Rise of the Swarajya Party -

The end of the year 1922 saw the Non-cooperation movement in a 'parlous plight' and torn by acute internal dissensions. The idea of constitutional agitation now inspired C.R. Das. In fact C.R. Das, Pundit Motilal Nehru and V.J. Patel had never really favoured the boycott of the new Legislatures brought into being by the Indian Reforms Act of 1919. Non-cooperation was adopted at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta in September 1920. But the debate was exciting and well-known nationalist leaders - Malavya, Das and Lajpat Rai, the president of the session who had strong doubts regarding the self denying ordinance which the Non-cooperation prescribed for themselves, had ranged against Gandhi; and C.R. Das opposed Gandhi's idea of boycott of Councils on the plea that Congress would lose points of vantage in the fight against the Government. With difficulty that nationalists were at last converted to Gandhi cult. The Mahatma had promised to bring swaraj within a year but the year was ending and the nationalists saw that Government had not moved an inch. On the other hand, the revocation of the aggressive programme in the Non-cooperation campaign, whatever its justification from Gandhi's point of view, had rung against the party. 

view, confused the Congress rank and file. The despair and confusion attendant on the fiasco of the Bardoli resolutions led to much heart-searching within the Congress; and the sceptics were now led by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. Now that mass civil disobedience was no longer in the offing they felt that the only way of keeping up the resistance to the Government was to enter the Central and Provincial Legislatures to expose its limited and irresponsible character; for the Legislative Councils though they had been subjected to severe strain by the Non-cooperators during the previous three years, had showed that they provided an useful arena for staging obstruction and an opportunity for causing embarrassment to the Government. They were influenced by the tactics which Parnell and his party had adopted with success in the House of Commons in the agitation for Irish Home Rule. They fought the matter out in the annual Congress meeting at Gaya in December 1922. But the Gaya Congress declared for no change. The no-changers won the day but little progress subsequently. The pro-changers led by C.R. Das and Pundit Motilal Nehru now announced the formation of the 'Congress Khilafat Swabhimaan Party' on 1 January 1923 with C.R. Das as its President and Pundit Motilal Nehru and three others as Secretaries. Gandhiji, now seeing that


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 180.
Non-cooperators were non-cooperating not so much with the Government as with one another, finally permitted the Swarajists in the Special Congress at Delhi in September 1923 to take part in the forthcoming elections, enter the Councils, and to carry on 'uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction' within the Council with a view to make Government through Council impossible. Thus by September 1923 the programme of militant mass action had been superseded by constitutionalism and the leadership of the Congress had fallen into the hands of the Swarajya Party.

Defeat of the Liberals —

In the election that followed at the end of 1923 the Liberals who had taken part in the previous Council naturally constituted the opposition to the Swarajists. Besides the Liberals a number of Independents contested the election mainly on the strength of local influence. But the second election under the Reform Act of 1919 registered the virtual 'exit' of the Liberal Party from Central and Provincial Legislatures.

From the first the Liberals found themselves in a very disadvantageous position. In none of the directions in which they had achieved progress, had they been able to satisfy the full force of national demand. They had controlled the Council

6. Young India, 11 September 1924.
in the previous term but they had no substantial achievement to advertise to the electorate. The Ministers had been overruled by the Government even in ordinary routine matters.

Secondly, the Liberal Party was in many quarters identified with the Government. In the Provinces there had been a failure on the part of the public opinion to distinguish between the Reserved and Transferred sides of the Government. The Ministers had been popularly identified with the Executive Councillors, and regarded as little else than an additional wing of the bureaucracy. This misapprehension, reinforced as it was by the fact that Liberal Ministers generally supported their Executive colleagues when the exigencies of the political situation demanded strong action, was not counterbalanced by any achievement in the Nation Building Departments as might have enabled the Ministers to appeal with confidence to the electorate on the merits of their record. Moreover, they were reproached for holding offices at a time when self-sacrifice was order of the day. In short, the Liberal Party repelled many young men by its apparent unwillingness to disturb the regular comfortable flow of life and make sacrifices. Thus


9. For example, in the adjournment motions in the Bengal Legislative Council on the Chandpur affair in July 1921 and North Bengal Flood in October 1922 and in the common demand for reduction of Ministers' salaries in all the Provinces.

10. E.g. when the Govt. passed repressive laws viz. Criminal Law Amendment Act etc.

11. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23 February 1923, Bengalee. 23 February 1923.
the Liberals were identified, partly by the course of events and partly by the course of propaganda of their antagonists, with all that for which Government stood.

The Liberals were also at a disadvantage so far as the electorate was concerned. Liberal organisations at the Provincial level were established in the beginning. But after the election of 1920 for three years during the terms of their office, they had not cared to visit their constituencies. It was only during the last few months that they tried to set their houses in order. In the United Provinces some efforts were made mainly due to the efforts of Chintamani to educate the electorate. Liberal Leagues were established at district level affiliated to the United Provinces Liberal Association. Chintamani also toured the Bombay presidency chiefly to improve and strengthen Party's organisation. They had based their hopes mainly on their performance inside the Councils, but these latter formed only one part, and the lesser part of the whole objective. By staking every thing inside the Council chamber they had neglected the constituencies and brought about their own downfall. In between the sessions of Liberal Party

12a. Chintamani to Sivaswami Aiyar, 23 June 1923, Sivaswami Aiyar Papers, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
13. Leader, 17 August 1923.
14. Secretary to the Govt. of Bombay, Home Dept. (Special) to Secretary to the Govt. of India, Home Dept., 3-12 July 1923, G of I, Home Pol., secret, no.25, June 1923 & K.W.
15. One conspicuous example of this fact was the defeat of Sir Surendranath Banerjee who visited his constituency only twice while Dr. B.C. Roy, his opponent, spent most of his time among the electors in the 24 Parganas Municipal North Constituency, J.H. Broomfield, op. cit., pp. 241, 301.
there was absolutely no political activity - the leaders following their individual avocations. A few men like Sastri, Paranjpye and Satis Ranjan Das in Bengal had seen the danger of neglecting the constituencies and pointed out the need for an whole time electoral organisation, but little was done subsequently to carry this into effect. Some rudimentary organisations existed in a few places in Bengal, Bombay and United Provinces but it was essential to co-ordinate all these organisations and it was also necessary to have a paid organiser in view of the impending election. Thus they neglected the elementary precaution in the face of a vigilant and aggressive adversary organising themselves and their supporters in the constituencies. Organisationally speaking, the Liberal Federation was very weak. It had none of the party machinery and party structure that was associated with the names of the Congress and the Muslim League. There was no strict party membership, no party election, no party manoeuvring. It was 'blissfully ignorant' of those things so much so that any man who did not owe allegiance to any other party could call himself a Liberal. They failed to perceive the fact that, to win elections, they required zeal and good record as well as organisation and discipline both inside and outside Legislature. They

were also slow to recognize the necessity and power of a party fund for local publicity and canvassing and a leader capable enough to make appeal to the wider electorate. Altogether it must be confessed that defective leadership and want of cohesion had in no small measure led to the deterioration of their position.

The Swarajists naturally profited from the weakness of the Liberal position, and from their skillful identification of the Moderate Party with the misdeeds of the Executive. Besides the Swarajists themselves enjoyed certain additional advantages denied to their opponents. It is impossible to overestimate the value of the permission they had received from the Delhi Special Congress in September 1923 to contest the elections. While within the Congress, they did not fail to enjoy the advantage naturally arising from their intimate connection with that body. They came before the electorate as Gandhi's men apparently devoted to his cherished ideals.

But even more important factors were the personnel and organisation of the Party itself. The Swarajya Party contained in its ranks men of outstanding ability. C.R. Das was its acknowledged leader; and there were others who were scarcely less capable than himself - Pundit Motilal Nehru from the United

17. The Liberals themselves admitted after the election, that these two factors - the lack of organisation and association with bureaucracy was everywhere operative and almost everywhere fatal to the Liberal candidate who had taken a significant part in the Legislature during 1921-23. Leader, 17 November, 15, 19, 28 December 1923.
Provinces, N.C. Kelkar, Tilak's successor in Deccan, V.J. Patel and M.R. Jayakar. By 1923 the Party had emerged with improved organisations and substantial funds. The Party also contained in its ranks a few electioneering experts who had assisted British Liberal candidates while they were in England. They applied new techniques to Indian politics and canvassed with great vigour apparently with no more scruple than political parties usually display. The Swarajist argument appealed to the sentiment of the youths more than the sedate wisdom of the Moderates and the help of an unpaid agency of youth was an enormous asset to them. The Party cry 'down with the bureaucrats' attracted a considerable number of followers.

But worst of all, from the point of view of election chances for the Liberals, were the events that followed in quick succession a few months prior to the election. The year 1923 indeed opened with gloomy forebodings for the future. The announcement of the Royal Commission on Superior Services was followed by the Secretary of State's despatch, denying any

20. Royal Commission on the Superior Services in India under Viscount Lee of Farnham.
further constitutional advance. The Liberals suffered a further setback in connection with the Government's unbending attitude in certifying the salt tax which was greatly aggravated through the announcement but a few days prior to the election by the decision on Kenya. The Government's attitude and policy had the effect of totally undermining their position in the eyes of their countrymen.

When the Swarajists decided to contest the election and enter the Councils after the collapse of Non-cooperation movement, the natural course for the Liberals to pursue would have been to drive home this remarkable change of front and claim the credit for themselves and for the Assembly in which they had played a part, and to point out that the collapse of the Non-cooperation movement was the best confirmation of the soundness of their own policy, that Swarajists decision to enter the Council was in a sense 'an unwilling tribute to their own achievement'. But instead of doing that, they proceeded to discredit the Assembly and the Councils by harping on their reverses and demanding a radical advance in the constitution. The fact was that with much of the Congress attitude they found themselves in complete sympathy. The denunciation of the unbending purpose of the bureaucracy and the necessity for a complete and thorough change were common items of Liberal and

22. Leader, 18 May, 7 June 1923.
23. The decision was published in the form of a White Paper which provided for the reservation of highlands for the Europeans in Kenya, P. P., Commons, 1923, vol. 18, (cmd. 1922).


Congress platforms. In their own Councils they described themselves as the victims of the Government, which relied on them when there was trouble, and had little use for them when it felt strong. They failed to realise that their denunciation of the Government and openly expressed dissatisfaction with the working of the Reforms, so far from commending them to the favour of the Swarajists, was received by their opponents as a condemnation out of their own mouth of the whole policy which they had been pursuing for the last three years. They were accused of being 'too fond of the doubtful sweets of office' and were 'despised for not having possessed the intelligence to have foreseen what their fate was certain to be'.

The Liberals, in short, adopted a line of criticism in which the Swarajists could easily surpass them in violence. Lord Reading, writing shortly after the election of 1923, put the whole situation clearly: "The system of Government", he wrote, "was attacked by both parties - the Swarajists condemning it root and branch and claiming complete and immediate Self-Government, the Moderates condemning it in fainter terms, or at most, damning it with the faintest praise, but always urging that it required drastic amendment ... It would seem inevitable that in an appeal to an electorate, and where both parties are concerned in attacking the Government, the party that shouts loudest, hits hardest, demands most, will assuredly

succeed and inflict defeat on a party which is equally bent on
attack but is weaker in its criticism and gentler in denuncia-
tion and more moderate in demands..." Indeed, the Liberal
Party's failure at the Council election was not merely due to
the imperfection of its organisation or misrepresentation and
calumny from the Swarajist camp. "What decided the fate of
the Liberals", wrote Chintamani in the Times of India, "was
that they were represented as being and were believed by the
people to be less against the British Government than real and
pseudo-followers of Mr. Gandhi and the Non-cooperation move-
ment". The Liberals began to display a tendency to show the
same dislike as the Swarajists for Government measures. And
the Leader, even went to the extent of suggesting an idea of
rapprochement with the Swarajya Party. The official opinion
lamented this lack of steadfastness in the faith that had led
them so far, and there was in general a failure to recognise
that once they had organised themselves into a separate party
their strength consisted not in resembling the Swarajists as
far as possible but in differing from them. In the end against
the compact, unified, and well disciplined Swarajya Party, who

26. Reading to Lord Olivier, 7 February 1924, Reading Collec-
27. Bengalee, 12 December 1923.
28. Leader, 7 July 1923. C.Y. Chintamani Papers, (Nehru Memo-
rial Museum and Library, New Delhi).
29. Confidential Memorandum A, Political and Constitutional
Situation in India, G of I, Home Pol., confidential no.
82, 1925, pt. I & k.W.
enjoyed a position of predominant advantage owing to the prevailing political atmosphere, the Liberals could put forward the sorry spectacle of only a disorganised band of nonobstructionists candidates of varying shades of Moderate opinion who appeared oblivious of the necessity of sinking differences on minor issues in order to secure compactness and efficiency. In the event they were heavily beaten at the poll.

The Swarajists in the Legislative Assembly -

Out of the total strength of some one hundred forty members the Swarajists counted fortyfive adherents in the Assembly. The conservative and official elements formed a block of approximately the same strength; and the balance of the chamber was composed of Independents of one kind or another. It was clearly apparent to the leader of the Swarajya Party that without the assistance of a substantial number of votes from individuals outside their organisation they would be unable to command a majority in the Legislature. They found their opportunity of attracting allies in the existence of a general desire, common to all the elected members in the House, for further constitutional advance. A resolution had been tabled by Mr. T. Rangacharriar who did not belong to the Congress Party and was Deputy President of the Assembly, recommending the Governor General-in-Council 'to take steps (including if necessary procuring the appointment of a Royal Commission) to revise the

30. Ibid., also Return showing the Results of Elections in India, 1923, P.P., Commons, 1924, vol. 18, (cmd. 2154), p. 503.
Government of India Act in such a manner as to secure for India provincial autonomy and full self-governing dominion status within the empire'. The proposition was no doubt far less radical than that to which the Swarajists had committed themselves in their election campaign, but it gave them an opportunity of coming to terms with a certain number of Independents. By 6 February, a coalition of some seventy members had been formed who agreed that if Government made no satisfactory response to the resolution demanding immediate constitutional progress, a policy of obstruction would be initiated by the combined group which subsequently became known as the Nationalist Party. The Independents who had joined the Swarajists in the formation of Nationalist Party did not favour the tactics of wreckage and destruction and they made it clear that obstruction would never be resorted to unless it was agreed to by three fourths of the combined strength. It was now evident that so far as their action inside the Legislature was concerned, the Swarajists were now committed to constitutional method of procedure.

On 8 February 1924 Rangachariar formally moved his resolution. The same day Pundit Motilal Nehru as the leader of the Swarajya Party in the Assembly moved an amendment to it which called for the convening of a Round Table Conference to

31. India in 1924-26, op. cit., p. 308.
32. Ibid.
recommend a scheme for the establishment of full responsible Government in India. This scheme after being placed before the newly elected Legislature, was to be submitted to the British Parliament for embodiment in a statute. Motilal Nehru in moving his amendment declared that his party could not be dismissed as wreckers. "We are not asking for responsible Government", he said, "to be handed over, as it were tied up in a bundle. We Swarajists have come here to offer our cooperation. If the Government will receive this co-operation, they will find that we are their men." Thus the Swarajya Party, which had challenged the preamble of the Government of India Act of 1919, that made the British Parliament the judge of time and manner of India's progress towards self-Government, soon abandoned this radicalism in practice. In fact Motilal Nehru admitted that he had 'toned down' his resolution 'to meet the wishes of friends who are not Swarajists in the Assembly'. Replying on behalf of the Government, Sir Malcolm Bailey, the Home member, did some expert hair-splitting in an attempt to side track the basic issue. He argued that representative Government was not necessarily incompatible with a Legislature of limited or restricted powers. Dominion Status was, however, a different proposition because it represented a

34. Ibid., p. 367.
35. Ibid., p. 369.
36. Ibid., p. 370.
further step from representative Government. But the Assembly did not like Hailey's hair-splitting. The Nationalist Party had already agreed to throw in its weight to support the amendment which was carried by seventysix to fortyeight votes practically all the elected members entering the lobby in its support.

But this National Demand was summarily rejected by the Labour Government in England that had in the meanwhile in January 1924 come into office. Lord Olivier, the Labour Secretary of State for India, considered it an entire departure from the principle laid down in the Government of India Act, and expressed the view of the Government that "... unless the parliamentary system is welded together by predominant common interests from its foundation in the electorate upwards, no theoretical constitution that may be arrived at by a concordat among leaders of divergent interests, for the mere purpose of establishing an ostensibly democratic form, can prevent it from flying asunder".

This unsympathetic attitude of the Labour Government caused great disappointment. The Swarajists realised the weakness of the Labour Party - only in office not in power, but it

37. Ibid., p. 358.
38. Ibid., p. 769.
40. Ibid., p. 334.
was not prepared for such a summary and off hand refusal of the National Demand. It had expected at least greater sympathy and consideration but the action of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald’s Government in vetoing the demand without exploring the avenues of possible understanding between the Government and the Legislative Assembly therefore, stiffened its attitude and led to an open constitutional conflict between Executive and Legislature. No doubt the difficulties of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald’s Government were great, but surely he could have shown a more sympathetic spirit in dealing with the Assembly’s demand. Such was the universal feeling with which the Legislative Assembly and the Indian people received Lord Olivier’s statement.

The Nationalist Party now decided to throw out the budget demands for grants. The Independents would not go very far with their allies in this respect; Motilal Nehru could not afford to lose the Independents for that would reduce the Swarajists into the position of a minority which the Government could ignore. So, contrary to their pledge to throw out the entire budget as a retaliation against the refusal to grant the National Demand, the Swarajya Party only availed themselves of the opportunity for a 'dramatic political demonstration' and contented themselves with rejecting the first four heads of the revenue side of the budget with a slight majority in order to secure

42. Ibid., 1924, vol. 4, pt. 2, pp. 1380-83.
the co-operation of the other parties. While moving the motion for the refusal of the grant under the head Custom, Motilal Nehru assured his Moderate colleagues, who were afraid of being misunderstood as playing the role of Non-cooperationists, that he was adopting a perfectly constitutional and legitimate means of bringing a very serious grievance to the notice of the Government, and when other remedies had failed, it was "the only course open to people who have outstanding grievances". He quoted from the speech of Fox in the House of Commons on 20 February 1784 in his long continued controversy with Pitt, from a debate in the French Chamber of Deputies and used all his power of persuasion to convince the Moderates who voted with him that he was not subtly dragging them into Non-cooperation. He assured them further that his motion had 'nothing whatever to do with what has been described as the wrecking or destructive policy of Non-cooperation'.

'I was speaking', said Motilal the next day, replying to those who accused him of resorting to obstruction, 'as a member of

43. Ibid., pp. 1418-19. The demand for custom was rejected by a majority of 7 votes (Ayes 63 and Noes 56), demand no.2 (Taxes on Income) by a majority of one vote (Ayes 61 and Noes 60), pp. 1422-23, demand no.3 (salt) by a majority of nine votes (Ayes 62 and Noes 53), p. 1428 and demand no. 4 (opium) by five votes (Ayes 59 and Noes 62), pp. 1429-30.

44. Ibid., p. 1380.

45. Ibid., p. 1381.

46. Ibid., p. 1380.
the whole Nationalist Party and not of that section only ... of Swarajists ... The step ... was not part of what is called wrecking policy'. The next three demands were also thrown out by narrow majorities. This was followed by the refusal of leave to introduce the Finance Bill by a still more diminished majority (of 3); and in the course of the debate Motilal Nehru declared that "the Nationalist Party, judging that they have established the principle for which they have contended, think it unnecessary to continue the same procedure with regard to subsequent demands." The rest of the demands were then passed. The Leader thereupon commented ironically that the 'Nationalist Party, having dropped complete obstructionism, was on the downhill path towards out and out constitutionalism and, therefore, an end of Swarajist election promises.' Other papers also pointed out this election promise turnabouts.

The extraordinary session of the Legislature convened in May 1924 saw the Swarajists co-operating with Government by

47. Ibid., p. 1443.
49. Ibid., pp. 1959-60.
50. Ibid., p. 1443.
52. Leader, 13 March 1924.
53. Times of India, 14-15 March 1924.
sitting in the Select Committee to consider the Steel Industry
(Protection) Bill. The Bill was passed with the active assistance of the Swarajya Party.

The nationalist group which had operated successfully in Delhi in 1924 did not survive the altered atmosphere of the special session of May 1924. The leader of the Independent Party Mr. Jinnah soon perceived that he had made a bad bargain in tying himself with the Swarajists. Lord Reading gave an account of Mr. Jinnah's difficulty in a letter written towards the end of the session of the Legislative Assembly in Delhi.

"... Jinnah evidently thought (he wrote) that by the terms of the alliance he would be sitting in the driving seat of the motor car holding the steering wheel, with Motilal Nehru beside him powerless to control except by means of advice. The exact opposite resulted. Motilal Nehru was in the driving seat and Jinnah was scarcely even beside him; but his party were inside the car, being driven along without realising whither they were going or what would happen." So in the September session (Simla) of the Legislative Assembly in 1924 the Independents led by Jinnah manifested a desire to organise themselves in a distinct group as they found the existing rules of the party more and more irksome.

55. Ibid., pp. 2282-2353.
56. Reading to Olivier, 13 March 1924, Reading Collection, op. cit., vol. 7, p. 33.
As a result in the Delhi session of the Central Legislature which commenced on 28 January 1925, the general change in the attitude of the Swarajya Party became noticeable. From time to time it was true that the old spirit of obstruction manifested itself, but, broadly speaking the attitude of the Party was more and more that of a constitutional opposition. They were perfectly prepared to carry against Government any proposal embodying their own point of view; but they were far from indulging in an indiscriminate policy of wreckage. Members of the Party played an active role in the ordinary business of the House; they sat on select committees; they co-operated in the passage of useful legislation. As the Swarajists were no longer able to tie the Independents to their chariot wheel, the tendency to discredit the policy of obstruction was strengthened in Delhi session in 1925. It was perfectly obvious to the Swarajists that 'a minority, unless placed in the very exceptional position of holding a balance of parties, could not obstruct effectively against the will of the majority'. One result of this was the evolution in the Legislative Assembly of two clear cut groups in place of the former Nationalist Party. The Government suffered, no doubt, a number of defeats. For example, Mr. Duraiswami Iyenger's resolution recommending the supercession of Bengal Ordinance by an Act of the Legislature was passed by a combination of Swarajists and Independents 58 votes. Again on 3 February the Government opposed the intro-

duction of Mr. Patel's Bill to repeal the Bengal, Madras and Bombay State Prisoners Act, 1850, the Punjab Frontier Outrages Act, 1867 and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1921, but was again defeated by a combination of the Swarajists and Independents. Upon a very large number of other questions, the Assembly adopted a more a reasonable line; and if the Government could expect no support from the Swarajists, they would often get it from the Independents, and vice versa. Thus with the help of the Independents the Government was able to defeat Patel's motion which was designed to deprive the American and colonials of their privileges in respect of criminal trials. The Swarajists themselves were found on occasion in the Government lobby. A conspicuous example of this fact was afforded when Sir H.S. Gour, the member from the Central Provinces, moved his resolution for the constitution of a Supreme Court in India. The Government and the non-official Europeans opposed and they found support from the leader of the Swarajya Party.

The voting in the budget session in 1925 no longer represented in all cases the 'automatic recording of a suffrage' against Government proposals irrespective of their merits. In the budget debate the Independents did not always vote with the Swarajists, thus sparing the Government further defeats.

59. Ibid., p. 724.
60. Ibid., pp. 916-62.
62. Ibid., p. 1180.
Pundit Motilal Nehru's motion for rejecting the demand for Railway Board was defeated, the Independent Party entering the Government lobby against it. The rest of the Railway budget was then passed with certain minor reductions, broadly in the form in which it was presented. The Swarajists succeeded in securing the refusal of the demand for the Governor-General's Executive Council, but the votes for the Governor-General's Household Allowance and the Army Department both of which the Swarajists were anxious to reduce as a form of political protest were passed with the help of the Independents. The Finance Bill was also passed by seventy-five votes against forty. On more than one occasion the Independents and the Swarajists speakers turned their 'big guns upon one another rather than upon the Treasury benches'.

The Swarajists and Independents again united together to oppose the Bengal Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in the form in which it was proposed by the Government. But the Bill was then certified by the Governor-General.

63. Ibid., p. 1514.
64. Ibid., pp. 1669-1809.
65. Ibid., pp. 2403-4.
66. Ibid., pp. 2405-8.
67. Ibid., pt. 3, p. 2830.
69. Ibid., pt. 2, pp. 2805-9, 2812, 2816-18, 2882.
70. Ibid., pp. 2803-22, 2860-80.
In September 1925 the National Demand was again put forward in the Legislative Assembly meetings in Simla. The occasion was the debate on the report of the Muddiman Committee, (appointed after the first resolution containing the National Demand had been passed in 1924). The Commission was divided in its findings. While the majority in the committee thought that a series of small departmental changes would ease the situation, the minority report recommended scrapping up of the Act and the substitution of complete responsible Government in the Provinces and at least a measure of responsibility at the Central Government. They also demanded a Royal Commission to recommend these reforms. Sir Alexander Muddiman, the Home Member, moved a resolution in the Assembly recommending the adoption of majority report of the Government. Motilal Nehru moved a long amendment to it recommending the adoption of the minority report against the majority report of the Government. But this second National Demand represented the first only in name. During the intervening months between the

71. A committee appointed in 1924 under the chairmanship of Sir Alexander Muddiman, the Home Member of the Govt. of India, to enquire into the defects inherent in the Govt. of India Act and suggest remedies for such defects consistent with structure, policy and purpose of the Act.


73. Ibid., pp. 153-93.


75. Ibid., pp. 854-55.
Assembly's demanding responsible Government and the presentation of the Muddiman Committee's report, the edge of Swarajists opposition had been blunted. The coalition among the different parties which had made possible the triumphs of 1924 had broken up. The Swarajya Party had been deviating gradually but unmistakably from its original creed of 'uniform continuous and consistent obstruction'. In two essential respects Motilal Nehru's resolution represented a further climb down. The Swarajists were now willing to accept a commission provided it included important elements in Indian political life. And secondly, the Swarajists made it clear that what they demanded was not immediate full responsible Government. Motilal Nehru's motion specifically laid down that Defence, Political Relations and Foreign Affairs were to remain Reserved subjects for a fixed term of years. Motilal Nehru even said: 'make us masters in our own home, but whatever else is outside the home, and pertains more to your Imperial interests, you are welcome to keep'. It should be noted that the Nationalist resolution did not demand any immediate change in the constitution. It simply presented the outlines of a scheme of constitution which should be considered by "a convention, R.T.C. or any suitable agency" to be called into being by the Viceroy "in consultation with the Legislative Assembly ..." It is also to

76. Ibid., p. 864.
77. Ibid., p. 865.
be noted that even the demand for a Round Table Conference, which was the central point in the nationalist resolution of 1924, was not insisted upon this time. They were equally prepared to accept a Royal Commission. Speaking in support of the nationalist amendment to the Government reforms resolution, the Independent leader Jinnah asked the Government: "Will you bring Pundit Motilal Nehru to bow down to the throne at Viceroyal Lodge, and say Sir, I am humble, I crawl before you, and will you now be graciously pleased to give me a Royal Commission? Is that what you want? What has Pundit Motilal Nehru been doing in this Assembly? Has he not been co-operating with you? What more do you want? ... and may I know what evidence, what proof documentary or oral, do you want me to produce or adduce that the responsible leaders are willing to co-operate with you?"

Then there was another testimony of a very sincere Swarajist, Diwan Chamanlal, who was supposed to be extremely radical: "The Swarajya Party had really accepted Liberal Federation's programme to show that the country stood united in its demands". The Liberal press hailed this as a 'historic debate and a new hope of united nationalist demand with the Swarajists coming round more to the Liberal position'.

The evolution of Swarajist attitude was summarised by a Liberal nationalist organ: "Step by step, stage by stage they (the

78. Ibid., pp. 940-41.
79. Ibid., 1925, pt. 2, pp. 931-32.
80. Servant of India, 10 September 1925.
Swarajists) have been coming down from the dizzy heights of obstruction to the plainer paths of negation of co-operation, and finally to the acceptance of co-operation as a principle of their political programme. The Government of India Act of 1919 provided for a further instalment of self-Government not later than 1929 and the second National Demand was hardly anything more than this. Thus the Swarajist gradually brought down their demand to what the Government was almost prepared to concede. In such circumstances Sir Alexander Muddiman, the Government spokesman, had no difficulty in announcing the Government's programme that, on or before 1929, a Royal Commission would be appointed to recommend the grant of a further measure of self-Government having made an investigation into the experience of the first reforms. Writing to Lord Birkenhead after the close of the Simla session, Lord Reading commented: "... Looking back upon the last session of the Assembly I cannot honestly say that there has been any obstruction by Swarajists or otherwise ... The true inwardness of the situation is that there is more desire to co-operate, and not only is there desire, but there has actually been more co-operation throughout the session ..."

In the Annual session of the Congress at Cawnpore at the end of December 1925 a resolution had been passed, notwith-

81. Bengalee, 22 July 1925.
83. Reading to Birkenhead, 24 September 1925, Reading Collection, op. cit., vol. 8, pp. 121-22.
standing the opposition from Malavya and Jayakar, pleading the Swarajists to withdraw from Legislative Assembly and the Councils, if, by the close of the next session, the Government had not met their claims. In accordance with this resolution when the Assembly met in 1926, the Swarajists walked out of the Central Assembly on 7 March, after a symbolic rejection of the first demand for budget grants. Henceforth they protested by adopting the policy of walking in and walking out and it was a regular scene between March 1926 and the dissolution of the Assembly. Jinnah's group was too weak to carry on as an effective opposition and the parliamentary experiment thus went into a stage of 'suspended animation'. The electors were confused by these walk-in and walk-out policy and when the election came in 1926 the Swarajists found that "the gilt was off the ginger bread."

Swarajists in Bengal Council -

In Bengal the Swarajists did not possess an absolute majority in the Council but formed the largest single Party. When the Council first met in January 1924 it was constituted as follows: Swarajists (including Muhammedans) fortyseven, Independents - Nineteen, Ministerialists - Thirty, Europeans

and Anglo-Indians - Eighteen, Nominated Members (including officials) - Twenty-six. The Independents differed from Swarajists in not acknowledging the leadership of C.R. Das and in not being pledged to refuse office. They had a nominal leader in Mr. B. Chakravarty, C.R. Das's old rival. It was to this group that Lord Lytton the Governor of the Province turned after C.R. Das had rejected his Ministerial offer. But Chakravarty was willing to accept office only if all the three Ministers were chosen from his party. As the Independent Nationalist group was not large enough to secure a majority over all other parties, and as the reason given by C.R. Das for refusing to take office must necessarily also prevent his followers from supporting any Minister who tried to work within the present constitution, Chakravarty's proposal was not acceptable to Lytton. With the prospect of office gone Chakravarty now hastened to join the Swarajist camp, whose leader could thus now command sixty-six votes out of a house of hundred and forty if the Muhammedan members of the parties voted on party lines.

In accordance with their published programme the first move of the Swarajya Party in the Council was to put forward

resolution recommending the release of detenus under regulation III of 1818, the release of all political prisoners, and the repeal of repressive laws. Upon all these points the Government was defeated by considerable majorities. The real test of the strength however between the Government and the Swarajya Party came with the debate on the budget proposal which opened on 18 March. On the Reserved side every demand was rejected except that under the head Police which was finally voted with certain amendments. On the Transferred side they refused grant to pay the salaries of the Education Department Inspectorate, the Medical Department Establishment, and the Ministers. A position of considerable constitutional difficulty was created by the results of the debate with regard to those demands for the Reserved subjects which had been rejected not on their merits or from motives of economy or as a criticism of the policy of the departments concerned, but simply as a protest against the present form of constitution. Lytton had no alternative but to restore the full amounts. But the real crux was the question of Ministers' salaries. The difficulty created by the refusal of the Council to provide

91. Ibid., pp. 131-32 (Ayes 72, noes 41), 187-88 (Ayes 63, noes 43).
92. Ibid., no. 5, pp. 21-212, 212-98, 300-4.
94. Ibid., 1924, vol. 16, pp. 41-45. Also the Second Earl of Lytton, op. cit., p. 45.
any salaries for Ministers was solved for the time being by
the Ministers' consenting to remain in office without salaries,
until the question could be resubmitted to the Council. It
was clear however that such an arrangement could only be tempo­
rary and that if the refusal to vote salaries were persisted
in, the ultimate result would be to transfer back to the
Reserved list of the departments concerned and their adminis­
tration by members of the Executive Council. In such circums­
tances, it was determined to submit fresh demands to Council
at a session to be held in July. When the Council met in July, however, the Swarajya Party lodged a successful application
in the High Court for an injunction to restrain the President
of the Council from putting the motion for demand which had
been previously rejected. The application was granted on
the ground that no such provision occurred in the rules and
for the procedure referred to. Lytton was prepared to contest
this decision. But the immediate situation was altered by the
action of the Government of India in framing new rules and
the suit was withdrawn. A fresh demand for Ministers' sala­
ries was put before the Council in August 1924 and was again

95. Ibid., p. 51.
96. Ibid., p. 52.
97. Ibid., p. 53.
defeated by sixty-eight votes to sixty-six. The Ministers immediately resigned and the Governor obliged himself to assume charge temporarily of the Transferred Departments with effect from 1 September. The Legislative Council did not meet between August 1924, when the demands for Ministers' salaries was rejected for the second time and January 1925.

When the Council met in January 1925 the Government, in order to procure an unequivocal expression of opinion on the question of Ministers' salaries, without proposing the name of any person as Minister, moved that provision for a Ministry be made in the budget for the ensuing financial year. This motion was carried by a substantial majority of twenty-four.

Lytton's new Ministers were appointed from the Moderates, Nawabali Chaudhuri and a fellow zamindar from Mymensingh, Raja Manmatha Nath Ray Chaudhuri of Santosh. But when however it came to the voting of grant on 23 March, the Council swayed by the great personal influence of C.R. Das decided to reverse its former decision. Lytton had again offended the Independent Nationalists by choosing the two Ministers from the Moderates. C.R. Das now made an appeal to them to stand against the Government. Thus his skill succeeded in achieving a

101. Ibid., pp. 41-42 (Ayes being 76, noes 51).
103. Forward, 14 March, 1925.
temporary combination against the Government and on 23 March the demand for Ministers' salaries was once again rejected by a majority of six votes.

The immediate result of the refusal of salaries was the resignation of the two Ministers then in office, accompanied by the temporary assumption by the Governor, of the administration of Transferred subjects and followed, when sanction had been obtained, by suspension of transfer with effect from June 1926, till January 1927 when the period of the present Council was due to expire. Lytton had no hesitation in making it clear that he would not attempt to restore Dyarchy until after the next general election scheduled for late 1926.

Though the Swarajists succeeded in wrecking Dyarchy in Bengal, they failed to bring Government to a standstill. The refusal of Ministers' salaries did not lead to any concession. The Liberals had seen the danger of reckless piloting in uncharted waters and as men, who had been in the inner Councils of the Government, they had known too well that the hand of the Government could not be forced. They pointed out that the only inevitable consequence of Swarajists' action would be the suspension of the constitution conferred by the Act and nothing else and in this way to allow the Government an opportunity to retrace its steps either to 'an unalloyed autocracy or to a

105. The Earl of Lytton, op. cit., p. 79
106. Ibid., p. 80.
system of benevolent despotism.* This proved to be prophetic; for in August 1924 when the Swarajists were concentrating on their second assault on the Ministers' salaries, Lytton made it amply clear that Government would not be coerced into terms by such tactics as the Swarajists were pursuing; Lytton's communique suspending the constitution certainly gave no hint of compromise, and, when the salaries were refused for the third time in March 1925, Lytton not only suspended the constitution and decided to continue without the reformed constitution but he sent Home certain strong suggestions. "I would like His Majesty's Government", Lytton wrote to Birkenhead, "to get away from the question of time altogether and lay down clearly and emphatically two propositions: 1) that the success of one stage is the only condition which would justify an advance to a subsequent stage, 2) that those who claimed to have proved the failure of the first stage have made themselves responsible for any delay there may be in proceeding to the new stage. I submit therefore that the act requires amendment not in the direction of enlarging the field of self-government but in the direction of limiting more strictly the area in which self-

107. Bengalee, 9 March 1924.
108. Lytton to Olivier, 3 August 1924, Reading Collection, op. cit., vol. 28, p. 445.
109. "... the people of Bengal", the communique ran, "have through the action of their representatives temporarily lost the advantages which Parliament intended to confer upon them, until such time as the Constitution is restored, the Legislative Council will be summoned only when required for the transaction of Government business". 28 August 1924, G of B, Appointment Dept., LSL 130(1-7).
government may be exercised ... " The Swarajists were thus foiled in their hope that the wrecking of Dyarchy would force the Government to concede greater reforms.

The fact was that in Bengal as in the Central Assembly the election of 1923 had not given the Swarajya Party an absolute majority. In order to present an effective opposition the Swarajists therefore required the co-operation of other groups who were not opposed to Ministry. As the Government rightly saw the situation, only the Swarajists wanted to get rid of the Ministers altogether as a way of wrecking the constitution which they disliked. There were some members who wanted the Ministers, thought that Rs. 5,000/- a month (the equivalent of a Cabinet Minister's salary in England) was unnecessarily high and were anxious to reduce it. Lastly, there were those who were dissatisfied with a particular Minister and wanted to show their disapproval by moving a token reduction in his salary by following the convention used in British Parliament. On two occasions C.R. Das's Party, though in a minority, had been able to muster a majority of votes for the total rejection of Ministers' salaries by combining these three groups - those who were opposed to any Minister, those who were
opposed to particular Ministers and those who were opposed to the scale of salaries payable to the Ministers.

Across this distribution into Swarajists, Independents and Ministerialists, ran another line of division, viz. that which separated Hindus from the Muslims. Of the Swarajists, twentyone were Muhammedans, while the other nineteen Muhammedans were distributed between Independents and Ministerialists in proportion that varied from time to time. It took all C.R. Das's tactical skill to keep the allegiance of the twentyone Muhammedan Swarajists and in doing that his principal weapons were the Hindu Muslim Pact and the patronage afforded by the Calcutta Corporation. The pact provided that 'representation in the Legislative Council was to be in proportion to population and through separate electorates. In local bodies, the majority community in each district was to have sixty per cent of the seats and minority community forty per cent. Fifty-five per cent of Government posts were to be reserved for the Muslims and until that percentage was reached, the community might supply up to eighty per cent of all recruits. No resolution affecting the religion of any community was to be passed by the Legislative Council without the consent of the three quarters of elected representatives of that community. There was to be no music in procession before mosque and cow killing was not to

113. Ibid., p. 55.
be interfered with. In the meantime the Swarajya Party had also captured the Calcutta Corporation lock stock and barrel and as a gesture to the Muslims the post of Deputy Mayor was given to one of the Suhrawardys and twenty-five other Muslims were appointed as Corporation staff.

The Hindu Muslim Pact was a political stratagem to secure for the Swarajya Party Muhammadan support. But the Swarajists overreached themselves for the terms of the pact were so generous to the Muslims that it caused resentment among a very large section of the Hindus. The Swarajists found themselves involved in an embarrassing situation, when, on 12 March, Khan Bahadur Musharruf Hussain moved a resolution which proposed to give immediate effect to the principle of the Hindu Muslim Pact by the appointment of eighty per cent Muhammadans to Government services until the number of Muhammadans in each branch become fifty-five per cent of the whole. There was a heated discussion in the Council and C.R. Das was reported to have made strenuous effort to prevail upon Khan Bahadur to withdraw his resolution. The danger which threatened the

116. Dainik Basumati, 14 April 1924.
119. Ibid., pp. 56-56, 66-106.
disruption of the Swarajya Party was however met for the time by the insistence of C.R. Das that the conditions of the pact were meant to come into operation only upon the attainment of 121 Swaraj and the amendment to adjourn the motion sine die was 122 carried by a majority of eighteen. C. R. Das had averted the crisis by saying that there had as yet been no time to place the pact 'before the country'. When the budget session was over he intended to tour Bengal to secure popular support for the agreement. Until this had been done, he said, any action in the Council was precipitate. But this line of argument fail to convince the Muslims. By moving for an adjournment the Swarajists had merely succeeded in giving offence to the Muslims without in any way pacifying their own community. Hindus could not welcome the pact without much heart burning. The Ministers were now able to point out to the Muslim how they were misled by empty promises and the 124 Muslim press took up the cry. A Muslim Conference at Seraj- 125 gunge condemned the action of Legislative Council in rejecting the demand for the inspecting staff of the Education Depart- ment. Moulana Abu Bakr wrote to C.R. Das urging that the

122. Ibid., pp. 107-8.
123. Ibid., pp. 83-87.
124. Muslim Hitaiishi, 4 April 1924.
125. Progs. of the Muslim Conference at Serajgunge, Bengalee, 2 June 1924.
Swarajya Party should change their policy in the Council in respect of Ministers' salaries and of the pay of the officers of Education Department. Thus the trend of the Muhammedan opinion seemed to be away from the Swarajist and the Central National Association of the Muhammedans now made an attempt to organise a communal party in the Council as a result of which defection followed from Swarajists rank. In the Bengal Provincial Conference that followed in June 1924 at Serajgunge C.R. Das managed to get the pact ratified, but these did not please the Muslims neither did it remove the displeasure of the Hindus. It was clear that loyalty of the Muslims would henceforth be of doubtful value and that C.R. Das's authority was weakened.

Terrorist activity had also become an embarrassment to him. The terrorist claimed the support of the Swarajya Party; and it was necessary for C.R. Das to keep them in hand in order to retain their votes in the Council. It appears that as early as December 1922, after his severe defeat at Gaya, he had entered into a pact with them in order to secure the participation of some of them in the ensuing election as members.

126. Confidential Report for Bengal for the first half of June, G of I, Home Pol., secret no. 25/1924.


128. Bengal, 5 June 1924.
of the Swarajya Party. As a result of this pact some of
the ex-detenus like Anil Baran Ray, the editor of Sarathi,
Satyendra Chandra Mitra and Nagendra Guha Ray were returned to
the Council; and one of the first act of the Swarajya Party
after coming to the Council was to move a resolution for the
release of prisoners detained under Regulation III of 1818 and
the repeal of repressive laws. Thus by the middle of 1924
it had, in the opinion of the Government of Bengal, become
apparent that 'the Swarajya Party in Bengal and revolutionary
parties had common directors and the dividing line between the
two had worn so thin that at times it was difficult to differ-
entiate between them'. But the terrorist were now growing
restive as the Swarajists tactics had failed to coerce the
Government to terms. The terrorists now condemned Das for his
failure to fulfil their promises of securing independence and
for their abandonment of their supporters whom they could not
protect. In the Provincial Conference at Serajunge he

129. G of I, Home Pol., no.61/1924. Also a brief note on the
alliance of Congress and terrorism in Bengal, ibid.,
no. 45/1/1933. Also that Atma Sakti and Bijali the
papers of the revolutionaries, took up the cause of Das
and preached pro-Council entry views was sufficiently
 corroborative of this information. E.g. Atma Sakti, 6
June and 15 December 1922; Bijali, 1 and 15 December
1922.

130. Return showing the Result of Elections in India, 1923,


133. Confidential Report from Bengal for the first half of
May, ibid., secret no. 112/1925.
attempted to pacify them by speaking in favour of the resolution expressing admiration for the patriotism of Gopinath Saha, a student who in an attempt to murder the Calcutta Commissioner of Police had mistakenly shot an English business man, although at the same time he discreetly reaffirmed Congress adherence to the principle of non-violence. But in doing so while on the one hand he merely succeeded in offending the Muslims who were growing 'increasingly apprehensive of Hindu violence'; 
on the other his support to Serajunge murder resolution along with his statement in the Statesman gave the Government the final excuse to resort to extra ordinary powers as a measure to combat terrorist crimes, which alienated the pro-terrorist group from the Swarajya Party.

In the midst of such accumulating difficulties it was extremely difficult for the Swarajists to secure support in the Council to defeat the Ministers' salaries for the second time in August 1924 and they succeeded on that occasion only by a liberal distribution of silver, according to the Ministers.

134. Bengalee, 4 June 1924.
135. Muslim Hitaishi, 4 April 1924.
137. A. Moberly, Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to Crerar, Secretary to the Govt. of India, Home Dept., n.d., ibid., no. 379/III/1924; also ibid., no. 379/IV/1924.
138. Confidential report from Bengal for the first half of May, ibid., no. 112/1925.
and by publishing in the Forward, the Party's English language
daily, a letter purporting to have been written by Fazlul Huq
which suggested that he was engaged in a discreditable intrigue
to purchase the vote of an unnamed Rai Bahadur. Though Huq
declared the letter to be a forgery and one of the Swarajist
members subsequently admitted that they had to take recourse to
mean and dishonourable method in securing the letter, it had
an immediate effect in securing majority for the Swarajists at
that time. When Ministers' salaries were refused in March
1925 C.R. Das had again great difficulty in securing the de-
fection of Huq and two other Muslims. According to Lytton's
secret information two decrees had been pending against Huq
for large sums and the decree holders were under the influence
of Das and the latter thus was able to threaten Huq with ruin
and disgrace if he supported the Ministers (while on the other
hand, he promised him a postponement of the execution of the
decrees and other substantial advantages if he supported
Swarajists). Eventually Huq succumbed. Two other members were
said to have received money for their votes.

C.R. Das's skilful handling was thus a powerful cementing

140. Ibid., pp. 53-54.
141. J.H. Broomfield, op. cit., p. 156.
factor both within the Swarajya Party and in the domain of 
Hindu-Muslim relations. Thus he had succeeded in holding 
together the various conflicting elements in the Council and 
twice in 1924 the Legislature, dominated by his powerful per-
sonality, threw out the proposal from the official side for 
the payment of salaries to the Ministers. In 1925 he went to 
the Council Chamber for the last time to drive the last nail 
in the coffin of Dyarchy. Dyarchy was thus suspended in Ben-
gal but he could not bring the Government down on its knees. 
He realised that the Government could continue without the 
Reformed constitution. Any way the wrecking tactics had not 
brought swaraj any nearer though Swarajists' success in the 
early stages had produced a series of thrills and sensations 
among the middle class intelligentsia. He now realised the 
increasing weakness of his own position and was now anxious for 
a political settlement. Thus events were now shaping under 
his lead towards a possible compromise.

With the help of two European friends in Calcutta C. R. 
Das arranged a meeting with Lytton at the Ramkrishna Mission, 
145. One of the Muhammadan members who voted in favour of 
Ministers' salaries admitted that in 1924 they had voted 
with Swarajists only because C.R. Das had told them that 
the British Govt. was sure to give them all that they 
asked for if they only voted against Dyarchy, G of I, 
Home Pol. no. 143/1925. Also Syed Emdadul Huq, another 
Mahammedan, M.L.C. said that he was led to vote against 
Ministers' salaries by an assurance from C.R. Das that 
he had definite information that refusal of Ministers' 
salaries would at once be followed by provincial auto-
nomy. Confidential Report on the Political situation in 
Bengal for the second half of August 1925, ibid., secret, 112/1925.
Belur to discuss the possibility of a compromise, where he readily agreed to Lytton's request that he should make a public statement condemning violence as an instrument of political action. In accordance with this he issued two Manifestoes one on 29 March and another on 4 April 1925 denouncing violence in bold terms. This open condemnation of revolutionary activities and mentality won for him at once the admiration of Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, and, speaking in the House of Lords on 31 March in a debate on the Bengal Ordinance, he said that it opened the way for the consideration of further constitutional advance and invited C.R. Das to move a step further in order to enable him to extend to him the hand of co-operation. C.R. Das was now in communication with Lord Birkenhead and in a speech in the Faridpur Provincial Conference in May he showed an appreciation of the difficulties in establishing Home Rule and the value of the Imperial connection. He came out with an outright offer of co-operation and defined his new position and willingness under certain conditions to accept the gesture of Whitehall and invited the Government to meet him half way on terms of honourable co-operation. The manner and substance

of the whole speech at Faridpore was such that a leader of the Liberal Party might as well have delivered it. So the Liberals were now jubilant and readily welcomed his 'rapid return from magic to logic'. "The return movement", wrote the Bengalee, "as the philosophers call it, having started, we are confident that it will gradually fulfil itself, in that complete illumination whence must come our national salvation." C.R. Das was expecting some thing definite out of the Reading-Birkenhead talks, and he even gave the impression that, given the gesture he was looking for, he would even be prepared to accept the task of forming a Ministry and administer the Transferred Departments, from a constructive point of view. Thus on terms of honourable co-operation C.R. Das was even prepared to work the Montagu Act. Bengalee poured ridicule on C.R. Das's recent gestures. "His self conceit was much satisfied", wrote the Bengalee, "by the sympathetic reception of his recent gestures by the European press in the country ... as a bluffer such as he had proved at Faridpore, he will only excite contempt, ... like Mr. Gandhi, he too, has been discovered as a harmless viper." The Amrita Bazar Patrika, equally severe,

150. Bengalee, 2 May 1925.
151. Reading had gone to England in April 1925 to discuss the Indian situation with Lord Birkenhead.
153. Bengalee, 6 May 1925.
rebuked him for whittling down the demands of the country.

By April 1925 C.R. Das had begun 'to play with Birkenhead

the same role which Gokhale had played with Morley'. In June he died all on a sudden.

Attachment to a particular leader, like C. R. Das, held

together the Swarajya Party in the Province and it naturally

broke up after his death. After him the deluge - that was now

undoubtedly the prospect before the Swarajya Party. Swarajya

Party affairs were now complicated by the rivalry between J.M.

Sen Gupta and Subhas Bose and factious squabble became the

order of the day. By 1927 Dyarchy was once again restored in

Bengal. As the Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote: "Ministry making

and Ministry breaking has long lost its constitutional impor-
tance and is now as good as a pantomime" and henceforth,

though not stable, Ministers continued to function, support-
ed in the Council by Muslims, low caste Hindus, Europeans,

Anglo-Indians and handful of responsivists caste Hindu members.

154. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 6-7 May 1925.

155. Percival Spear, The Oxford History of Modern India,

156. Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17 December 1929.

157. Sir Abdur Rahim was appointed as a Minister in January
1927, but had to resign because no Hindu would serve
with him, G of B, Appointment Dept., Sh-10(1-11), A
103-13 February 1927. His successors A. K. Ghuznawi
and Byomkesh Chakravarty, survived for only seven months,
and their successors Musharruf Hussain and P.C. Mitter
for nine months. Indian Statutory Commission, op. cit.,
Responsive Co-operation

The Swarajya Party continued the process, which C.R. Das had already initiated, of a 'strategic retreat and of liquidating its commitments to the principle of Non-cooperation'. His death accelerated this drift towards constitutional opposition and co-operation within the Swarajya Party, and during 1925 the movement within the Swarajya Party against unqualified obstruction gained momentum. Liberalisation of the Swarajists led to the splitting of nationalist rank. Responsive Co-operation began to be taken up as a political creed. After C. R. Das's death Motilal Nehru no longer felt the enthusiasm of the earlier days when C.R. Das was alive and when, with the aid of other parties, a number of defeats were inflicted upon the Government and the bureaucracy was 'momentarily bewildered' and in June 1925 Motilal Nehru set the fashion by accepting a nominated seat on the Skeen Committee. The next move came from a still more unexpected direction. It was the turn of V.J. Patel to co-operate with the Government as the President.

158. The early official impression of the Swarajya Party may be seen from a letter which Reading wrote to the Secretary of State at the end of February 1924: "For the present", he wrote, "the Swarajist has all its own way; there is none to withstand him; there is none to compare with him; there is none to attack him; and he proceeds on his victorious march largely because of the full-blooded programme he puts before the electorate as a remedy for all their ills and a means of disposing of a tyrannical Government. . ." Reading to Lord Olivier, 21 February 1924, Reading Collection, op. cit., vol. 7, pp. 19-20.

159. A committee appointed to investigate the possibility of establishing in India a militant academy of the type of Sandhurst.
of the Legislative Assembly which election, in order to be legally valid required the approval of the Governor-General. He also received salary out of the taxes raised by the Finance Bill which the Swarajists were unwilling to pass. But Motilal’s acceptance of seat in the Sweeney Committee was greatly resented by some of his own followers. They attacked the change of policy involved in such an acceptance, which was tantamount to positive co-operation. At the time it was said in reply that membership would give a rare opportunity of studying the military problems of the country from inside, but the arguments failed to convince the critics.

Early in October 1925 the leader of the Central Provinces' Swarajists Mr. S.B. Tambe accepted the office of Executive Councillor in the Government of the Province, an act which was in the event to split the Swarajya Party from top to bottom. This was regarded as the beginning of the end of the policy of Non-cooperation, particularly coming as it did on the top of Mr. Khaparde's attempt in March and August 1925 to form Ministry. The Swarajist leader was distressed to observe the frailty of human nature prevailing over loyalty to party. Pandit Motilal Nehru hastened to condemn Tambe. Sastri ironically


162. Jayakar's speech and Kelkar's speech at a meeting held on 11 November 1925, Leader, 12 November 1925.

pointed out that Nehru's recent acceptance of a seat in the
Skeen Committee for army reorganisation and Patel's acceptance
of the presidency of the Assembly hardly qualified them 'to
cast stones at one whose fault was that he saw the inevitable
more clearly than his fellows and went further afield to meet
it.' It became obvious that an important section of the
Swarajists in the Deccan were also in favour of a change to the
policy of the responsive co-operation, for a prominent
Swarajist, Mr. N.C. Kelkar, wrote criticising the rigid disci­
pline of the Swarajya Party. He wrote in the Mahratta in May
1925: "Non-cooperation has certainly been only a passing phase of politics... Non-cooperation has been definitely superse­
ded by Swarajya Party politics though I know even that is not the last word. If I may make a guess, politics in India will
before long settle down into useful and workable mould of res­
ponsive cooperation." He also pointed out how the Swarajists
had steadily drifted from their original programme of consis­
tent and uniform obstruction and said that it would be logical
at the present stage to allow the acceptance of office. "There was a time", said he, "when in the Assembly we could make no
constructive proposals say, a motion even to refer a bill to a
Select Committee. Then came a time when we were allowed to
make such motions, but not to take a seat on any of the Commi­
tees. Then came a time when we could accept nominated seats.

165. Mahratta, 19 May 1925.
on Committees under a special dispensation of executive authority. Now I grant that all these developments were natural and were symptoms of a definite new policy, that is to say, a policy of revolt from hidebound obstruction."

Of even greater significance was a declaration issued by M.R. Jayakar, leader of the Swarajya Party in Bombay. The Maharashtrian Swarajists in fact had never fully believed in the policy of 'uniform, continuous, consistent obstruction' of the Swarajya Party. They believed in a theory of responsive co-operation, a term used for the first time in political parlance by Tilak at the time of the Amritsar Congress in December 1919. It was as early as January 1924 that elected members in the Bombay Council had expressed the view that instead of becoming 'dumb and mute' they should make the best use of the Council to promote welfare of the voters and public; and Motilal Nehru was requested "to sanction wholesale obstruction only where you can do it effectively ... But where obstruction cannot be successful you may be pleased to allow ... members of the Swarajya Party to vote for such resolutions as would be moved by independent members ..."

"The feeling in Bombay,"Jayakar wrote to Motilal, "was against inaction in Council or sitting with folded hands". In 1925 the demand was again pressed on

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167. Ibid., pp. 644-45.
168. Ibid., pp. 182-83.
behalf of the Bombay Council Swarajya Party for acceptance of a policy of responsive co-operation. Jayakar now pointed out that the difference between Mr. Tambe's acceptance of office and Mr. V.J. Patel's was merely technical and that the time had come when the Swarajists should accept office to save the country.

The controversy was for the time being set aside in view of the annual session of the Congress which was to be held in Cawnpore at the end of December 1925 but as soon as the Congress session was over, a meeting of the leading Indian politicians was held at Calcutta to forge a common line of action. It was clear in that conference that the Liberals, Independents and many Responsivists were divided from each other in no material sense. The next move was that a conference of responsive cooperators was held at Akola on 14 and 15 February, Mr. M. R. Jayakar presiding and a party of Responsive Cooperation was formed.

In accordance with the resolution of the Cawnpore Congress the exodus of the Swarajists was duly carried out on 8 March 1926; but the walkout lost any dramatic flavour.

designed for it by the elastic proviso that the Party was free to return on special occasions and to the extent that they might be permissible under Congress resolution. Muddiman the Home member, ridiculed the Swarajists 'as sheep who would soon have to return to the fold, where they would remain and cooperate in working towards the goal which all of us have so much at heart.' It could not prevent the defection from the Swarajya Party; and the main effect of the manoeuvre was to convince the leaders of the other parties that the time had come to join forces. At a conference held in Bombay on 3 April 1926 the Responsivists, Independents, and Liberals met again to discuss the possibilities of union. The Conference was presided over by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. The deliberations of the Conference lasted for two days and ended in the formation of Indian National Party "to prepare for and accelerate the establishment of Swaraj or full responsible Government of India, such as obtained in the self-Governing dominions of the British Empire, with a due provision for the protection of rights and interests of minorities and the backward and depressed classes." As the president of the Ninth session of the National Liberal Federation, Rao Bahadur K.G. Damle now sent an invitation to Jayakar as the leader of the responsivists to formally join the Liberal Party. Motilal Nehru could not

177. Leader, 4 April 1926.
178. K.G. Damle to Jayakar, 12 December 1926, Jayakar Papers.
afford to lose the responsivists and so hastened to effect a reconciliation with them. By the pact at Sabarmati on 20 and 21 April 1926, he even conceded to the acceptance of office under certain conditions. "The compromise", wrote the Kesari, "has altered the very angle of vision as regards the Reform Act, and the talk about the councils being the 'houses of Maya' has ceased". But in view of the differences which arose later in the interpretation of the pact, the All India Congress Committee meeting at Ahmedabad held on 4 and 5 May 1926 refused to ratify it and so the compromise broke down. To Birkenhead's great delight Irwin wrote: "The Sabarmati Pact has now completely gone; and Nehru and Responsive co-operators have departed their separate ways. It is in squabble between the two parties (Nationalists and Responsive co-operators) that Nehru's hope of rehabilitating himself lies. There is no doubt he has made more enemies than friends in his own party by his recent demarche; and in particular the Madras Swarajists seem likely to choose their own leader and give him his congé."

The Swarajists thus began to find themselves in an increasingly embarrassing position. "From one or two talks I have had with Andrews and Patel", Irwin wrote again, "I feel pretty clear in

179. Leader, 21-22 April 1926.
181. Leader, 6 May 1926.
182. Irwin to Birkenhead, 12 May 1926, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters to Secretary of State for India, April to December. 1926, p. 69.
my mind that the Swarajists are thinking of nothing so much as
to how to find a bridge to get back from a position which they
find is no longer tenable". The Viceroy therefore stiffened
his attitude and Patel's request to induce Swarajist return
by some 'spontaneous action' on the Viceroy's part met with
a curt refusal.

As the year 1926 rolled on the Indian politics gradually
drifted into confused counsel. In addition to the fact that
Swarajists themselves were not at all happy as regards harmony
in their own camp, there were a number of other parties which
covered a multitude of political sympathies - Responsivists,
Nationalists, Independent Congressmen, Liberals, Independents,
etc.

Swarajists' Failure -
The election that followed at the end of 1926 was worse
therefore from the point of view of Swarajya Party than what

183. Same to same, 9 June 1926, ibid., p. 31. Also same to
same, 16 June 1926, ibid., pp. 34-35.

184. "Motilal Nehru and his friends", he wrote to Birkenhead,
"had themselves and themselves only to thank for the mess
in which they now found themselves. They had made the
mess and it seemed to me indisputably plain that it was
their duty to clear it up. They had in my judgment
committed an act of political folly of the kind that it
never paid any party that had been unwise enough to pur­
sue the same course, whether the Whigs at the end of
eighteenth century, the Labour Party in recent days at
home or the Italian opposition on the Aventine ...".
Same to same, 16 June 1926, ibid., pp. 34-35.

185. Same to same, ibid., p. 34.

186. "...if I did act as he suggested", Irwin wrote to Birken­
head, "there were plenty of people behind Motial who
would not be slow to trade on the implied admission of
government that there walk-out had been justified by the
result and that it was evident that government could not
get on without the absent party", same to same, ibid.,
p. 35.
they were in 1923. Except for Madras Presidency where it swept the board, the Party fared badly everywhere. In Bombay and Central Provinces the Responsivists' propaganda was active and Swarajists suffered severe reverses. Its defeat in United Provinces and Punjab was due to strong communal differences. The newly formed Nationalist Party captured sizeable number of seats. In fact the Swarajist's success would have been much less if their opponents had not been divided among themselves.

The Swarajists, therefore, gave up the old policy of opposing Government in season and out of season and internal dissensions over the party leadership inside the House which was vaguely distributed between Pundit Motilal Nehru and Srinivasa Aiyanger, the President of 1926 Congress, broke the old

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187. Same to same, 30 December 1926, encl. Statement showing the composition of the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Legislative Councils, *ibid.*, pp. 173-79

The number of Swarajists in 1923 & 1926

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>1923</th>
<th>1926</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bihar &amp; Orissa</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>12</td>
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188. In Madras the Swarajya Party captured 46 seats in the 1926 election while they numbered only 22 in 1923 election. Same to same, *ibid.*, p. 174.

189. Even in Madras a great deal of their success was rather due to a successful campaigning of non-Brahmins against Brahmins than to anything which might strictly be termed as proswaraj. Same to same, *ibid.*


191a. Motilal Nehru to Jawaharlal Nehru, 14 April 1927; also same to same, 23 June 1927, *Jawaharlal Nehru Papers*, op. cit.
solidarity of the Party. "The wane of extremism inside the Assembly", Irwin wrote to Birkenhead, "which was noticeable last session has now become an outstanding feature of the business of the House. The Swarajists were prepared not only to co-operate with government on the Reserve Bank Bill, but to let the country know that they are co-operating and in fact they wanted to be able to take the lead in one of the most constructive pieces of legislation which has hitherto come before the Assembly ... There seem to be more tendency towards real co-operation." Both in Bengal and the Central provinces which for three years had lain fallow as far as Dyarchy was concerned, now returned sufficient numbers willing to work it to make the system operative again and Irwin was hopeful. 

"... the formation of a ministry in Bengal", he wrote to Birkenhead, "is a practical possibility ... the idea seems to be gaining ground that Swarajists, if returned to power will be ready, if they can possibly find a face saving formula, to take office ... I have suggested to Lytton, Goschen and Montagu Butler that they should if possible, keep the political situation fluid and so not close the door to any advances which the Swarajists make in this direction." In Bengal Byomkesh

192. Same to same, 29 September 1927, ibid., Letters to Secretary of State for India, January to December 1927, p. 196.

193. Same to same, 30 December 1926, encl. Statement showing the composition of the Legislative Assembly and Provincial Councils, ibid., Letters to Secretary of State for India, April to December 1926, pp. 178-79.

194. Same to same, 1 December 1926, ibid., p. 164.
Chakravarty had been popularising the responsive co-operation programme since August 1926, and by 1927 Ministry was re-established in Bengal and in the very first session in a contest between the Liberals' and Swarajists' candidates for the Presidency of the Assembly, the Swarajist candidate was defeated. In the Central Provinces, the responsivists now agreed to accept Ministership. In fact in the Central Provinces dissensions had appeared long before 1926 beneath the surface unity. For it was during June and July 1924 that a change in the attitude of one section of Swarajya Party in the Central Provinces was reported which indicated that local Swarajya Party favoured a change in favour of permitting acceptance of office. Speaking generally, it seemed that the Marathi speaking portions of Central Provinces were with Kelkar and Jayakar and were somewhat favoured by C.R. Das in January 1925. In the Swarajist conference in Calcutta in August 1924 over which C.R. Das presided, the responsivists announced their intention of accepting office by the Party at an early stage.

196. Raja Manmatha Nath Roy Chowdhury was elected President against Dr. Promotha Nath Banerjee by 77 to 50 votes, B.L.C. Progs., vol. 26, p. 9.
198. Confidential Report from Central Provinces for first half of June and July 1924, ibid., no. 35/1924.
199. Ibid., for the Second half of June and July, 1924.
date, and in December 1924 Sir Frank Sly the Governor of that Province wrote to Lord Reading that he had received 'indirect but substantial overtures' from a section of the Swarajists to the effect that if he would invite them to form a Ministry, his invitation would be accepted. Thus the Swarajists gradually agreed to accept Ministership and Dyarchy continued to function. By April 1925 the situation in the Central Provinces Council was so much improved that it was thought advisable to cancel the instructions a year ago regarding propaganda by Government officers against the policy of obstruction followed in the Council.

The evolution of the Swarajya Party is a dismal reading. In order to retain popularity it was necessary for them to maintain an attitude of outward extremism. But in practice they followed parliamentarianism. As a consequence the Swarajists were driven to 'a course of quibbling as to when co-operation was non-cooperation'. One after another of the leaders took a course which was just that of a Liberal yet all the time saying that they were following their principle of Non-cooperation. In the day to day work of the administration they for all practical purposes co-operated with the Government. But the Swarajists in order to 'preserve a semblance of

200. Bengalee, 18 August 1924.
intransigence', took recourse to all kinds of stage effects. They found it necessary for capturing seats at the ensuing election. Thus the Swarajists in practice really proved to be a party for constitutional action and Motilal's apprehension proved true. The Liberals certainly had reason to gloat over the fate of the Swarajists pretension to wrecking the Legislature and Surendranath Banerjea invited the Swarajists to join the Liberal camp.

The Liberals had always taken the line that obstructionist part of the programme was unrealistic and destined 'to recede into the background'. The Swarajists saw at last what a heart breaking job it was to wage a battle of wits year after year with an irremovable Executive, backed by an official block in a Legislature elected on a communal franchise, and to lead a not too highly disciplined party in

203. In the beginning of 1924 when Jayakar proposed a slight departure from the usually accepted methods of Non-cooperation in the Council in the Bombay Council Swarajya Party's programme, he had warned Jayakar that "it is easily conceivable that a number of such slight departures in various provinces put together would end in our entirely breaking away from our moorings and drifting aimlessly on the currents generated by our Independent friends. If compromise with principles lead different provinces in different directions showing an utter want of cohesion, the party as a whole will stand condemned before the world in spite of such successes as it might possibly achieve here and there," Motilal Nehru to Jayakar, 23 January 1924, A.I.C.C. no. 41/1924.

204. Leader, 10, 16 May 1925.


206. Ibid., 26 February 1923.
co-operation with groups each of which had some communal or personal axe to grind. They realised at last in their heart of hearts that Non-cooperation and making Government impossible were useless. The only way of securing further constitutional advance was by working the present constitution to the fullest advantage. As Sapru had predicted earlier in a meeting of the United Provinces Liberal Association: "When they have entered the portals of the council and seen them at work and come into direct touch with realities, they will soften down still more and discern for themselves that so far from being able to wreck the councils the only option left to them is to work them." "The inherent unsoundness of such a policy", the Leader continued, "of blind and reckless opposition will dawn on their representatives when they enter the councils ... and they will have to admit the essential soundness of Liberal policy." Thus the Swarajists and Responsive Co-operators took six years to see what the Liberals had seen from the beginning, that the only rational course was to work the present Reforms fully and to agitate for more.

The Swarajists were mistaken in believing that their obstructionist policy would force the Government to make greater concessions. They did not foresee that the field of operation left to them under the 1919 Act for the use of their destructive weapon was by no means large. They could not touch

207. Ibid., 1 February 1923.
208. Ibid., 2 May 1923.
many subjects which were protected from the vote of the Assembly. They might create considerable difficulties in the way of Government in regard to those portions of the budget which were subject to vote of the Assembly but these difficulties would not be in the nature of a surprise. They were foreseen by the framers of the constitution and they would have to be faced, whether they were raised by Swarajists or by Liberals or any other class of politicians in the Council. As the Liberals, who had seen the working of the constitution from inside in the previous term, pointed out and rightly that Swarajists would not succeed in their object as the difficulties likely to be created by them were all anticipated by Government; and they also knew that the Government was quite prepared to meet them.

209. It seems that both in Bengal and in the Central Provinces the Governors-in-Council after consultation with the Govt. of India were fully prepared to meet any awkward situation arising out of the obstructionist tactics of the Swarajists in the Council. Papers relating to the Obstructionist tactics of the Swarajya Party in Central Provinces and Bengal, G of I, Home Pol., K.W. 1 to 82/1925, pt. I.

210. In Bengal particularly long before the election was held Lytton wrote to Reading informing him about the possible composition of the Council and the difficulties likely to be created by them. "In any case there is, I think", Lytton wrote to Reading on 3 August 1922, "certain to be a minority of extremists who would resort to more violent agitation. They are all intelligent people who take their politics very seriously. They are great talkers and most of them would find in the Legislative Council a very favourable opportunity for the exercise of their particular talents..." Lytton to Reading, 3 August 1922, Reading Collection, op. cit., vol. 24, p. 394.
That the Liberals were right in anticipating the attitude that the Government was likely to adopt towards the Swarajist assault could be seen from the fact that in his first address to the Legislative Assembly on 31 January 1924, Reading flouted the idea that the hand of Parliament might be forced. He told his hearers that no action could prevail with the British people which was not based on reason and justice and he gave utterance to the truth that India's progress towards responsible self-Government depended not on Parliament or on British people but on the people of India and the conduct of their representatives in the Legislature. A few months later Lytton also wrote in a similar strain. "There are some no doubt", he wrote to the Secretary of State, "who think that if the reforms are suspended, something better will be conceded by Parliament, that when the half loaf is rejected the whole loaf will be conferred. Those who delude themselves and others with this expectations forget that the Act of 1919 was not a concession extorted from a reluctant Parliament by agitation and capable of improvement by increased agitation ... It was intended to be both an instalment and a test and the only possible justification for a further instalment is the success of the test. If Bengal deliberately demonstrate the failure of the test, she will deprive the friends of India in the Parliament of the only argument on which they can base with any justification or hope of success a demand for a further

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Indeed the Swarajists procedure led nowhere not even with
the Labour Party, and the policy of obstruction in the Council
in so far as it was pursued, resulted in strengthening enormous-
ly the position of bureaucracy without giving any hope that
the country would progress quicker on the road to complete
self-Government. And the Swarajists found in practice that
the Executive Government of the country had not yielded on
main issues. Only they had made the steel frame more invulner-
able.

The Swarajists also did not realise the fact that their
policy under the circumstances would not be pursued for long.
For if the political complexion of the Councils after the
second election under the 1919 Act left room for speculation,

212. Lytton to Olivier, 3 August 1924, Reading Collection,

213. As Irwin wrote later: "The only certain result, so far
as I can see, is that which has attended similar tactics
whenever they have been tried in India or indeed else-
where, i.e., greatly to facilitate the course of Govern-
ment business and ultimately bring discredit upon those
who pursue such a course ..." Irwin to Birkenhead, 18
January 1928, Halifax Collection, op. cit., Letters to
Secretary of State for India, January to December 1928,
p. 6.

214. "It would", Lytton wrote to Birkenhead, "I think be dis-
astrous for His Majesty's government to give the slight-
est encouragement to those who have tried to force the
pace by working for the failure of 1919 constitution,
or to hold out any hope of even considering a further
advance before 1929 ..." Birkenhead to Irwin, 20 May
1926, excl. Lytton to Birkenhead, 4 June 1925, ibid.,
Letters from Secretary of State for India, January to
December 1926, p. 11.
its social composition certainly did not. There was a reassuring similarity between the successful candidates at 1923 election and those who had sat in the first Council. Most of them were themselves lawyers and stood for constitutionalism and responsive co-operation. By training and temperament they were unable to follow the policy for a long time. All the Swarajists leaders such as C.R. Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, V.J. Patel, Mr. N.C. Kalker and Lajpat Rai had supported the resolution of Amritsar Congress in 1919 for using the Reforms for what they were worth and actually stood for first election. In September 1920 C.R. Das and B.C. Pal fought hard against Non-cooperation resolution at Calcutta but at that time Mahatma Gandhi had swept the board clean of all opposition.

Besides the Swarajists in the Council, there remained an extremely important class of members who were known as 'Independents'. 'While the Swarajists had been very largely successful in displacing the Liberals, against whom they had directed much of their heavy artillery', as the Government rightly saw the situation, 'their success against these Independents of the land-holding class and other men of local influence was very much less striking'. The status within their constituencies enabled them to stand without any reference to party ticket. Thus the second Legislature, surprisingly like

the first, was predominantly a gathering of lawyers and landholders, and from the very social reorientation of the Councils it was evident that a policy of 'uniform continuous and consistence obstruction' would not in practice be pursued for long. So the Swarajists-Independents coalition soon broke up as early as September 1924. In fact it would have broken even earlier than this if the Home Government had accepted Reading's suggestion for an earlier announcement of the Statutory Commission under certain conditions. This would have rallied them to the side of the Government. The real purpose of Reading's proposal was to separate the Independents and all those who were prepared to work the present constitution from the Swarajists. But the Secretary of State refused to agree to this on the ground that an earlier announcement of the Statutory Commission might encourage the hope that both the Home Government and the Government of India were prepared for a supercession of the present constitution.

The Independents were a powerful factor in maintaining the balance of the chamber; and the Swarajists found in actual practice that parliamentary work carried on by a majority in the Legislature necessitated compromise. Once inside the Council they therefore slipped further and further to the right not because that they became less hostile to the Govern-

217. Reading to Olivier, 10 February 1924, Reading Collection, op. cit., vol. 18, pp. 21-22. Also same to same, 17 April 1924, ibid., vol. 18, pp. 47-48.
218. Ibid.
ment but they found that their policy was impracticable under the circumstances. Thus the alignment of forces inside the Assembly and the Councils forced upon them the necessity of a gradual political climbdown and made the policy of 'uniform consistent and continuous obstruction' impossible. Although the new entrants to the Legislature vowed to destroy the constitution by obstruction from within, gradually conformed to the traditions already established. By 1926 responsive cooperation (i.e. cooperate when you can and oppose where you must), which really was the same as the Indian Liberal Party's doctrine and practice gained ground and the administration proceeded on the lines initiated in 1921. Thus the policy of the Indian Liberals though neither in their name, nor by their organisation came to hold the field.