CHAPTER EIGHT
FROM THE SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE TO THE
PASSING OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1931-1935

Gandhi-Irwin Pact -

During the absence of the delegates in London the condi­
tion of affairs in India had worsened further. The Civil Dis­
obedience movement continued in full swing. The Round Table
Conference had been held in London in the midst of a 'campaign
of calumny and distortion' in the Congress press. Two days
after the conclusion of the First Round Table Conference on 21
January the Working Committee of Congress met at Allahabad
and passed a resolution saying that the declaration of policy made
by the Prime Minister was too vague and general to justify any
change in the policy of the Congress, and reiterated the policy
of Civil Disobedience. But the Congress later withheld their
decision not to call off Civil Disobedience on the receipt of
a telegram from Sapru and Sastri, asking the Working Committee
"not to arrive at any decision on the Premier's speech, until
their arrival and without hearing them." Accordingly the reso­
lution was not published.

1. E.g. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 20, 27 November, 4, 9, 16
December 1930 and 8, 11, 16 January 1931.

2. Progs. of the Working Committee of the Congress at Alla­
also Bengalee, 22 January 1931. See also S. Gopal (ed.),
Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, (Orient Longmans,
1973), vol. 4, p. 470.

3. Ibid. Also Bengalee, 22 January 1931.
The Liberals who were on their way back home recognised that the first thing they had to do on their return was to approach the Congress and to give them a first hand impression of the Round Table Conference. On 6 February 1931 the twenty-six members of the Round Table Conference, immediately after landing in India, sent an appeal to the Congress requesting its leaders "to come forward to make solid contribution to the completion of the scheme" which was outlined in the conference. In their Bombay Manifesto they explained their position at some length. They stated that British opinion had undergone a remarkable change in India's favour. They also explained the federal ideal assuring their countrymen of the promised grant of responsibility at the Centre and pointing out the tentative nature of the proposed safeguards. They emphasised the view that the policy outlined by the Prime Minister undoubtedly marked a considerable advance over the recommendations of the Simon Commission.

Negotiations were then opened between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin regarding the political situation and future work. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M.R. Jayakar were joined by Satr - the one man who equally shared the confidence of Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin. Meanwhile, Sapru, was also keeping in close touch with Lord Irwin. It was through him that the stalemate

4. Liberal Manifesto issued on 6 February 1931, Bengalee.
5. Sapru to Irwin, 10 February 1931, Sapru Papers.
was broken at last and on 14 February the Mahatma was finally persuaded to write to Lord Irwin asking for the benefit of his advice and counsel. Lord Irwin immediately agreed to meet him. Thus Sapru once more proved to be the providential bridge between the two men. Gandhi-Irwin parleys began on the afternoon of 17 February 1931 and an agreement was reached finally on the morning of 4 March. The pact provided for discontinuance of the Civil Disobedience movement on the part of the Congress and the revocation of the Ordinances and the release of Civil Disobedience prisoners on the part of the Government. The constitutional question was discussed in clause two, which said that 'the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, federation is an essential part; so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters, as for instance, defence, external affairs, the position of minorities, the financial credit of India, and the discharge of obligation'. The rest of the pact, which was a very lengthy document, contained details of the ways in which the Government agreed to undo the injuries suffered by individuals during the


7. Irwin to Gandhi, cited in Irwin to Sapru, 27 February 1931, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters and telegrams from persons in India, January to April 1931, p. 69, also Irwin to Jayakar, 27 February 1931, ibid., p. 70.
Civil Disobedience movement. The clause regarding the constitutional question practically gave away the whole Congress case and the agreement did not even guarantee Dominion Status. Its terms manifestly fell short of those which the Congress leaders had considered as the minimum for a truce in August 1930 during the negotiations initiated by Sapru and Jayakar. As a result a section of the Congress press notably in Bombay and Calcutta, was not very enthusiastic about the pact. Gandhiji was severely criticised for calling off Civil Disobedience movement and it was frankly stated in some quarters that he had 'betrayed' his people. There was no mention even of the eleven points which Gandhiji had initiated a year before as a test of the sincerity of the British Government. Critical observers wondered if there was any thing in the pact which could not have been obtained from the Government in December 1929, without putting the country through the fire of a severe repression. The many days of discussion, in which Gandhi had welcomed the chance of setting out all his grievances, had in fact resulted in his acceptance of a place at the Round Table Conference when the conference resumed its sitting and an undertaking to call off Civil Disobedience and the boycott of British goods.


9. Report on Newspapers and Periodicals in Bengal, 14 March 1931; also Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8 March 1931; also Bombay Chronicle, 4 March 1931.

10. The members of the Youth League described the settlement as a 'betrayal'. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8 March 1931.
The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was a clear triumph for the Liberals. The whole object of the settlement between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin was to secure Congress participation in the Round Table Conference and the result was the accomplishment of a work the Liberals had initiated in July 1930. 'While I recognise the wonderful work done by Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi', Sankey, the Lord Chancellor, wrote to Sapru shortly afterwards, 'I know and feel personally that the real praise is due to you and Mr. Jayakar - I have seen the hands of the clock move, and I know that you and he have been the mainspring.' The Liberal opinion in India also appeared to be fairly satisfied. At a meeting of the council of the National Liberal Federation of India under the presidency of Sir Pheroze Sethna gratifications were expressed at the conclusion of the pact. 'The feeling of tension and irritation', Sapru wrote to Irwin, 'has certainly disappeared and I think the country can now more easily approach the task of evolving a new constitution in a spirit of hopefulness'. Thus the Liberals 'had pulled their fish into their net', or, at least, so it appeared for the time being. And the Mahatma sailed for England.

11. Sankey to Sapru, 30 March 1931, Sapru Papers.
12. Leader, 19 April 1931.
13. Sapru to Irwin, 10 March 1931, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters and telegrams from persons in India, January to April 1931, p. 258.
The Second Round Table Conference -

The second session of the Round Table Conference did not open with a meeting of the full conference. The main work of the second conference was done by two large committees on Federal Structure and Minorities which re-examined the reports presented by the corresponding committees at the first session. Most of the leading men of the first session were present and there was a distinguished group of new comers, led by Mahatma Gandhi.

The plenary session of the Conference met on 28 November with Mr. Ramsay Macdonald in the chair. After the formal opening by the Premier, Lord Sankey submitted the Federal Structure Committee's report dealing with the structure, size and composition of the Federal Legislature and the Reserved subjects.

The Minority Committee, after successive adjournments on 28 September and 1 October, met again on 8 October. But Gandhi was outgeneralled by the Moslems and had to inform the conference that all negotiations had proved abortive despite the utmost anxiety on the part of all concerned to reach a satisfactory outcome. After considerable discussion it was agreed that the committee should be adjourned for a further period to enable fresh efforts to be made to reach agreement.

15. Ibid., p. 120.
between the various interests concerned. At the meeting of the 13 November it appeared that, despite every effort on the part of the negotiators, it had unfortunately proved impossible to devise any scheme of such character as to satisfy all parties. The Sikh representatives (in the second session) declared openly that nothing on earth would make them agree to guaranteeing the Punjab Moslems a majority of the seats in the Punjab Legislative Council. The Moslems were resolute in their determination to have such a majority. Hindu-Moslem-Sikh triangle thus presented sufficient complications for those who wanted to solve the communal problem, but additional complications were introduced by the claims of other minorities, particularly the Depressed Classes and the Europeans, for separate representation and certain other safeguards. Gandhi-ji met the Moslem claim with a flat rejection. But the demand made on behalf of the Depressed Classes was an unkind cut. For Gandhi's interest in the Depressed Classes was neither a recent nor a temporary phase and he refused to grant separate representation to the Depressed Classes on the ground that they were an integral part of the Hindu community. But Gandhi had

17. Ibid., p. 1365.
18. Ibid., pp. 1365-67.
19. Ibid., pp. 1339, 1359-60, 1367-68.
20. Ibid., pp. 1351-52.
22. Ibid., p. 1346.
underrated the forces arrayed against him and the negotiations between him and the various minority representatives thus ended ineffectively. The Moslems, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Depressed Classes and the Indian Christians thereupon made a pact among themselves and presented it in the form of a declaration of minority right to the Prime Minister. This memorandum demanded statutory safeguards for the protection of the religion, personal law, and culture of the minority communities, and for a fair share in the Government of the country and in the Public Services. An annexure to the report showed the demands of the different minorities for certain proportions of the seats in the various legislative bodies to be set up, and especially asked that the Depressed Classes should have separate electorate and reserved seats for at least twenty years, and until direct adult suffrage for the community was established. Other sections set forth the special claims of the Moslems, Depressed Classes, Anglo-Indians, and Europeans. The special claims of the latter were for rights and privileges equal to those enjoyed by the Indian born subjects in all industrial and commercial activities, and for the maintenance of existing rights in regard to procedure at criminal trials.

The presentation of this memorandum was the prelude to a

regular spate of such documents in which the representatives of a number of separate communal and Provincial interests presented their points of view and their demands. But the agreement in question was not regarded as acceptable by the Hindu or Sikh representatives. Thus the crosscurrent of communal feeling ran strong and nearly carried the conference on to the rocks. The conference in short failed to reach any agreed conclusion on the difficult and controversial question of communal representation.

Despite the failure to reach agreement on communal problem the Liberals had done some work to fill in the framework of previous year. They had agreed upon a scheme of the structure of federal judiciary. The difficult and important question of the distribution of the financial resources between the Centre and the Provinces had been examined by a sub-committee. The main points on which agreement had not been reached were composition of Federal Legislature and the manner in which the states should enter into it. "The great idea of an All India Federation", said the Prime Minister in his closing statement at the end of the second conference, "still holds the field". The principle of responsible Federal Government subject to certain reservations and safeguards through a transition period remains unchanged. And we are all agreed that the Governors' Provinces of the future are to be responsibly governed units, enjoying the greatest possible measure

of freedom from outside interference and dictation in carrying
out their own policies in their own sphere."

The Communal Award -

Since further discussion on communal representation
proved unavailing the Prime Minister announced on 17 August
1932 the Government's provisional scheme of minority representa-
tion known as the Communal Award. The scheme fixed the
number of seats in the Provincial Legislature at approximately
double the number in existing Councils. Separate electorates
were retained for the minority communities and also for the
Moslems in Bengal and the Punjab, despite their numerical
majority. The weightage was also conceded to the Moslems in
Provinces in which they were a minority and to the Sikhs and
Hindus in the Punjab. The Depressed Classes were now regarded
as a minority community entitled to separate electorate. While
creating specially reserved constituencies for Depressed
Classes, it gave them the additional right to contest seats in
the general constituencies, with provision that special elec-
torates and reservation of seats would lapse after twenty
years.

The Award was received with mixed feelings in the country.

25. Statement by the Prime Minister to the Conference at the
Conclusion of the Second Session: on 1 December 1931,
P.P., Commons, 1931-32, vol. 18, (cmd. 3972), pp.958-64.
It was very strongly opposed in Nationalist circles and by the Hindus at large. But it was more favourably received by the Muslims and other minorities. The Liberals also condemned the Award from press and platforms. But while Sapru and H.N. Kunzru criticised it, they wanted it adopted since an agreed settlement could not have been reached. The general attitude of the Liberal Party towards the Award was summed up by Sir C.H. Setalvad when he said that Indians, having by their own failure invited decision, nothing was left for them but to make the best of a bad bargain and submit to it provisionally and proceed with the framing of a constitution.

The provision for separate electorate for the Depressed Classes led Gandhi to resort to a 'fast unto death' from 20 September. Immediately a leaders' conference was summoned by Pundit M.M. Malavya which met first at Bombay and then at Poona. On the main issue of joint electorate there was a prolonged discussion. Dr. Ambedkar was unwilling to give in when Sapru suggested the adoption of a system of primary and secondary election for a limited number of seats. Sapru held

29. E.g. Mussalman, 17 August 1932; also Report on Native Papers in Bengal, August 1932-33, pp. 39-43.
30. Servant of India, 18 August 1932. A meeting was held in Town Hall, Calcutta under the presidency of D.P. Sarbadhikari to condemn the Communal Award on 5 September 1932. A statement was issued on behalf of the Council of the Western India National Liberal Association. Jayakar also issued a separate statement condemning the Award. G of I., Home Pol., confidential no. 41-8/32 and K.W., Appendix.
31. From the under Secretary to Govt. of United Provinces, 5 September 1932, ibid.
32. Ibid.
that the system, while maintaining the principle of joint electorate, would enable the Depressed Classes to choose their own candidates. When the scheme was put before Gandhi on 21 September, he accepted the panel idea of Sapru's scheme but instead of confining it only to a limited number of seats, as was suggested by Sapru, he extended the system to all the seats reserved for the Depressed Classes. Sapru's plan, he held, would have divided the untouchables into two separate groups as a result of which there would be a panel group in the Legislature and the other group which would come in by direct election; thus there would always be a glamour about the panel seats which would result in the creation of a complex among the Depressed Classes.

A settlement was at last arrived at on the basis of this agreement on 25 September. A common electorate to all the Hindus was agreed upon, subject to two conditions, first, one hundred forty-eight seats in different Provincial Legislatures were reserved for the Depressed Classes in place of seventy-one provided in the Prime Minister's Communal Award. Eighteen per cent of the seats in the Central Legislature, which were allowed to the general electorate for British India, were similarly reserved for them. Secondly, there would be a primary election, by the voters of the Depressed Classes alone.

34. Ibid., p. 170.
for four candidates for each reserved seat and the election by
the general constituencies was restricted to these alone.
The agreement, or the Poona Pact as it came to be known, was
ratified by the Hindu Mahasabha and accepted by the British
Government, and the constitution amended accordingly. Thus
the Depressed Classes benefited both ways. They secured double
the number of seats reserved for them in the Communal Award and
also enjoyed the benefits of a separate electorate though in a
modified form.
The Third Round Table Conference—

With utmost promptness 'Fact Finding Committees' were
despached to India at the conclusion of the Second Round Table
Conference to carry on essential preparatory work on the spot
while a Working Committee of the conference was to continue
consultation in India and to keep in touch through the Viceroy
with the British Government. The main business of the third
and last short session of the Round Table Conference was there­
fore a further consideration of the Central Government on the
basis of the recommendations of the Lothian, Percy and David­
son Committees. The conference proved to be a thoroughly
attenuated affair. Delegates did little else beyond reiterat­
ing their hackneyed views on the same old subject like safe­
guards and the eligibility of Indians to administer their own

35. Text of the Poona Pact, Telegram from Bombay, (special),
24 September 1932, G of I, Home Pol., confidential no. 31/113/32.
37. Telegram from Secretary of State, 25 September 1932,
G of I, Home Pol., confidential no. 41/5/32.
affairs. As to franchise, the Lothian Committee said that it would not be possible to launch the constitution on the basis of adult franchise, that the existing franchise should be extended and the principle of direct voting retained. It also provided for enfranchisement of a substantial portion of women and agreed that the election to the Federal Upper Chamber should be made by the Provincial Legislatures. As to the Lower House, it expressed the opinion in favour of direct rather than indirect election. Opinions were divided on the ultimate allocation of residuary powers exclusively to the Provinces or to the Centre. There was a cleavage of opinion on the subject. While the Hindus wanted them for the Centre, the Moslems were anxious to retain them in the Provinces. To overcome this deadlock the Committee suggested, though not without dissent, that it would rest with the Governor-General to decide in any such cases as arose. As regards the powers of Legislature it was argued on British side that the general power of amending the constitution and of dealing with such matters as the sovereignty of Crown and the control of the

40. Ibid., pp. 82-85.
41. Ibid., p. 163.
42. Ibid., p. 166.
armed forces, and possibly also nationality, should remain with the British Parliament. But it was agreed that 'in all other respects Indian Legislation, introduced with the sanction and enacted with the assent of the Governor-General or a Governor, would be valid like the legislation of Dominion Parliaments under the statute of Westminster, even if it conflicted with Acts of British Parliament applying to India'.

Further discussions were held regarding the question of distribution of financial resources between the Centre and the Provinces and to the contributions to be made by the states.

In the full session of the conference on 23 December 1932 the Liberals urged once more that the inauguration of the federation should not be delayed, and that Government must fix a date for it. They pointed out further that it would be a most dangerous thing for them to start the new constitution in the Provinces and leave the Centre unaltered, for on constitutional and administrative ground it would be impossible for the responsible Provinces to work in harmony with an autocratic Central Government. Besides the constitution of the Provinces had a direct relation to the new constitution which was being contemplated for the Centre and they would not fit in with the constitution of the Centre as it was at the time.

44. Ibid., pp. 18-19, 25-35.
47. Ibid., p. 78.
Sapru told further that inauguration of federation should not be delayed on the ground that Reserve Bank had not been established. He made it clear that mere provincial autonomy without responsibility at the Centre would not be acceptable to them.

The Liberals advanced a vigorous plea for modification of the financial safeguards. Both Sapru and Jayakar urged that in the form in which they had so far been drafted they were unnecessarily wide. They did not dispute the claim that British investors' security should not be impaired and that there should be every possible guarantee given to the members of the Services that their salaries and pensions would be maintained intact and preserved. 'Credit', said Sapru, 'was more a matter of political contentment than of legal restriction.' 'If you fail', he warned the British Government, 'to satisfy the political aspirations of India (and let me tell you that they are very live political aspirations not confined to the intellectual classes any longer) the credit of India will go down'. With regard to the question of appointment of a financial adviser, he said that he should be appointed by the Governor-General in consultation with Ministers, that he should be above party politics and that this financial adviser

48. Ibid., pp. 76-79.
49. Ibid., pp. 40-80.
50. Ibid., p. 80.
51. Ibid., p. 82.
should not be a rival of the Finance Minister.

Both Jayakar and Sapru held, and rightly, that the new constitution would be judged in India by two tests. Firstly, whether it would confer on India a substantial amount of financial independence and secondly, what the position of India was going to be in regard to Defence. Sapru asked once more that the Defence Minister should be chosen from elected Indian members of the Legislature and, so far as supply was concerned, it should be left originally to a committee consisting of the representatives of the Governor-General, the Army Member, the Finance Minister and other Ministers who might be appointed in that behalf. As regards the Indianisation of the Army he urged that more emphasis should be laid to the passage of the report of the Defence Sub-committee of the Round Table Conference to the effect that the Defence of India would be the increasing concern of India and not of Great Britain alone. It was also urged that a committee should be appointed for further reduction of Army expenditure, and distinction in the matter of recruitment which had prevented certain classes from adopting the Army as their career, should be done away with. With regard to the power of Governors, he said that Governors should not be entrusted with special and reserved powers in the Provinces. Lastly, he made an appeal for the release of

52. Ibid., pp. 82-83.
53. Ibid., p. 83.
54. Ibid., pp. 84-85.
55. Ibid., p. 85.
political prisoners.

Replying on behalf of His Majesty's Government, Sir Samuel Hoare (the Secretary of State for India) said that he could not agree to giving any definite date for the inauguration of federation. Firstly, he was afraid of the reactions of the Indian States to the announcement of any definite date which would, in his opinion, be something like an ultimatum to them and secondly the Parliament, if it were confronted with a definite date, might demand a longer interval and more cautious provisions than it would require if there were no fixed date. He emphasised the 'peculiar difficulty' that in the midst of 'the most difficult financial crisis that has faced Asia and Europe for many generations', a substantial amount of short term loan raised for the Indian Government in the name of the Secretary of State would soon be due for repayment. 'The Government', he said, agreed that there 'can be no effective transfer of responsibility unless there is an effective transfer of financial responsibility', but he argued that the establishment of a Reserve Bank - which would be speeded up as fast as the economic situation allowed - and the other safeguards were necessary to keep the confidence of the world outside and to make it possible in the future for a federal Government to raise money upon reasonable terms. He ended

56. Ibid., p. 86.
57. Ibid., p. 141.
58. Ibid., p. 142.
59. Ibid., pp. 152-43.
with the gratuitous advice to the Liberals to regard the safeguards 'not as a stone wall that blocks a road, but as the hedge on each side that no good driver ever touches but that prevents people on a dark night falling into the ditch'.

As regards Defence, Hoare told the conference that the Government preferred that the Governor-General's choice of the Defence Minister should be unfettered. It was suggested, however, that Governor-General might be instructed to consult other Ministers in matters of Defence and especially on the financial provision made for it. As regards Sapru's demand, for a statutory provision for Indianisation of Army (that is to say, greater participation of Indians themselves in the Defence of India), he refused to give any statutory provisions as those were considered to be too inelastic, but he agreed to include directions to the Governor-General in both these respects in the Instrument of Instructions.

The Third Round Table Conference broke up at the end of December 1932. In March 1933 the proposals of the Government based on the deliberations of the three conferences were embodied in a White Paper.

60. Ibid., p. 142.
61. Ibid., p. 145.
62. Ibid., p. 144.
The publication of the White Paper created a tremendous uproar in India. The National Liberal Federation of India held two sessions in the year 1933, one at Calcutta in April and the other at Madras in December to consider the White Paper and to express their disapproval of the proposals embodied in it. They held that the proposals did not advance India to the status of a Dominion and there was no mention of the objective. Secondly, there was no date mentioned for the inauguration of federation. They could not approve of the conditions precedent to the inauguration of a federation as they made for undue delay. Resolutions were then passed on Sastri's motion demanding that if for any reason the inauguration of federation should not materialise or be unduly delayed, there should be a responsible Central Government for British India concurrently with provincial autonomy, without


65. That Federal Laws should not apply *propria rigori* to Indian States, that a Reserve Bank would have to be set up, and would have to be in successful operation, that a number of princes should agree to join federation, that 51% of the population of the Indian States and that 51% of the seats should be represented by the states which would agree to join federation, that the princes should be given the right of secession from federation at their will, that there should be a Royal proclamation, that both Houses of Parliament would have to present an address to His Majesty praying for such proclamation, were some of the conditions, P.P., Commons, 1932-33, vol. 20, (cmd. 4866), para 32, pp. 38-39.

prejudice to the effectuation of an All India Federation, at the earliest possible date thereafter. Thirdly, it took strong objection to the retention of India Council in whatever form or for whatever purposes. Fourthly, the Federation condemned the proposal to confer on the Heads of the Government, Central and Provincial, of special powers, under various names—financial, legislative, and administrative, as being the negation of constitutional Government. Fifthly, while the Federation consented to the reservation of the subject of Defence in the hands of the Governor-General for only a fixed transitional period, it strongly disapproved of the non-acceptance of a clear policy regarding the complete transfer of the Army to Indian control at the end of the period of transition. Sixthly, they resented the fact that Finance was to be transferred but subject to many safeguards and restrictions, that the Indian Finance Minister would have control over only about twenty per cent to twenty-five per cent of the total expenditure. The Federation recorded its deliberate conviction that proposed financial safeguards were both unnecessary and objectionable and that the Government and the Legislature should have the same power in the sphere of Finance outside the region of reserved subjects as the Dominion Governments and the Legislatures. Seventhly, the Federation protested against the White Paper proposals against commercial discrimination as they would deprive the future Government and Legislature in large part of the power that must reside in every such authority,
to take from time to time such steps, legislative and adminis­
trative, as might, in their judgement, be required in the
interest of Indian trade and industrial development. From
this point of view they objected to the powers proposed to be
given to the Governor-General to override the ruling of the
Legislature or the Government, whether in the discharge of his
responsibilities in the sphere of External Relations or for
preventing commercial discrimination. The Federation also pro­
tested against the most reactionary proposal in the White Paper
as regards the Services, and demanded that recruitment and
control and determining of the emoluments of the I.C.S. and
the Indian Police Service must, in future, be vested in the
Government of India, subject to the guarding of the legitimate
rights of the present incumbents. In conclusion they recorded
that White Paper proposals, as they stood, could not possibly
satisfy even the most moderate section of the progressive
opinion and would far from appeasing unrest and allaying dis­
content, aggravate the present unhappy conditions and further
alienate public opinion from the Government. A generous and
far reaching measure of real reform on the lines of Dominion
Constitution, which would make India an equal member of the
British Commonwealth of Nations, would alone meet India's
requirements and satisfy the national self-respect of the peo­
67 Jayakar and Sapru jointly drew up a memoran-
67 Resolutions passed at the fourteenth session of N.L.F.
of India, April 1933, Bengalee, 18-19 April, 1933.
dum pointing out the lines along which they desired modification and it was in accord with the resolutions passed by the National Liberal Federation of India.

Chintamani and other Liberals were also vehement in their criticism of the White Paper and thought that it should be rejected. But though Sapru criticised some of its features and wanted important amendments, he thought that at this stage of the discussion of constitutional reforms there could be no question of rejection or acceptance of the White Paper. He decided to go to the Joint Select Committee. Jayakar equally dissatisfied, was willing to accompany. "I share", Jayakar wrote to Sapru, "your anxiety about the future. My own feeling is of complete disgust with the way the things had been handled in England and the mute and submissive manner in which the Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister have allowed the surrender to take place. I feel no enthusiasm about Joint Parliamentary Committee and have lost all zest, but I am not going to allow this to interfere with my desire to do my best right up to the last minute, for it is always open to us to reject the picture after it is complete ..."

68. The Sapru-Jayakar Memorandum, 16 May 1933, Jayakar Papers.
70. Sapru to Jayakar, 23 March 1933, Jayakar Papers.
71. Jayakar to Sapru, 8 April 1933, ibid.
So in April 1933, when a Joint Committee of both Houses was appointed, with Lord Linlithgow as Chairman "to consider the future Government of India" with special reference to the White Paper, Sapru and Jayakar went to England to take part in the proceedings of the Joint Select Committee. In all twenty-one delegates from British India and seven from the states went to the Select Committee. After the scrutiny in the committee the White Paper remained the same as before almost on all major points save the method of election to the lower house. The policy of both the Government of India and His Majesty's Government at home was to stick to the White Paper. In the committee controversy centred round mainly on two points of the White Paper - the method of election and the size of the federal chambers. Jayakar, on behalf of the Hindu Liberals, put the case in favour of direct election and a bigger chamber. But in the meantime Hoare had considerably been influenced by the Moslems and other minorities, as also a group of princes, in favour of indirect election and a smaller federal chamber. There was also a strong body of diehard opinion in the committee who were putting constant pressure upon the Secretary of State to make provision for indirect election and smaller federal chambers. Hoare sounded Willingdon, who saw the

73. Same to same, 3 August 1933, ibid., vol. 3, pp. 770-71; also same to same, 5 November 1933, ibid., vol. 3, p. 857. Also same to same, 15 December, 1933, ibid., vol. 3, pp. 925-27.
danger of alienating the Liberals and expressed his opinion against reducing the size of the chambers and changing the method of election. Hoare then arrived at a compromise. The provision for bigger federal houses provided in the White Paper was retained but direct election was thrown overboard. It was decided that the Assembly should be elected by the Provincial Lower Houses and that the Council of State should be elected by Upper Houses and 'where these did not exist, 'through ad hoc electoral colleges'. The Committee Report was introduced in Parliament in the form of a Bill and on 4 August 1935 the Bill received royal assent. The Act of 1935 comprised of fourteen parts and ten schedules. It came into force on 1 April 1937, except Part II, which dealt with the All India Federation, and Part VIII which established the Federal Railway Authority.

Parliament in 1935 passed a new Government of India Act, a successor to the long line stretching back to 1833. The Act of 1935 provided for full provincial autonomy and liberated

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75. "I fear", Willingdon wrote, "it is almost certain that all the Liberals such as Sapru and Jayakar and Co. and many of our moderate supporters will look upon this as a definite turning back from the Reform scheme and may quite conceivably join the Swaraj Party after the Report comes out and of course give an enormous fillip to the Congress people ... and what will be the effect upon loyal Indians who have supported us during the past three years ... these people will feel that they have been badly let down". Willingdon to Hoare, 23 April 1934, also same to same, 7 May 1934, ibid., vol. 4, pp. 505-09.
the Provinces entirely from Central control except for certain specific purposes. It established full responsible Government subject to safeguards, in all Provinces (which, with the new Provinces of Sind and Orissa, now numbered eleven). It provided for the creation of 'Federation of India' comprising both Provinces and states with a federal Central Government and Legislature for the management of the Central Subjects. Dyarchy, abolished in the Provinces, was reproduced at the Centre. The subjects of Foreign Affairs and Defence were 'reserved' to the control of the Governor-General, the other Central subjects were 'transferred' to Ministers, subject to similar 'safeguards' as in the Provinces. It recognised the federal principle in the provision for indirect or Provincial election to the lower house of the Central Legislature. On the other controversial issues the Act maintained the policy of 1917. On the one hand it confirmed and extended parliamentary Government in the Provinces and introduced it at the Centre; on the other it retained separate electorate both Provincial and Central, distributing the seats on the lines of the Communal Award. As to the Dominion Status it was

77. Ibid., Part II, Chapters I-II.
78. Ibid., Part III, Chapter II, Legislative List, Seventh Schedule.
79. Ibid., Composition of Federal Legislature, Schedule no.1.
80. Ibid., Composition of Provincial Legislature, Schedule no. V.
officially declared that 'the provisions of the Act which precluded full self-Government were to be regarded as transition-al' and it was stated further that, 'mainly by usage and convention India under the new constitution might quickly acquire the same freedom, internal and external, as that of the other members of the British Commonwealth'. The Act came into force partly on 3 July 1936, when the electoral provision began to operate and completely in April 1937.

The Liberals had worked hard in filling out the details of constitutional reform but they considered it extremely unfortunate that provincial autonomy, so far as it was granted by the Act of 1935, was launched without a federal link at the Centre broad-based on popular opinion. The part of the Act which established federation was not to operate until a specified number of states had agreed to enter into it. They were disappointed to find the formidable array of safeguards and reservations which barred the transfer of real power from London to Delhi. But an analysis of the various factors would show that an Act better than that which was passed in 1935 was not possible under the circumstances.

Princes' Attitude -

Whether the federation would come into operation simultaneously with the inauguration of provincial autonomy was largely dependent upon the attitude of the princes. Already during the first session of the Round Table Conference the princes

had displayed their weakness and the situation had worsened further during the second session. During the intervening months in India H.H. the Maharaja of Patiala had headed a group of rebellious princes whose object was somewhat antagonistic to Sapru's idea of federation. Patiala had published a scheme, supported by the rulers of Dholpur and Indore, of an alternative to federation, namely, a closure union of Indian states themselves through the medium of an improved and strengthened chamber of princes acting for the Indian states as a whole vis-a-vis the Government of India. It had powerful backing. Bikaner's outburst against Patiala's attitude had alarmed the minor princes and Patiala skillfully exploited this fear of the smaller states in formulating his alternative scheme of federation. He had been disappointed in not being able to secure re-election as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. The Nawab of Bhopal who had been elected to the post, belonged to the Bikaner school of thought about federation. Indeed, it took no little time for the Liberals to realise that the revolt

82. Bikaner told the Secretary of State about his differences with Patiala and others, Wedgwood Benn to Irwin, 10 May 1931, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters from Secretary of State for India, January to December 1930 and January to April 1931, p. 146.

83. Patiala's articles on Federation in The Times of India, 17 June 1931.

84. Bikaner's reply to Patiala, Leader, 24 June 1931.

85. Irwin to Wedgwood Benn, 23 March 1931, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters to the Secretary of State for India, January to December 1930 and January to April 1931, p. 424.
of the Maharaja of Patiala and his followers was a fatal blow to the cause of federation, that Patiala was sure to put spokes in the federation wheel which Bhopal would be pushing through. At the conference it became clear that Maharaja of Patiala had found support for his alternative to federation, and the rulers of the important states of Indore and Dholpur made it known that they agreed with him. The states also differed over the arrangements to be adopted for federal finance, and some began to show alarm at the financial implications of federation. The protracted discussion over the scheme of federal finance, which occupied a very great part of the proceedings at the second session, only revealed too clearly the size and strength of the obstacles in the way of federation. Moreover, after the first Round Table Conference an insidious campaign was being carried on to persuade the princes not to join federation on the ground that no deficit state would agree to pay and no surplus state would agree to surrender. Sapru appealed to Bhopal that he and Bikaner should carefully examine the financial scheme before committing themselves to any position.

88. Ibid., pp. 436-596.
89. Sapru to Hamidullah, Nawab of Bhopal, 9 April 1931, Sapru Papers.
The Patiala scheme was favoured by the small states, which could not expect to be represented separately in an all-India federation and which would take comfort from unity. On the other hand states of a moderate size were probably attracted more by a scheme of Bikaner's, for the separate representation of the states that enjoyed representation in the Chamber of Princes. The major Indian states, which did not belong to the Chamber, wanted representation commensurate with their importance. Patiala's scheme had been adequately circulated, and they gave the die-hards in the conference an opportunity to raise the cry that the princes were not at all unanimous about the whole scheme. Hyderabad's scheme of federation differed fundamentally from that of Bikaner and Bhopal. For example, Hydari representing the Nizam of Hyderabad was opposed to the administration of Central subjects by the federal authority as supported by the Hindu Liberals and Bikaner and as suggested in the Federal Structure Committee Report of the First Round Table Conference. He wrote to Keyes, the British Resid:

90. "A good many of the states", wrote Irwin to Benn, "were very anxious about their own representation and it was going to be a difficult matter to get them satisfied". Irwin to Wedgwood Benn, 23 March 1931, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters to Secretary of State for India, January to December, 1930 and January to April 1931, p. 424, also Wedgwood Benn to Irwin, 11 November 1930, ibid., Letters from Secretary of State for India, January to December 1930 and January to April 1931, p. 238.


92. Ibid., pp. 239-42, 233-37.
dent in Hyderabad, that the object of doing this was to 'preserve under Federal facade what so far as British India is concerned will be a Unitary Government'. In fact, by May 1931 Hydari had already prepared five safeguards essential for the states. Early in the beginning of 1932 Hyderabad informed Sapru that they did not want to part with autocracy by joining the federation. By keeping the Resident pleased, they could do anything. The princes began to raise new objections to many matters which had apparently been settled by the first Federal Structure Committee Report. "It does, however, appear to me", as Hoare wrote to Willingdon, "that the differences upon matters of detail have become greater and that the princes are more reluctant than ever to show their hands. I imagine that what is happening is that everyone is keeping back until they see what is going to happen with the communal question." Again, during the meeting of the Joint Select Committee when, in pursuance of a statement, at the request of the Committee Sapru submitted a draft, several of the Ministers of the Indian states told him personally and also the British Indian delegates, that

94. Same to same, 31 May 1931, ibid., p. 225.
95. Sapru to Nawab of Bhopal, 12 January 1932, Sapru Papers.
97. The statement was made at the previous conference by the Maharaja of Bikaner and others who wanted some provisions by statute or by convention, that in purely British Indian matters the Indian states would take no part (except when it was a question of a vote of no confidence).
they were prepared to support Sapru's formula and indeed they liked it. But two days later at the open sitting of the Committee the Ministers went back on their previous agreement with him and Sir Akbar Hydari and C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar opposed his formula. They made a declaration that they did not want to take part in any purely British Indian matters, but they were opposed to having any written provision in the statute or even in the treaties of accession which Sapru had suggested as an alternative. Even the Muslims who were very keen on this matter and had promised their support, went back on their promises; and the British delegation including Lord Reading sided with the states and Moslems. The Liberals received no support from them.

Akbar Hydari and the Dewan of Mysore, the two representatives of the princes, violently disagreed with each other. Therefore the attitude taken up by them did not at all improve

98. Sapru to Braj Narain, 2 June 1933, Sapru Papers.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. 'Dewan of Mysore to Sapru, 3 August 1932, ibid.
the situation during the third session and clearly revealed that the federalist enthusiasm of 1930 had lost its fire; and that in fact the princes were now only 'marking time'. "I am afraid", Sapru wrote to one of his friends, (K. N. Hakim) at the end of the third session, "I cannot at all be happy about the attitude of the princes. Their Ministers are hopelessly divided among themselves. One group of them wants a bigger house and equal representation, another group wants smaller house and larger representation for the bigger states. Akbar Hydari and Jam Sahib are insistent upon a fifty-fifty representation... Rushbrook Williams has taken, ... a very critical attitude and to-day he frankly said that there were other alterations to federation... Meanwhile, they seem to me to be justifying the officials view that they are speaking with double

102. The situation may be best described in Hoare's own words - "The trouble is that", he wrote, "they seem further off agreement amongst themselves upon most things than they were last year. For instance, upon the question of the size of two Federal Chambers, there was a day's discussion in which the cleavage between the different points of view became deeper and deeper. The Hindus for big chamber against the Moslems for small chambers, the medium sized states for big chambers, the big states for small chambers and the very big and the very small states for small chambers... No doubt they will not agree and we shall then have to make a decision between them. At present Hydari and Mirza appeared to be rigid against big chambers with equal representation for individual state and I do not believe that they will move from their position. Here (in the discussion about the distribution of powers between the centre and the units) again there was a definite cleavage between Hindus and Moslems", Hoare to Willingdon, 25 November 1932, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 542-43.
The whole thing is a sickening business." Early in 1933 when the Joint Select Committee met, Patiala sent three representatives who were unlikely to come into the federation and would represent his point of view, and Patiala was constantly intriguing with the Morning Post, the organ of the die-hards in England. Not only that, the Kathiwar states, under the guidance of Jamsahib, were playing a contemptible part and Rushbrooke Williams was supplying the brains and vigour. Hydari was keen about a small legislature and he had already some support for this plan from the Secretary of State.

"We must get," Hoare wrote shortly after, "Bikaner and his friends to drop the idea of a big chamber ..." and if that

103. Sapru to K.N. Haksar, 9 December 1932, Sapru Papers.
105. Same to same, 30 April 1934, ibid., vol. 4, p. 507.
106. Jayakar to Sapru, 29 March 1933, Jayakar Papers.
107. Hoare personally was in favour of Hydari's idea of small chamber, and he did not like Sapru-Jayakar and Bikaner idea of an existing central chamber in British India, Hoare to Willingdon, 9 June, 1932, Ibid., vol. 2, p. 356.
108. Same to same, 28 December, 1932, ibid., vol. 2, p. 570.
happened and Legislatures were made smaller, Jayakar feared
that Manubhai Mehta, the representative from Bikaner, would
openly threaten that princes would not come in. Indeed
Jayakar soon reported from the Joint Select Committee that
during the session of that Committee Manubhai Mehta came out
with a statement that the standing committee of the Chamber
of Princes had passed a resolution claiming the right in favour
of the princes, to come before Parliament at any time and ask
that the federation be dissolved between British India and the
princes, by an amendment of the constitution Act. Jayakar
feared that such a statement was likely to be utilised by the
die-hards as a sounding the death knell of future federation.
Indeed, as Hoare wrote a few days later, this gave Salisbury
and his friends an opportunity for "blaspheming and for claim-
ing that the federation meant nothing at all."

Under such circumstances it was not surprising that Sir
Samuel Hoare soon fell in line with the recommendations of the
Simon Commission and of the Government of India's despatch
which visualised the emergence of federation as 'a dim and
distant product of the future'.

110. Same to same, 13 October 1933, Sapru Papers.
111. Hoare to Willingdon, 20 October 1933, Templewood Collec-
112. Govt. of India Despatch on proposal for Constitutional
Reforms, 20 September 1930.
113. Ibid., p. 11.
The Attitude of the British Government -

Indeed the conference might have achieved more if British home politics had not combined with Indian jealousies to create a stalemate. Even before the second conference met the position in England had changed catastrophically. The Labour Government was threatened by the mounting economic and financial crisis. While the delegates were still arriving, Britain fell from the gold standard and an emergency Government was formed. India had been thus thrust well into the background by the events at home, and the obvious imminence of a general election still further detracted from the importance of the Indian conference. The new Government was elected to stem the drift to economic ruin which had been apparent since 1929. The nation's attention was directed to an emergency budget. There was, indeed, little time to pay any attention to the Indian problem. This was followed by a general election which resulted in an overwhelming Conservative victory. The Liberals were disappointed to find that the late Secretary of State for India and the other members of the Labour cabinet with whom they had been in constant touch for so many years were now out of office. At the Indian Office Wedgwood Benn was now replaced by Sir Samuel Hoare, a Conservative. Sir Samuel Hoare was a follower of Baldwin on the Indian question, and it was expected that he would not be committed against

Irwin's policy. But Sir Samuel Hoare was also a believer in safeguards. During the first conference he had made his position quite clear. Hoare's attitude during the first session of Round Table Conference may be best summed up in what Wedgwood Benn wrote to Irwin: "Hoare ... will not go an inch beyond saying that when he has seen the safeguards he will make up his mind about responsibility." In subsequent

115. In his Memorandum to the cabinet (dated 12 December 1930) he said that under the Montagu Chelmsford reforms and the policies and promises of last thirteen years it would be impossible to create an irremovable executive separated from legislature. So he proposed that though it would be necessary to transfer portfolios yet it was possible to retain the 'threads that really direct the system of government'. Viceroy's overriding powers were to be broadly defined; the army 'the ultimate instrument of control' must be kept 'completely in our hands' and finance would be transferred in a way that some eighty per cent of the expenditure would be kept out of the hands of an Indian minister. Commerce would also be safeguarded by a trade agreement. The Central legislature consisting of the states and the British India, would be never responsible in British sense of the word. The central executive would be only technically removable. In this way no real responsibility would be conceded to the Indians. But even this very limited responsibility was entirely dependent upon an effective federation being in actual practice in India - a condition which would take a period of years to fulfil - Memorandum by Hoare on 'Conservative Policy at the Round Table Conference' 12 December 1930, cited in C.H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainright (eds.), op. cit., pp. 65-63; also Hoare to Willingdon, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 670-91; also same to same, 1 December 1932, ibid., vol. 2, pp. 546-49; also same to same, 9 December 1932, ibid., vol. 2, p. 553; also same to same, 15 December, 1932. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 558, 560; also same to same, 6 January 1933, ibid., vol. 3, pp. 677-78.


117. Wedgwood Benn to Irwin, 26 December 1930 (Diary, dated 30 December 1930), Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters from Secretary of State for India, January to December 1930 and January to April 1931, p. 304.
debates in the House of Commons he had made his position quite clear as regards the financial safeguards which would have to be imposed in any new constitution. It was also known that he would be in keeping with the old bureaucratic tradition of giving support to the Moslems. Even the optimistic delegate felt that the conference was about to resume its deliberation under less auspicious circumstances. The Liberals saw that Macdonald headed a national Government but it was the Conservatives who kept him in office. His failing health enabled the tories to use him as a cat's paw. Of Macdonald's last Prime Ministership Amery had written: "For three years Macdonald had been little more than label which gave the name national to a coalition in which he had a bare dozen of personal supporters and exercised no real authority. His health had been constantly bad and he had, to quote Snowden, become constitutionally unable to make an intelligent statement on any question."


119. In November 1931 when the Muslims informed him that the Congress in an attempt to destroy the Muslim solidarity was trying to do a deal with the Muslims of Sind and North Western Frontier Provinces, Hoare in response to the Muslim demand, in his Memorandum of 9 November, proposed the separation of Sind and the conferment upon the N.W.F.P. the status of a Governor's province. Shortly after he wrote to the Viceroy that he was 'most nervous lest he should send the Moslem delegates back discontented.' Hoare to Willingdon, 19 November 1931, cited in C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainright (eds.), op. cit., p. 69. Again in 1932 in his private letters to the Viceroy he was pointing out the danger of alienating the Moslems and agreed that opposition of the Liberals should not detract them from their decision. Hoare to Willingdon, 22 July 1932, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 372.

In such circumstances it did not take very long time for the Liberals to see that Macdonald would virtually be a captive in the hands of the conservative Party and, as far as India was concerned, it would be the conservatives who would eventually dominate the scene. The Liberals still had a friend in Lord Sankey whose work during the first conference had deeply impressed them. But this time it was not possible for him to override the decision of the Secretary of State for India.

As a result of all this the second Round Table Conference was marked by a decided stiffening in British attitude. In the Federal Structure Committee Sapru had several times concentrated upon Sir Samuel Hoare with whom he had sundry and pointed passages. In October 1931, when the session was approaching its end, Hoare had formed the idea of starting with provincial autonomy first, leaving the whole question of federation to be decided later on. 

Early in April 1932 he proposed to abandon the Round Table Conference method, to take the Indians in the Joint Select Committee merely as witnesses and advisers and introduce provincial autonomy. Few days later he again

121. Jayakar to John Beaumont, Chief Justice of Bombay, 7 February 1931, Jayakar Papers, also Wedgwood Benn to Irwin, 12 January 1931, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters from Secretary of State for India, January to December 1930 and January to April 1931, p. 314.


123. Same to same, 8 April 1932, ibid., vol. 1, pp. 243-44; also same to same, 15 April 1932, encl. Note on Provincial Autonomy, ibid., pp. 267-77; also same to same, 27 May 1932, ibid., vol. 2, pp. 330.
sounded Willingdon who was in complete agreement with him. The Liberals sensed the danger that an attempt was being made to introduce provincial autonomy first leaving the whole question of federation for the future. They wrote letters to nearly every influential quarters in London - to Lord Sankey and to the Prime Minister. Sapru also wrote to B.L. Mitter who was in London to influence the Secretary of State and asked Chintamani to make protest in the Leader and Jayakar in the Times of India. But Hoare remained unperturbed. "Of all the Indians", he wrote to Willingdon, "I found him (Sapru) the most difficult to deal with ..." All of Sapru's efforts were in vain. On 27 June Hoare announced in the House of Commons that the Government would first issue a Communal Award. As a next step it would then frame proposals which would be embodied in a White Paper. This White Paper would be placed before a joint committee of Parliament with Indian assessors.

125. Willingdon to Hoare, 7 May 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 118; also same to same, 23 May 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 125; also same to same, 5 June 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 148.
126. Sapru to Sankey, 10 April 1932, Jayakar Papers, Sapru to Prime Minister, 2 June 1932, ibid., Jayakar to Sankey, 20 December 1932, Jayakar to Lord Lothian, 29 January 1932, ibid.
127. Sapru to B.L. Mitter, 7 June 1932, ibid.
128. Sapru to Jayakar, 7 June 1932, ibid.
The Government, he indicated, had decided to provide for constitutions for autonomous Provinces and for a federation in a single Bill. The Consultative Committee would proceed with its programme of work and, if its conclusions proved satisfactory, the third session of the Round Table Conference would be abandoned. The Liberals knew that a communal decision would have to be imposed by the Government but the further programme could only be regarded as an affront and as a prime facie evidence of the ascendency of the Tories in home politics. "The Tory majority is a hard fact," wrote Sastri, "on which we can make only a slight impression." Sapru, Sastri Jayakar, Chintamani, Sethna, and Setalvad and others condemned Hoare's procedure for 'doing away with ideas of equality during discussion between British and Indian delegates and agreement between them on the basis of proposals to be laid before Parliament.' Sapru, and Jayakar immediately issued a statement on 29 June protesting against this change of procedure and, despite best effort on the part of the Viceroy and B.L. Mitter, the Law Member, they resigned from Viceroy's Consultative

133. Sapru-Jayakar Statement, Servant of India, 7 July 1932.
134. Willingdon to Hoare, 10 July 1932, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 185.
Committee in protest. Joshi also followed suit. Though anxious to get the Hindu Liberals back to the fold, Hoare was unwilling to give in. "They" (the Liberals), he wrote to Willingdon, "really are impossible people. It is quite impossible for us to yield to their present demand." On 10 July a meeting of all the Liberals was held at Bombay. "... the new procedure", said they, "is entirely different in substance and spirit from the conference method as expounded by Lord Irwin in October 1929 and July 1930, and by the Premier in 1931." They considered that the new procedure "is symptomatic of a new policy and cannot produce a constitution so satisfactory as that which the conference method was designed to produce. The result is bound to be a great aggravation of the evils of the present situation. It is considered an emphatic conclusion of the signatories that maintenance of the conference method is, as it was an essential condition of their co-operation and support." On the same day the council of the National Liberal Federation met at Bombay and passed a resolution protesting emphatically against the abandonment of the Round Table Conference method and withholding co-operation in all further stages of constitutional enquiry.

135. Jayakar to Sapru, 6 July 1932, Jayakar Papers; also Sapru to Jayakar, 7 July 1932, ibid.
136. Hoare to Willingdon, 8 July 1932, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 566; also same to same, 14 July 1932, ibid., vol. 2, p. 372; also same to same, 5 August 1932, ibid., vol. 2, p. 388.
While the Liberals were thus protesting in press and platforms Sapru made an appeal to Lord Irwin who had initiated the conference method and also to Lord Sankey. "The statement does not seem to me", he also wrote to Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy, "to be some variation in method, but on the contrary it strikes me as a very vital departure from Round Table Conference ... the variation effected, in the procedure is not one merely of form of procedure but of substance. My faith in the method hitherto pursued continues unaffected. But I have no faith in the new procedure ..."

Early in June Sapru and Jayakar also paid a visit to the Viceroy at Simla. Partly constrained by these Liberal efforts and partly because he too was anxious on his part to settle with Liberals before the communal decision was out, Willingdon requested Hoare to widen the terms of the announcement with regard to discussion because "their (Sapru-Jayakar) action may encourage the Congress people and drive them into

139. Sapru to Irwin, 10 July 1932, Sapru Papers.
140. Sapru to Lord Sankey, 10 July 1932, ibid.
141. Sapru to Lord Willingdon, after 22 June 1932. Ibid.
143. Same to same, 6 August 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 175; also same to same, 14 August 1932, ibid., vol. 4, pp. 177-78; also same to same, 22 August 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 179; also same to same, 6 August, 1932, vol. 4, p. 173.
Hoare's proposal was abandoned in the face of unanimous opposition but he was determined to have his way with provincial autonomy and asked the Viceroy to be 'very careful about the selection of delegates who would join the third session of the Round Table Conference'. "I am sure", he wrote to Willingdon, "we shall want a stronger provincial representation and fewer of the shadowy detached type from the centre that seemed to me only to get in the way last year." Some days later he again wrote to the Viceroy to keep in mind the fact 'that we must have Indian conservative opinion adequately represented'. During the third session of the conference Sir Samuel Hoare's attitude took a very reactionary turn particularly on the Defence question. He did not make any concession to the views of the Liberals and ended merely by a pious expression of sympathy for their ideas and aspiration. He ruled out all possibilities of a reduction of Military expenditure or the production of a scheme for Indianisation within a certain period or the recognition of their demand that there should be an Indian Minister selected from the Legislature to hold

144. Same to same, 19 June 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 156.
146. Same to same, 22 September 1932, ibid., vol. 2, p. 424.
the portfolio of the Army. Sapru and Jayakar and other delegates immediately wrote a letter to Lord Sankey protesting against the position as it seemed to emerge from the speech of the Secretary of State on the matter of Defence and pointing out that 'no scheme based on the lines indicated in the Secretary of State's speech will appeal to even moderate minded men in India'. They thought it necessary to write this letter because of the conviction that the decision of His Majesty's Government on this vital issue would be one of the determining factors which would affect the reception of the new constitution by their countrymen.

Hoare was also very anxious about the fate of the financial safeguards and commercial discrimination. For he was sure that without a Reserve Bank in existence and without a reasonable chance of its working satisfactorily, 'it is not a risk but a certainty that India's credit will be shaken to its foundations'. As to commercial discrimination he was determined to stand firm upon reciprocity of treatment for British trade and traders. He decided not to budge an inch from the Government position. Indeed the situation deteriorated to such an extent that Sapru foresaw the result of the con-

148. Sapru to K.N. Haksar, 9 December 1932, Sapru Papers.
149. Joint letter of the delegates to Lord Sankey, 7 December 1932, Jayakar Papers.
150. Ibid.
153. Same to same, 2 December 1932, ibid., vol. 2, p. 560.
... It appears that things are not going too well”, he wrote to one of his friends (Haksar) in a letter from London at the time of third Round Table Conference, “Lord Sankey has bidden us good bye, and I believe he may not come back until the last moment, and Sir Samuel Hoare will conduct proceedings. I am afraid that the Government will be absolutely unbending on the question of financial safeguards. One idea is to reserve Finance altogether. Another is to impose on us a financial adviser from England, who will be appointed by the Secretary of State and will be responsible to him ... they will not give us the power of currency in exchange laws ... Apart from all this there is the big question of the date of the federation. They do not want to lay down any definite date, and their apparent excuse for that is that the princes are not committing themselves to any particular date. All this means that federation may never come at all or if it does, its inauguration will depend upon the sweet will of the princes ... I look upon the whole thing as an ingenious device to start provincial constitution leaving the federation in a state of uncertainty ...

During the intervening months between the publication of the White Paper and meeting of the Joint Select Committee the situation in England became far more serious. The die-hards

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164. Sapru to K. N. Haksar, 9 December 1932, Sapru Papers.
intensified their campaign in India against federation. They were mobilising vigorously against the White Paper and Churchill was relentlessly exploiting his influence and prestige to rally the Conservative Party in favour of a strong line over India, and putting pressure on the rank and file of the Conservative Party by appealing to constituency associations. The general Conservative attitude at the time was summarised by Lord Lothian in a letter to Jayakar thus: "There is a natural anxiety in conservative quarters here on the ground that at a time when the whole world is veering towards despotism or anarchy, when democracy every where is apparently failing to stand up to the strains and stresses of the present day it is foolhardy to try to launch 350,000,000 people simultaneously in the province and at the centre on the perilous waters of coloured ballot papers and coloured ballot boxes". The die-hard Conservatives were unwilling even to give full provincial autonomy and wanted that Law and Order should never be transferred. Inside the Committee Lord Salisbury and Austen Chamberlain were the two key men, and while Lord Salisbury was...

155. For example, Rushbrook Williams, who was in the service of the chancellor of the Chamber of Princes was assured of "a safe seat by the die-hards at home if he can succeed in smashing federation ..." Willingdon to Hoare, 26 March 1933, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 226.

156. Hoare to Willingdon, 12 May 1933, ibid., vol. 3, p.706; also same to same, 26 May 1933, ibid., vol. 3, p. 710; also Sapru to Brajnarain, 25 May 1933, Sapru Papers.

157. Lord Lothian to Jayakar, 2 March 1933, Jayakar Papers.

158. Sapru to Brajnarain, 26 May 1933, Sapru Papers.
'very conservative' Sir Winston Churchill was trying to get Sir Austen Chamberlain join forces with him in order to have a considerable landslide against the Liberals. "Hoare is Wooden", wrote Jayakar to Setalvad from the meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, "and implacable as ever, he will not even cross the 'T's and dot the 'I's of the contents of the White Paper. Sankey is dumb, Reading feebly supporting. Lothian sixteen annas with us but mute and biding his time. The Labour members many of them more than official in their views. Atlee is especially worse than official on many points".

As the meeting of the Joint Select Committee continued there was a daily increase in the die-hard agitation against White Paper, Sapru was apprehensive of the situation. "The position in England seems to me to be very serious, (he wrote to Jayakar). Winston Churchill and his group by themselves may not be able to wreck the bill but there are other conservatives who are beginning to show their teeth". By the middle of 1933 it seemed that die-hards had captured the platform and the press and Winston Churchill, helped by Sir Michael O'Dwyer, seemed to dominate the situation. The position of the Liberals in the Committee became so very critical that Sapru at one time began to talk despondently of resignation from the Committee.

159. Jayakar to Setalvad, 2 June 1933, Jayakar Papers.
160. Sapru to Jayakar, 23 March 1933, ibid.
161. Sapru to Brajnarain, 23 June 1933, Sapru Papers.
Although Baldwin came out victorious, Sapru was by no means optimistic of the situation. 'I am sure', he wrote on 30 June 1933, 'that in a very short time Winston Churchill and his friends will renew their campaign and Baldwin and others will purchase the solidarity of their party at a heavy price.' In 1934 the die-hards sent out to India some of their own men to influence Patiala who had this assurance that when they (die-hards) came into power, which they would do, Patiala should receive all such honours and guns that he was disposed to ask for, provided he would say that he was against the Reforms. After the report of the Joint Select Committee came out Winston Churchill and his friends renewed their overtures to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in order to deter the princes from embarking on federation. The result was that early in the beginning of the year 1935 the princes met in a conference at Bombay and passed a resolution that seemed to repudiate the federal proposals.

162. At the time a tussle was going on between Churchill and Baldwin for the leadership of the Conservative Party.
163. Sapru to Brajnarain and Kunzru, 30 June 1933, Sapru Papers.
164. Willingdon to Hoare, 30 April 1934, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 507.
165. Same to same, 9 December, 1935, encl. 1. letter dated July 1934 from Duke of Argyll and Duke of Buccleugh to Patiala, encl. 2. letter dated 28 October 1934, encl. 3. letter dated 2 December 1934, ibid., vol. 4, pp. 506-10.
166. Same to same, 9 March 1935, encl. Letter to Mievelle from Patiala forwarding a copy of the verbatim record of the proceedings of the meeting of the princes and ministers, held in Bombay on 25 February 1935, ibid., vol. 7, p. 651.
the leader of the die-hards upon whom the mantle of Curzon had fallen at once took advantage of a situation that had providentially played into his hands to make one of his most formidable attacks in the House of Commons on the whole conception of federation.

It was not without reason, therefore, that Sapru lost all hope of any thing big coming out of the Committee. "The fact must be recognised that England is in the grip of the die-hards", he had already predicted in the fall of 1933, "and they will never give us anything like we want. Meanwhile English opinion is being fed on false estimate of the situation in India."

Situation in India -

Before Gandhi returned to India (at the end of the Second Round Table Conference) the truce between Congress and the Government had come to an end. In the United Provinces the Working Committee had sanctioned a no rent campaign among the peasants.

168. Sapru to Jayakar, 22 October 1933, Jayakar Papers.
169. In fact ever since the pact had been concluded the Govt. of India and the Congress had been bringing charges and countercharges of the breaches of pact, Gandhi to Emerson, Secretary to the Home Deptt., Govt. of India, 22 April 1931 and Emerson to Gandhi, 2 May 1931, G of I, Home Pol., secret, no. 33/4/31; also ibid., 33/34/31, also ibid., 33/22/31, also ibid., secret, 14/30/32 and K.W.
the villagers. In Bengal 'terrorism' was rampant; three district magistrates of Midnapore had been murdered in succession and several others seriously injured. The old communal spectre, far from withering away was assuming a new and more malignant guise. The Hindu Sabha met at Ajmer and passed certain strong resolutions, and the Mohammedans were already replying to them in the press and on the platform, and an outburst of communal riot at any moment seemed very likely. In the North West Frontier Provinces a Muslim organisation under Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as the 'Red Shirts', had made common cause with the Congress. Abdul Ghaffar Khan had declared that his object was to free the country from foreign domination and had called on the Congress to repudiate the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, and resume the fight for freedom. Hoare had

170. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21 December 1932(T), G of I, Home Pol., no. 36/1/32. See also S. Gopal (ed.), Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 52-192.

171. From Home member, Govt. of Bengal, 20 April 1931, also from Home member, Govt. of Bengal, 10 October 1931, also same to Home member, Govt. of India, 5 December 1931, G of I, Home Pol., ibid., secret no. 281/31.

172. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21 December 1932(T), ibid., no. 36/1/1932.


174. All India Muslim League (Twenty third session), 21-23 October 1933, Ldls., 1933, vol. 2, p. 213; also All India Muslim League Meeting, 25 November 1933 at New Delhi, ibid., pp. 214-15; also Bengal Presidency Muslim League Meeting, 25 November 1933, ibid., pp. 217-18.

176. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21 December 1932(T), G of I, Home Pol., no. 36/1/1932.
also approved plans of offensive against the Congress. The Government of India now issued instructions and copies of Emergency Powers Ordinance to all local Governments according to which they were to be guided in dealing with the revival of Civil Disobedience movement. So the conflict was resumed. As a result the Congress became more radical in its utterances and activities. While the Liberals were in England in connection with their work in the Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill, the Congress utterances and activities in India were being fully exploited by the opponents of reforms in England which proved fatal to their cause.

"... I feel somewhat anxious", Sapru wrote to Jayakar, shortly after the end of the Second Round Table Conference, "about the socialistic programme which the Congress has now put forward ... it will place very powerful weapon in the hands of British Tories ..." Indeed, it was being fully utilised by the opponents of reforms in England. By the middle of 1932, Hoare reported that 'recent events in India had hardened opinion against many of the constitutional changes that we have been discussing'. The result is that people here are more

176. Willingdon to Hoare, 17 December 1931, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 105-06; also same to same, 31 December 1931, ibid., pp. 114-17.

177. Emerson, Secretary to the Govt. of India, Home Deptt. to All Local Governments and Administrations, 17 December 1931, G of I, Home Pol., secret no. 14/12/31, K.W. Also ibid., confidential, no. 13/12/32.

178. Sapru to Jayakar, 8 April 1931, Jayakar Papers.

179. For example, ever since the beginning of Civil Disobedience movement Rothermere had been carrying on a 'save India' campaign in the Daily Mail. One such article appeared in the Daily Mail of 13 January 1931.
strong in favour than ever of an advance by two stages'.
Sapru also reported how, during the Joint Select Committee
meeting, the Congress programme of Sovietization of Indian
society led Lord Lytton to ask the Secretary of State to re­
quire the Governor-General's previous sanction to any legisla­
tion dealing with the permanent settlement, and Samuel Hoare,
frightened by the announcement, readily agreed to make provi­sion for such a contingency. This was how the Congress
utterances were leading the Liberals deeper and deeper into
the mire. Perhaps the safeguards would have been much less
stiff if the Congress programme to follow a British withdrawal
had not been so radical. Its implacable refusal to consider
any period whatever of transition hardened opposition

Attitude of the Government of India -

Irwin's successor in India was Lord Willingdon. He was
cast in a very different mould. His motto was Burke's: "There
is a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue." He
had a very different programme. "My job has been", he wrote
shortly after his arrival, "to reassert the authority of the
administration. That settlement (Gandhi-Irwin) has established
a position in the minds of the people of the country that
Gandhi had acted as a plenipotentiary in negotiating terms of
peace with the Viceroy himself and that therefore there seemed
to be two kings of Brentford in India ..." Far from trying

180. Hoare to Willingdon, 27 May 1932, Templewood Collection,

181. Sapru to Jayakar, 2 October 1933, Jayakar Papers.

to conciliate the Congress and the public opinion in India he was trying to sabotage the prospect of the conference in London upon which the Liberals had put so much stake. When the Secretary of State wanted him to make a public announcement in India in accordance with the Prime Minister's announcement designed to create a peaceful atmosphere, he not only opposed the proposed public announcement but asked for the approval of the Secretary of State for issuing emergency ordinances to deal drastically with any law breaking. "I have done my best", he wrote shortly afterwards, "to disabuse them of the idea that British Raj was shortly going and Gandhi Raj coming". But to the Liberals the two crucial factors upon which they had largely pinned their hopes of success were the repeal of the repressive ordinances and the release of political prisoners. As the Liberals rightly felt, this would determine not only the Congress participation in the conference but also the ultimate reception of the constitution which would emerge out of its deliberations.

While the Liberals did not overlook the danger of Civil Disobedience, they recognised that the drastic character of

183. G of I, Reforms Office, 2/31 secret notes.
185. Same to same, 3 November 1931, ibid., vol. 4, p. 16.
186. Sapru to K.N. Haksar, 23 February 1932, Sapru Papers.
187. Sapru to Samuel Hoare, 10 May 1933, Sapru Papers; also Sapru to George Lansbury, 10 December 1931, ibid.
the ordinances was sure to affect the attitude of Gandhi and the Congress and that they were also alienating the people who were not Congress men and who did not support Civil Disobedience. Of all the ordinances that the Government issued in 1932, the Bengal Ordinance was the cause of greatest grievance. For that reason Sapru suggested certain amendments to the ordinances designed to make them less objectionable and also to make it easier for Gandhi to continue his co-operation in the committees appointed by the Prime Minister. But it failed to evoke any response from the Government of India. The Liberals were, however, under no delusion as to the attitude of Congressmen to the release of political prisoners. Sapru did not expect them to accept or welcome the new constitution but he attached importance to what he called the 'psychological effects'. The country was in a bad mood, their release would, to a very large extent, allay public discontent. For this reason, ever since their return from the Round Table Conference, they had been emphasising the need for release of

188. Ibid.
189. Sapru to George Lansbury, 10 December 1931, G of I, Home Pol., no. 13/6/32.
190. Willingdon to Hoare, 10 January 1932, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 60; also same to same, 17 January 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 62; also same to same, 19 April 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 118-15.
191. Sapru to K. N. Baksar, 23 February 1933, Sapru Papers.
192. Ibid.
the political prisoners. But the Local Governments were unwilling at this time for a general amnesty. The Viceroy was further convinced of the futility of allowing Sapru and Jayakar to act as mediators or of coming to any agreement with the Congress leaders. The Viceroy was in full agreement with the Home Member’s view and refused to grant any interview to Sapru and Jayakar to discuss the question of release of political prisoners. He also moved the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister in England to agree to his view that 'this is not the time for release of Gandhi and other prisoners'.

The hard headed officials at Delhi and in the other provincial capitals who had never at heart liked the Delhi pact, had now a sympathetic chief. The friction began within a few days. The Government of India now began to bring charges of breaches of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact by the Congress. But when

193. Summary of the views of Local Governments, G of I, Home Pol., secret no. 5/45/31 K.W. Appendix II

194. "In my view however", Haig, the Home Member wrote to Willingdon, "It is in no way necessary to secure the cooperation of the Congress in order that the new constitution may be properly launched and in fact if Government reach an agreement with Congress I think condition would be set up which might in certain provinces wreck the constitution at the outset". Confidential note by Home member, 23 December 1932, ibid., secret no. 31/37/32; also ibid, secret no. 5/45/31 and K.W.

195. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 7 January 1933, ibid. Also ibid no. 5/45/31 and K.W.

196. Secretary of State to Viceroy, 12 January 1933(T), ibid., secret no. 31/37/32.

Gandhi brought countercharges against Government, the Viceroy refused to make an enquiry into the situation and flatly declined to consider the case in view of the issues 'much wider in scope ... involved'. A series of acrimonious correspondence between Viceroy and Gandhi followed and the climax was reached when Gandhi informed the Viceroy that it was not possible for him to join the Round Table Conference in England. Seeing the prospect of the conference shattered, Sapru and Jayakar again intervened, pleaded the Congress case with the Viceroy and the matter was settled only after Gandhi had agreed to accept an enquiry by an 'ordinary officer of the revenue department' as proposed by the Government. The incident created much bitterness in India. Not content with this, the Viceroy contemplated inclusion of men like

198. Complaints made by Gandhi of breaches of the settlement on the part of Govt. A memorandum given to Mr. Emerson by Mr. Gandhi; Schedule A - Alleged instances of specific breaches of the settlement cited by Mr. Gandhi; Schedule B - General complaints made by Mr. Gandhi, which do not relate to breaches of specific provisions of the settlement, ibid. no. 33/23/31. Also Gandhi to Viceroy, 14 August 1931; Gandhi to Emerson, 27 August 1931; Gandhi to K.M. Maxwell, P.S. to H.E. the Governor of Bombay, 24 July 1931; Gandhi to Collector of Surat 24 July 1931; Gandhi to J.N. Garret, Commissioner of Northern Division, 24 July 1931; Gandhi to Hailey, Governor of United Provinces, 6 August 1931; Gandhi to Viceroy, 12 August 1931; same to same, 13 August 1931; Gandhi to K.W. Emerson, Home Secretary to Govt. of India, 14 June 1931, ibid., secret no. 14/30/32 and K.W.

199. Viceroy to Sapru, 14 August 1931(T), ibid.

200. Gandhi to Viceroy, 11 August 1931; also Viceroy to Secretary to State, 13 August 1931(T), ibid.

201. Sapru and Jayakar's Tel., 14 August 1931; also Viceroy to Secretary of State, 17 August 1931, ibid.

201a. Sapru and Jayakar to Gandhi, 24 August 1931, Gandhi Papers, op. cit.

202. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 28 August 1931(T), ibid.
Shafaat Ahmad Khan in the Federal Structure Sub-committee of the Second Round Table Conference. Inside the Government, Fazl-i-Husain was pulling strings from India. Delegates who were in favour of joint electorates had been encouraged in private letters to favour separate electorate which led to the rejection of joint electorates. Sapru resented the inclusion of communalist leaders in the Conference and wrote to C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, who was in the Viceroy's Council, to persuade Lord Willingdon against adding such men either to the Hindu or the Muslim side. A few days later he was writing to the Viceroy about the disappointment that had been caused by the publication of the names of communalist leaders in the Federal Structure Committee and requested that Nationalist Muslims, who represented a considerable section of opinion, should not be denied a chance of expressing opinion in the Federal Structure Committee. But far from making any change in the list of delegates, Willingdon urged the Secretary of State 'to include in the Federal Structure Committee Dholpur who was a man of Patiala. Dholpur has got particular views which are not

203. Sapru to C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, 4 June 1931, Sapru Papers.
205. Ibid., pp. 255-56.
206. Sapru to C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, 4 June 1931, Sapru Papers.
207. Sapru to Willingdon, 24 July 1931, ibid.
entirely Sapru and Bikaner's view on the matter of the princes coming into the Federation'. Sapru had also information that the Government of India was trying to delay the coming of federation. For example, so far as the states were concerned, the instructions given to the political officers in 1930 were not withdrawn. These officers were instructed to keep the states out of federation. They succeeded in doing so and were rewarded, much to 'the chagrin which bordered on revolt of their senior officers' (e.g. McKenzie - a very junior officer - at the time serving at Jaipur was to be the Resident of Hyderabad; McNabb - another junior officer at Udaypur was to be A.G.G. in Central India etc.). Negatively, those who 'took their cue from the progress of events in London and came to believe that the policy was to bring federation into being were kept out of promotion with the result that the Resident of Mysore another junior man - was actually going to become Resident of the States in order that senior men might be kept out of prize appointments'. Sapru also received the disquieting news that desperate attempts were being made at certain quarters at the Government India to defeat responsibility at the Centre. "Our main position is", Willingdon wrote to Hoare, "to give provincial autonomy with a mere prospect of

208. Willingdon to Hoare, 28 August 1931, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 3.
209. K.N. Haksar to Sapru, 18 February 1933, Sapru Papers.
210. Ibid.
central responsibility ... My opinion is that ... you will have to give hookunu, both on the minorities question and in the matter of safeguards. I of course believe that it would have been much better to have done this at all events before the end of the Conference."

At the end of the second Round Table Conference he strengthened his efforts. Early in January 1932 he pressed upon Hoare to get on with provincial autonomy and pass the necessary legislation through Parliament. He continued to give more and more support to the Moslems in India because the vocal ones amongst them wanted provincial autonomy.

"I believe", he wrote, "that the fair way would be to give the minorities practically all that they ask for and the best way would have been for the Hindus as a great majority to have agreed to do it for a term of years." In private letters he was constantly urging the necessity of supporting the Moslem who had always supported the British Government and sent in a list of extreme communalist Muslims who were nominated for the Third Round Table Conference. Not only that, he was

211. Willingdon to Hoare, 30 November 1931, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 36.
212. Same to same, 4 January 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 56; also same to same, 27 March 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 104; also same to same, 1 May 1932, ibid., vol. 4, pp. 115-16.
213. Same to same, 6 March 1932, ibid., vol. 4, pp. 88-89.
214. Ibid., also same to same, 16 July 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 185; also same to same, 10 July 1932, ibid., vol.4, pp. 165-66.
215. Same to same, 14 March 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 91.
216. Same to same, 19 September 1932, ibid., vol. 5, pp.186-88.
also urging Hoare on the necessity of laying much stress on Financial safeguards and establishment of a Reserve Bank.

Sapru also reported how, during the third session, the Liberal position was very much weakened by the attitude of the Indian members of the Executive Council who were reported to have agreed to the reservations about Finance.

In short, by 1932 the policy of the Government of India and of Lord Willingdon was to fall back upon the support of the two reactionary elements - the princes and the Moslems. Since then he had been constantly urging the Secretary of State of the urgent necessity of relying upon these two elements 'who on the whole have generally supported us' and to take the least cognisance of 'these hopelessly while livered gentlemen who call themselves Liberals'.

Disunity among British Indians -

Perhaps things might have been a little different if the delegates from British India had been able to produce something

217. Same to same, ibid., vol. 4, p. 154; also same to same, 23 July 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 170; also same to same, 31 October 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 205.
218. Sapru to K.N. Haksar, 9 December 1932, Sapru Papers.
219. In fact the idea to rely upon the Moslems and the States was mooted as early as May 1931, Keyes to Hydari, 26 May 1931, K.G. 28, cited in R.J. Moore, op. cit., p. 224.
220. Willingdon to Hoare, 10 July 1932, Templewood Collection, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 175.
221. Same to same, 10 July 1932, ibid., vol. 4, p. 167.
like a united front. But Sapru anticipated greater danger from the side of the Indian Liberals. Already during the first session, of the Round Table Conference a difference of opinion had appeared between Sapru and Chintamani and others. One section of the Liberals was progressively becoming more radical in its views. Some of the Liberals were not free from their recent personal disappointment at the Round Table Conference. On their return to India the Liberals themselves were spoiling for fight and were now organising and fomenting opposition to the recommendations of the Federal Structure Committee as proposed by Sapru and others. The attitude of the Leader of Allahabad and the Servant of India at Poona was a fair index of what was coming. The Bombay Liberals continued to pour ridicule on Sapru and Jayakar and the Leader continued to publish stuff absolutely hostile to federation.

223. The speech of Chintamani at the thirteenth session of N. L.F. of India clearly showed that there was not much difference between the point of view of the Congress and that of the younger section of the Liberals.
224. In fact Chintamani supported Patiala's Article in The Times outlining a mischievous scheme of federation, Jayakar to Sapru, 17 June 1931, Jayakar Papers.
225. Servant of India, 19 February, 26 March, 14 May, 2 July, 13 August, 22 October 1931. Also Leader, 1931 passim.
226. Sapru to Jayakar, 19 February 1933, Jayakar Papers, also same to same, 26 March 1933, ibid.
Indeed, it was more correct to say that the loudest in their
denunciation of the Round Table Conference results were the
Indian Liberals - particularly the Bombay group. As a result
they failed to produce a united demand during the meetings
of Consultative Committee in India. Somewhat of a storm arose
between Patro and Sapru and his group. While Patro pressed
the necessity of immediate provincial autonomy as a first step
and appeared to receive some support from the Muslims, Sapru
definitely placed the Centre in the forefront and expressed
himself as not interested in the details of provincial consti-
tution. Again during the session of the Joint Select Com-
mittee Sapru attacked many of the so-called rights of the
Services in his speech on the question of the Public Service.
One of his points was that recruitment in future should be made
by the Government of India. Another point was that although
officers appointed before 1919, that is to say until the Monta-
gu-Chelmsford Reforms, might claim protection at the hands of
the Secretary of State, those who were appointed after 1919
should look unto the Governor-General for protection of their
rights, in respect of salaries, pensions, and particularly
dismissal. This created some hard feelings at the Joint Select
Committee. But, again, two of their own men, Sir A. F. Patro

228. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 23 January 1932(T), Progs.
of the Consultative Committee, G of I, Reforms Office,
no. 32/2/34 and K.W. Also ibid., no. 23/1/32; also Wil-
lingdon to Hoare, 14 March 1932, Templewood Collection,
op. cit., vol. 4, p. 91.

229. Tabulated in the White Paper; Appendix VII.
from Madras and Sir N.N. Sircar from Bengal, did not stand by him and the Muslims adopted a wobbling attitude. On another occasion some members tried to create difficulty by referring to the Congress demand for repudiation of Indian debt. Sapru explained the position by reading out an excerpt from Gandhi’s speech. Lord Reading supported Sapru on that occasion. But it was left to Sir N.N. Sircar again to contradict Sapru and throw aspersion on the Mahatma. On no single occasion of a critical character did Sircar stand by him.

As the plans for self-Government began to take form, communal fears and suspicions became more acute, so acute in fact, that at one time the Moslem delegates seemed anxious to make sure of the Provinces in which they had a majority and to leave unreformed the Central Government, in which federation would place them in a minority. Against this was a tactical move engineered by Sapru and the Hindu Liberals to refuse any

230. Sircar who had before him the prospect of becoming the Law Member in place of B.L. Mitter did not want to support Sapru openly, Sapru to Jayakar, 19 February 1933, Jayakar Papers.

231. Ibid.

232. Sapru to Brajnarain, 2 June 1933, Sapru Papers; also same to same, 15 June 1933, ibid.

233. At one stage Sapru was so vexed with the Hindu Muhammadan problem that he told Wedgwood Benn that he really would like to go home, Wedgwood Benn to Irwin, Diary, 15 December 1930, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters from Secretary of State for India, January to December 1930 and January to April 1931, p. 266.
idea of provincial autonomy unless the Moslems at the same time dealt with the Centre. To these the Moslem reply was a refusal to do anything at all until the communal question was settled and until they were sure of provincial autonomy on lines that would suit them in Punjab. The Moslems did not always support the Hindu Liberals except when their own interests were concerned. For example, when, at the end of the third Round Table Conference, Samuel Hoare made a very reactionary speech on Army, he received support from Liyaquat Hyat Khan and the Moslem block. When the Liberals put up a strong fight on the Army question in the Joint Committee, the Moslems were quiet, giving the impression that, having secured the co-operation of Hindus on Provincial subjects, they were lukewarm about what happened to the Centre. Shafat Ahmad Khan was always making mischief by raising the communal question and Zafrulla, no friend of federation, put forward proposal after proposal intended to frighten the representatives of Indian States.

"Our difficulties are immense", Jayakar wrote to Setalvad on 2 June 1935, "and they are at present, so various that both Sapru and myself are very nearly despairing whether we are serving any good cause at all at continuing to remain here ... Everybody is convincing us that we can secure practically no improvement in the White Paper and may on the contrary, by our

235. Jayakar to Sapru, 2 November 1933, Jayakar Papers.
226. Sapru to Brajnarain, 26 May 1932, Sapru Papers.
presence and our consequent show of differences amongst ourselves, strengthen the position of our opponents who, if we were not here, the Government would have to fight alone. Notwithstanding the complete agreement on Moslem demand they are playing a foul game. They supported the Government almost on every point in the White Paper which does not go against their communal aims ... with the result that parliamentary committee notes our differences and questions about them. It is a most pitiable situation much worse than any which developed during the deliberations of the Round Table Conference."

The die-hards were quick to make capital out of this fundamental breach in the plan of All India Federation. They were therefore in favour of postponing the constitutional reforms until the Indians were agreed among themselves as to what they wanted. "I can scarcely blame Englishmen", Sapru wrote to Jayakar, "for their unwillingness to part with power after the sorry exhibition of mutual distrust and suspicion which our own men have betrayed on this occasion".

One ought to be impressed with the magnitude of the perils which confronted the Liberals and which they surmounted during these years. Since 1923 and before the Reforms Enquiry Committee in 1924 and the various other conferences of the Liberal
Federation, they had demanded provincial autonomy with simultaneous responsibility at the Centre, with some safeguards for the transitional period. They repeated these demands at the Round-Table Conferences. The Act conceded these demands in broad outline but 'loaded them with chains'. But to take a rational view of the situation in a fairly long perspective, it seems that the passing of a Bill more liberal than that which was enacted in 1935 was inconceivable and, inspite of its many shortcomings, it may be said that the Act contained features which were reassuring. The path was indeed difficult and obscure but its direction was certainly upward and onward and to clear it the Liberals had contributed significantly.