy of this proposal was very feeble and it could not be approved by the British high-ups. It was too anti-national to be accepted by the prospective new rulers of the two dominions. In the new liberal and free atmosphere the Chamber of Princes became virtually not only out of date but also futile. Therefore, it was not astonishing that its meeting of 25 July 1947 proved to be the last meeting before complete dissolution, followed by the liquidation of the Princely order.