The Viceroyalty of Lord Reading, 1921 to 1926;

with particular reference to the political and constitutional progress of India.

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This thesis will investigate and evaluate the Viceroyalty of Lord Reading, from 1921-26, with particular reference to the constitutional and political progress of India during that time.

Reading faced political unrest from two organisations, the non-co-operation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, and the Khilafat movement, under the Ali Brothers, which were temporarily united in opposition to the Government. In order to restore political stability it was essential for Reading to pacify this opposition, and the degree of success he achieved will be investigated. Reading faced the problem of whether to arrest the nationalist leaders, how to pacify Muslim opposition to aspects of British Foreign Policy and how to keep India tranquil during the visit of the Prince of Wales in December 1921.

Reading's handling of political unrest was regarded by some of his Provincial Governors as unsatisfactory. This brought the Viceroy and three of his Governors into conflict. The causes and consequences of this conflict will be examined, as will be the conflict between the Viceroy and three Indian princes who were unwilling to accept the overlordship of the Raj.

In the area of constitutional change Reading was to be responsible for the introduction of the reforms laid down in the Government of India Act 1919. This Act included such measures as the introduction of dyarchy. The Indianization of the services was also to be introduced. The process by which these changes were made, and the role played by the Viceroy in their smooth introduction, will be analysed.

The Viceroy's responsibilities also included control of economic and foreign policy. After a series of unbalanced budgets, India was facing severe economic problems in 1921, and Reading needed to find a solution. In foreign affairs two areas caused concern, the problems of Indians living in southern Africa, and the threat of Russian involvement in Afghanistan. Reading's attempts to solve these problems will be analysed.

Finally, as a member of the British judiciary, Reading's influence on the Indian legal system was significant, and the Viceroy was to regard it as his most valuable contribution to India.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to investigate in depth the Viceroyalty of Rufus Isaacs, 1st Marquess of Reading, who was in India from April 1921 to March 1926. During that time he was to be responsible for ensuring the smooth implementation of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, which changed the system of government in India. The reforms were part of the Government of India Act of 1919. However, the Viceroy faced considerable opposition from the Indian Nationalist movement, led by such politicians as Mohandas K.Gandhi, C.R.Das and Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru.

The end of the First World War led to demands by the Indian Nationalist movement for independence. Even before the war some members of the British Parliament, such as Edwin Montagu, Under-Secretary of State for India in 1912, had been prepared to admit that there was a need for change in the Indian system of government. Ultimately the goal the British hoped to achieve in India was that of 'self-governing dominion status'. The Government of India's Reforms Despatch of 1916 demonstrates that there was a commitment to self-government. Edwin Montagu, who became Secretary of State for India in 1917, and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy between 1916 and 1921, had devised a scheme intended to prepare India to govern herself, 'by allowing an increasing association of Indians in the administration, leading to a gradual development of responsible government within the British Empire'.

P.G.Robb identifies five facets of this policy; that there should be collective responsibility in consultation with local governments, that national politicians should be allowed to operate without government interference, that racial discrimination should be attacked both internally and internationally, that political crime and disorder should

be repressed and that the Central Adminsistration should preside over constitutional reform.[1] This policy, designed and introduced by Montagu and Chelmsford, was carried out by Reading after 1921.

Chelmsford's interpretation of the policy was to work through consultation and collective decisions, not a method of administration which found favour with traditional administrators, or, indeed, with Montagu. However, it was a move away from autocracy towards devolution. Unfortunately, Chelmsford failed to fulfil his role as co-ordinating head.

The political nature of India was also changing, as nationalism developed. Anil Seal argues that the roots of this development lay in British rule which sharpened the competitiveness of nationalist groups.[2] The origins of nationalism lay, he contends, in the Presidencies where, in the early 1800s, Indians under British rule, whatever their religion or Caste, had one thing in common, they were all under the political authority of the Imperial power. D.Page also argues that, as the Raj depended on its District Officers, politics were necessarily conducted at local levels, thus disputes and grievances were initially dealt with at local levels also.[3] However, the introduction of the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 began to change this. A substantial elected element was introduced at Provincial level. The elected members had no real power; they could only ask questions and speak in budget debates, but the experience increased their political awareness. The reforms also resulted in grievances being taken from local to Provincial level.

The Imperial power further contributed to the growth of nationalism because of its intention that political power, as represented by the Morley-Minto reforms, should not go to those who were demanding reform but to those who could be guaranteed to remain loyal to the Raj. Thus

as David Page suggests, the introduction of Parliamentary institutions in 1909 and 1919 were not an attempt to absorb "those on the outside trying to get in" but to improve and extend the existing system of control, to include all those collaborating with the Raj.[4] The Raj had always depended on the goodwill and co-operation of the collaborators.

For those left out of the scheme, notably a growing number of educated and professional Indians, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms presented a challenge and increased competitiveness among those seeking power. Anil Seal points out that educational development, even in the Presidencies, was uneven, and was related to the religious, the caste,and the linguistic and economic situations in which they lived.[5] Increased competitiveness between different groups also meant that graduates and their communities lost touch with each other. In addition, Western education disturbed the existing social structure, and, in some places, increased competitiveness between men of different communities and castes. By increasing the size of the electorate, the Government hoped to make it impossible for urban politicians to canvass and control the rural voters, thus ensuring that many of the Raj's old allies were returned to office.

Judith Brown suggests that the British Imperial power also applied external pressures on India. Their system of law and administration, and modern communications began to create one country where before there had only been an unstable federation of separate regions. The most powerful agent of change, in her eyes, was the Western education imported by the British.[6] Through education, an Indian could hope to gain a place of power in the administration or law, but this prospect was only available to a few. In fact, due to patronage and family connections, such advancement was available to fewer than expected it. This created a discontented group looking for an outlet in politics. P.G.Robb argues

that the reforms themselves were a response to the demands of educated Indians.[7]

However, the Nationalist movement could not genuinely claim to have all-India support. The British administration attempted to treat India as a whole and this necessitated the creation of a political structure among Indians which would reflect the administrative structure of the British. Nevertheless, at local levels, national unity was largely imaginary: each community had its own grievances which made government from above difficult ; if not impossible, as there was little agreement between communities. Anil Seal comments that "its [the Nationalist movement] unity seems a figment. Its power appears as hollow as that of the Imperial authority it was supposed to be challenging."[8] Indian politics operated at several levels, the role of the Imperial power was to encourage the linking of those levels.

Relations between Chelmsford and the influential and articulate classes began to deteriorate after 1918. Chelmsford had tried to retain the support of the educated classes, as he believed an educated minority could influence the masses. Indeed, the masses were influenced against the Raj by educated leaders such as Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru, C.R. Das and Gandhi.

Against the background of growing nationalism Gandhi's non-co-operation campaign was launched. Initially the Government paid scant attention to the campaign, believing it had little chance of success. Rural unrest developed, for example an outbreak of hat looting occurred in Bihar and there were attacks on liquor stores in the Central Provinces. However, most of the trouble was related to local problems, for example, there was a mill strike in Madras. The Central authority, following its policy of non-interfence, appeared to be doing nothing about this unrest.

In the midst of this policy came the events at Amritsar in 1919, where, according to the official account, some four hundred Indians were killed. General Dyer, in charge of implementing martial law in the area following outbursts of violence and looting, handled the situation with extreme repressive measures, such as the 'Crawling Acts', which, according to Lala Lajpat Rai in his Presidential Address to the Calcutta Congress, had increased racial tension.[9]

By January 1920 it appeared that Gandhi's campaign was in abeyance and the Mahatma's attention had been diverted to bringing politics to the masses. This seems to have been what Chelmsford aimed for, and his policy of non-interference, or, rather, interference in abeyance, was intended to manoeuvre Gandhi in this direction, in P.G.Robb's opinion.[10] There was a change in the tone and priorities of Chelmsford's campaign and, by the end of 1920, the policy was also intended to manoeuvre Gandhi into a position in which it would be safe to arrest him. The emphasis was on expediency, and tactics varied according to political considerations, such as Gandhi's popularity.

The events at Amritsar had a widespread impact and came at a time of rising prices, epidemics, increased Muslim grievance following the events of the 1919 peace talks in Paris and economic dislocation. All these problems had the potential to turn local grievances into major provincial, and, indeed, national issues.

Consequently, as Chelmsford began to near the end of his Viceroyalty Montagu decided that he needed a different type of Viceroy. In his opinion, formed during his tour of India during November and December 1917, the kind of man usually selected as Viceroy was wrong:

> They approach the problem from the wrong side

> they do the work they are called upon to do; they wade through files; they think of their regulations, and then as to the social side, precedence, precedence, precedence."[11]

Lord Chelmsford was, in Montagu's opinion, a very good example of the problem: he was cool and cautious, whereas Montagu himself was volatile and emotional. When the Viceroy made a decision he stuck to it with consistency and inflexibility. Ideally, Montagu would have liked to see the Viceroyalty split into two parts. His mind was already on a new type of leadership, with a Royal Viceroy for functionary purposes, and a Prime Minister appointed in Britain to do all the other work:

> The junction of the two seems to me to be an intolerable nuisance and it is all wrong. You see, the Indian Princes who are here treat the thing with amused and benevolent contempt, as something which has ceased to mean anything.[12]

He went on to express the view that the type of man needed as Viceroy was a politician able to "make friends" with the Indians. On his tour he had found it easy to make friends, and he suspected that, as a Jew, his 'oriental mind' was responsible for this. Montagu discussed his idea with Lord Chelmsford on 13th November and was pleased that the Viceroy appeared to like it. The Secretary of State even considered writing the necessary changes into the Government of India Act. However, the Prime Minister's reception of the idea was less than enthusiastic, and it was temporarily shelved.

During 1920, as the end of Chelmsford's term of office approached, it became necessary to select a new Viceroy. Montagu again proposed a splitting of Viceregal duties. Initially, he suggested that he should become a temporary Viceroy, and he asked the Prime Minister to consider this possibility.[13] He would then begin the re-organisation of the role of the Viceroy preparing for the appointment of a Royal Viceroy within

three years. He went on to list the reasons why he believed he would be a good choice; Indians trusted him and he thought he had been trained for the role by Lloyd George himself. However, before the matter could be discussed, Lloyd George left for San Remo on holiday. The debate was re-opened on 3rd June 1920, when Montagu wrote to the Prime Minister:

> It is a paramount necessity to the continuance of the Imperial tie that the representative of the King Emperor should remain a dispassionate spectator, performing ceremonial functions, aloof from party strife and from criticism, whilst a political head of the Indian Government governs...answering criticism, dealing with political extravagance, keeping order and arranging for progress.[14]

For the first role he suggested either one of the King's sons, or another member of the Royal Family. Failing that, a nobleman would have been acceptable. For the second role he wanted a "first-class British statesman accustomed to administration."[15]

However, after much to-ing and fro-ing of letters on the subject, Lloyd George decided that the idea was not suitable and Montagu dropped it. Thus the search began for a suitable candidate to replace Chelmsford. Initially, Reading was not under consideration. Montagu's first choice was Austen Chamberlain, although he did suggest Sir Harcourt Butler, Winston Churchill or H.A.L.Fisher. Butler was rejected by Lloyd George because he was virtually unknown in Britain.[16] The other candidates were unwilling to accept the position. For a while it appeared that the Viceroyalty was being offered indiscriminately, which was contributing to dissatisfaction in India, in Montagu's opinion:

> ...great harm is being done by the suggestion that you want to get rid of these great men and that is why you are trying to force them to India; or the alternative, that the Viceroyalty is being hawked about.[17]

Finally, Lloyd George suggested that the post should be offered to Lord Reading, the Lord Chief Justice. A great friendship existed between the two, strengthened by the crisis they had both faced in 1913, when they had both been involved in the Marconi Scandal. Lord Reading, a Jew like Montagu, and already sixty-one years old, had had a varied career up to that point. As Rufus Isaacs he had been elected Member of Parliament for Reading in 1904, but his greatest success had been in the legal field where he had had a brilliant career as a barrister. In 1910 he had become Attorney-General and in 1913 he was appointed Lord Chief Justice. At the end of the First World War he had served as Ambassador to the United States, returning to the post of Lord Chief Justice, in 1919, somewhat reluctantly.

Reading's friendship with Lloyd George, and with Asquith, had greatly helped his career, yet the Viceroyalty was to severely strain that friendship. In July 1922, after the scandal surrounding Montagu's resignation, Reading was convinced that Lloyd George blamed him, and he wrote to the Prime Minister:

> ...perhaps I attribute too much importance to not hearing from you, and yet, when I think of the messages I have sent to you without any direct answer, I wonder if there is more significance in your silence than mere preoccupation.[15]

Lloyd George was so anxious that Reading be appointed Viceroy that he was prepared to conduct some undercover dealings in order to ensure that his friend was available for the job. Reading was pleased to be offered the post; he had been unhappy for some time as Lord Chief Justice and longed for some excitement. However, he could not accept the post without first considering two problems. Firstly, he was concerned about his wife's health which had never been good. Having been reassured

that his wife could stand up to the Indian climate, he was able to contemplate the second problem, availability.

Reading had not served long enough as Lord Chief Justice to be entitled to a pension, so he and Lloyd George devised a scheme by which the post of Lord Chief Justice would be regained by Reading on his return from India. It was agreed by the two of them that Gordon Hewart, the Attorney-General and Reading's successor, should be asked by the Prime Minister to stand aside from being Lord Chief Justice on the grounds of public interest, and continue as Attorney-General. The post of Lord Chief Justice would then be offered to Lord Sterndale, an elderly judge. Moulton, Head of the Appeal Court, would be offered a peerage in October 1921, and Hewart would be offered his position. If the position of Lord Chief Justice fell vacant while Reading was away it would then be offered to Hewart.[19]

The scheme needed the approval of Hewart. Lloyd George approached him and suggested that if he was appointed Lord Chief Justice immediately on Reading's resignation, the Conservatives would be discontented, on the grounds that the Liberals were being given more than their due.[20] Lloyd George proposed that when the post became vacant it should be offered to Hewart, with a real opportunity of accepting or declining it. Hewart would decline, and it would then be offered to an elderly judge, who would agree to give up the post any time the Prime Minister requested, which he would certainly do before the next election.[21]

Hewart was unwilling at first to accept the proposal. He suggested that the public, unaware of the plan, might think there were doubts about the Attorney-General's competence. Lloyd George then said it was impossible to appoint Reading Viceroy without Hewart's agreement, as the Government needed Hewart, and could not afford a by-election. Hewart, who thought the British legal system would not be best served by the plan,

was subjected to tremendous pressure from the press and from the Prime Minister. On 14th February he wrote to his friend and colleague, Bonar Law:

> ...I do feel that the political difficulties would not be relieved but would be increased if any temporary or provisional arrangement or understanding were to be attempted.[22]

Later the same month he made the same point to the Prime Minister:

> Many of my legal friends of long experience pointed out to me that any such plan was improper and detrimental to the administration of justice.[23]

Lloyd George replied that had he known that Hewart felt so strongly no question of a vacancy in the Lord Chief Justiceship would have arisen. Even more pressure was applied when Hewart visited Reading who dejectedly told Hewart that the offer of the post of Viceroy had been withdrawn. In an effort to ease the pressure, Hewart visited Lloyd George and it was indicated to the Attorney-General that, "you may never succeed at all".[25] A good Attorney-General was essential in the Prime Minister's opinion, and Bonar Law, when consulted by Hewart, agreed. Hewart therefore accepted the arrangements, fearing that if he refused he would never have another chance.

The announcement of Reading's appointment was generally well received. There can be no doubt that Reading was himself pleased at his new appointment. Gordon Hewart commented that Reading had come to enjoy diplomacy and longed to get back to it.[26] Lord Riddell added that, "for some time past he had been on the gloomy side. Now he is like a school-boy let out for the holiday".[27] Reading himself vowed, "I will never look at a law report again if I can help it. I never want to see another one".[28] He admitted that part of the attraction of the job, as he saw it, was to be the dispenser of British justice and the initiator of liberal reforms to a politically naive people.[29] In his farewell speech to the Bar, he

said that he regarded himself as passing from one arena for the administration of justice to another. He declared that justice would be the keynote of his India policy:

> I trust those in India, who may be reading of my appointment, who are now at the outset of great progressive reforms...may recognize that in selecting the representative of Justice from this country to take the supreme place...it is the desire of His Majesty and His Majesty's servants to make manifest in India that justice will remain the supreme guiding factor in the destinies of India.[30]

On the whole the announcememt was also well received by the press. Reading cut out and kept some of the press cuttings. Only the Morning Post attacked the choice of Viceroy, on the grounds that Reading was a Jew, as was the Secretary of State.[31] This fact caused concern, in certain quarters, that the pair were lacking in the traditions of the British Empire, and might thus embark on foolish ventures:

> We hope Lord Reading will stick to his job on the bench - where he is, par excellence, the right man in the right place. India might easily prove the grave of his great reputation.[32]

Other newspapers did not agree. One undated and unnamed paper in Reading's collection reads:

> The Morning Post bitterly deplores the possibility of both Secretary of State and Viceroy being Jews, but surely if English Jews retain any trace of their oriental mentality Lord Reading is not, in this case, a liabilty, but an Imperial asset.[33]

This certainly seemed to be the case. Reading's appointment was well received in India. The Indian people imagined that Reading's faith would help him to understand the minds and ways of Eastern people. One unnamed newspaper clipping kept by Reading reads:

> It is clear that the selection of Lord Reading to succeed Lord Chelmsford has been well received by the Indian people, who in these

> matters are helped by an imagination finer
> than is sometimes possessed by persons in this
> country who profess to speak for them.[34]

On 12th February 1921, Lloyd George spoke at the English Speaking Union dinner, wishing Reading luck and expressing his confidence that his friend would be as successful as Viceroy as he had been in his other high offices.[35]

Certainly Reading was determined to succeed. He spent several hours every day studying the Indian political situation at the India Office. His collection of books, donated to the India Office Library, suggested that he read widely. They included such varied works as A Passage to India, by E.M.Forster, India; its administration and progress, by Strachey and Mystic India, by Baulnois, as well as copies of the Government of India Act of 1919. Consequently, he was able to write to the Prime Minister on 21st February with conviction:

> Ever since I went to the India Office I have
> done my utmost to inform myself as to the causes
> of the condition of unrest in India that I might
> arrive at my own judgement.[36]

Reading arrived in India on 2nd April 1921 and immediately faced a series of political problems, the full implications of which he had not totally understood before his departure. As well as the demands of the Nationalist movement and Gandhi, Reading also faced the task of introducing the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, which had been boycotted by the non-co-operators in the elections of 1920. The poll had varied between 50% in Madras to 22% in the Central Provinces.[37] He had to be responsible for the implementation of the Indianization programme in the Civil Service and the Army, which was unpopular with India's European community.

The Treaty of Sèvres, made with the former Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War continued to cause unrest among India's Muslim community resulting in the formation of a pact - known as the

Khilafat Movement - between Hindus and Muslims against the Raj. The Movement pressed for a revision of the Treaty of Sèvres and vowed to protect the Khalifa and the independent Muslim Empire he led. Reading could understand the concern of the Muslims and hoped to persuade the British Government to change its foreign policy in order to pacify India's Muslims. He wrote on 23rd January 1921:

> I cannot express too strongly on His Majesty's Government the injurious effect that will be produced in this country should Britain assist the Greeks against the Turks.[38]

However, those members of the British Government responsible for foreign policy did not always believe that Indian opinion should be a factor for consideration. For example, Lord Curzon, in charge of negotiations with Turkey, complained to Montagu, "Is Indian opinion always to be the final court of Muslim opinion".[39]

The Viceroy was also responsible for India's foreign and Imperial policy and had to be aware of problems of discrimination against Indians elsewhere in the Empire. By 1921, India was suffering from severe economic problems, and Reading, aiming at economic stability and balanced budgets, was often forced to resort to measures which went against his liberal principles, such as introducing protectionist policies.

Above all, he hoped to be remembered for his reform of the judicial system, and here too he had to deal with problems of discrimination, and again he faced opposition to his plans from all sides: from the Government at home, from the British in India and from the Indian nationalist movement.

Although Reading still had to prove his ability as Viceroy, the Secretary of State believed that Reading could fulfil the role:

> No one can say who is going to make a good Viceroy, but one can confidently predict that

Rufus ought to make a good one.[40]

This thesis will consider each of the problems Reading faced, and examine his success in handling them.

Chapter One; Reading and Anti-Government Unrest, April to December 1921.

Reading arrived in India in April 1921 and immediately faced problems. The events at Amritsar had contributed to the lingering discontent of many Indians, especially those who had suffered as a result of Dyer's harsh handling of the situation. This discontent was made worse among some of the Muslims in India by Britain's attitude to the Turkish Empire, the future of which was being discussed at the Sevres peace talks. Tension between the Indian Muslims and the British Raj had been deepening for some time. Administrative changes, introduced from 1900 onwards, which increased the powers of the district officers and appeared to benefit educated Hindus, contributed to this growing tension. Muslims believed, in the opinion of Mushirul Hasan, that these measures were an attempt to pacify Hindu revivalists.[1]

The position of the Muslims in political terms varied greatly from province to province, depending on their social and economic importance. In those provinces, such as the United Provinces, where the Muslim landowners had been left largely undisturbed by the decline of the Moghul Empire and the rise of the Raj, they played a greater role in the Imperial system, which depended on district officers. In 1913, in the United Provinces, Muslims made up 14% of the population, but held 35% of the top jobs.[2] In those areas, such as Bombay, where the Muslims were largely merchants, Muslim political influence was negligible. In 1913, in Bombay Muslims made up 20% of the population, but held only 10% of the top jobs.

Within the oldest centres of British rule, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, college education was beginning to grow and improve, but Muslims

in those areas were unable to take advantage of these advances because of their poor economic position. In Bombay and Madras, for example, money was invested in trade. Therefore, the educated and professional elite became an important source of opposition to the Raj, especially as even in Muslim majority provinces, such as the United Provinces, agents of the Raj were selected not on educational grounds, but, rather on family contacts.

Francis Robinson suggests that in the United Provinces, where Muslims were well placed educationally and politically, they feared that not only would the Hindu majority interfere with their religious practices, but would also discriminate against them in secular fields such as education and employment.[3] The existence of British rule had cut Muslim power in the United Provinces following a series of municipality and council acts, which limited the role of officials, most of whom were Muslim. Robinson argues that the United Province Muslims directed their politics towards compensating for their loss. They aimed for a protected share of power.[4]

In 1906, Nawab Salimullah of Dacca suggested an independent all-India Muslim political association. Although the idea was opposed by the Aga Khan, young Muslim males were clamouring for a political association. Each major province then started its own branch, and each of these took a local issue as its major cause of concern. For example, the Eastern Bengal and Assam League was concerned with the preservation of Eastern Bengal as a separate province. However, the members of the League did work together on national issues, and, from the formation of the League, its members did begin to demand separate electorates and other concessions, such as the reservation of Government jobs for them. Nevertheless, although the Muslim League claimed to be representative of all Muslims in India, many Indian Muslims remained loyal to the Congress Party, and, indeed some United Province Muslims deserted the League

in the 1920s.

David Page suggests that the Muslim community cannot be treated as a coherent unit at this time. Divisions had begun to emerge between the traditionally educated leaders and the growing body of Western educated Muslims.[5] Robinson agrees, pointing out that Muslims were further divided by their different interests in government service, land and religion.[6] Sir Harcourt Butler suggested, in April 1913, that the Muslim League had been founded to harness the enthusiasms of Muslim youths who might otherwise join the Hindus in Congress.[7]

Nevertheless, educated Muslims, such as Mohamed Ali, continued to support the Raj, believing that such an attachment would be beneficial. Mahomed Ali believed that it was the social distinction between the races, and not the British that caused distress. However, Mohamed Ali's views began to change, and during the First World War it became necessary for the Raj to imprison both him and his brother when they began to publicise the ideal of Pan-Islam. In 1919, Mohamed Ali appeared at the Amritsar Congress as the spokesman for Muslim opinion, in particular with regard to the Khilafat campaign.

The Khilafat movement which resulted stemmed from concern over the spiritual and temporal authority of the Khalifa; a desire to maintain the territorial integrity of the Turkish Empire and to divert British aggression from Turkey. Among Indian Muslims there was a great deal of sympathy for the Khalifa, and a desire to see the remains of the great Turkish Empire survive. It was an essential part of the doctrine of the Khalifa that he should have "adequate territories, adequate military and naval resources, and adequate financial resources".[8] It seemed possible that the peacemakers at Sèvres would take those essentials away. The situation could have been avoided if the allies had dealt magnanimously with Turkey and if relations between the Government of

India and Indian Muslims had been more cordial. Mahomed Ali said:

> Our sympathy with Turkey was not political or territorial, but religious, for the Sovereign of Turkey was the successor of the Prophet and the Commander of the Faithful. It was our religious duty to prevent the further disintegration of the temporal power of the Khilafat which was indispensable for the defence of our faith, to maintain the inviolabilty of the sacred regions of Islam.[9]

Mahomed Ali used his right as a British subject to put pressure on the Government in respect of his religious requirements. The temporal allegiance of Indian Muslims depended on the Government's respect for religious obligations. David Page suggests that Mahomed Ali and like thinking Muslims took pride in the independence of Turkey as a compensation for the Muslim fall from power in India.[10] They wanted to see the revival of the Ottoman Empire. As early as 1914 this problem had been pointed out to the British by Lord Hardinge, who had explained that such a move as the break up of the Ottoman Empire would be regarded as an insult by those Muslims in India who were committed to its preservation."[11] Nevertheless, this warning went unheeded, and the break up of the Khilafat seemed inevitable

At the end of the war Indian Muslims hoped that when the Empire was broken up, separate Muslim states would be created in Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia. Some Muslims felt they had been deceived when the peacemakers appeared not to consider the idea. The fact that the solution to the Turkish problem was still being discussed some time after the end of the war also contributed to a feeling of unreality, some were able to 'forget' the nature of the problem. The Government White Paper on the progress and condition of India in 1920 said of the Khilafat movement:

> As to the ultimate origin of the intensive agitation in India directed towards the

> modification of the Turkish Peace terms, it is not so easy to speak with certainty. In its inception it appears to have originated among a certain section of advanced Muhammedan opinion, whose views can broadly be described as Pan-Islamic and Pro-Turkish.[12]

In addition to their deep religious conviction and commitment to the Khilafat, the Muslim Nationalists, seeing the success of the Swadeshi campaign in Bengal, and feeling that their traditional loyalty had been unrewarded, increasingly lost faith in British rule. Mushirul Hasan suggests that they now began to claim concessions through agitation and vigorous protest.[13] Robinson argues that not all Muslims were equally committed to protecting the Khilafat. Traditionally educated Muslims, whose interests were tied to government and who hoped to gain power and prestige under the Montagu -Chelmsford reforms, only expressed concern over the treatment of the Khilafat. It was the new political group of Western educated Muslims who needed the weight of Muslim identity to compensate for their weakness.[14] Agitation was motivated by religious considerations, but some Muslims realised that agitation could improve their personal position and might contribute to their influence in the community generally.

Thus it can be seen that a complex movement, based around intellectual and Western educated Muslims, was developing. This was further intensified by the attitude of the Secretary of State for India who, in 1912, vetoed hopes for progress towards the foundation of a Muslim university in Aligarh along lines suggested by the forward Muslim Party who wanted to remove the secular modernists and European members of staff.

Mohamed Ali, while in prison, had become more deeply religious, and had been motivated by communal loyalty, now he became motivated by what he saw as his religious duty,

However, Prabha Dixit suggests that this is somewhat misleading. Muslims chose the ideal of Islamic brotherhood for the articulation of their political aspirations because of their minority status.[15] He argues they wanted a share of power in excess of their numerical status. This view is born out by Mahomed Ali himself, who wrote

> When it is remembered that this community, numbering nearly 400 million people throughout the world, whose ambition is to convert the rest of Mankind...who claim and feel a unique brotherhood: to talk of it as a minority is absurd.[16]

However, Mushirul Hasan disagrees with any view that members of the Khilafat movement used their religious belief to further their political power deliberately. Such an interpretation, in his opinion, ignores the religious symbolism of Indian Islam, and underestimates the sense of religious unity between Indian Muslims and Muslims elsewhere in the world.[17] This provided the driving force behind Muslim ideology and the Khilafat movement

In fact, neither view seems totally satisfactory. Some leading professionals undoubtedly used the existing network of religious organisations to bring themselves closer to the masses. They then used local discontent to stir up religious discontent, in the hope of winning political support. However, communal distubances after 1922 also suggest that, for the masses, religious symbolism and the tenets of their faith were of greater importance than political power, of which they had none anyway.

In 1920 the Hindus and the Muslims sought to work together, through the non-co-operation movement, inaugurated in August and ratified by Congress in September, to peacefully coerce the Government of India into meeting their demands. The movement's policies were embodied in a resolution which advocated non-violent non-co-operation until, "the said wrongs are righted and Swaraj is established".

It is important to understand some of the motives behind the involvement of the Hindus in the movement, which also involved a commitment to the Khilafat movement. As Motilal Nehru said at the Amritsar meeting of the Indian National Congress in 1919, "it is impossible for one part of the nation to stand aloof while the other part is suffering from a serious grievance".[18]

It was Mahatma Gandhi who brought Hindu support to the Muslims and transformed a minor inconvenience into a major problem for the British. On 18th November 1918, Gandhi wrote to Mahomed Ali:

> My interest in your release is quite selfish. We have a common goal and I want to utilize your services to the uttermost in order to reach that goal. In the proper solution of the Mahommedan question lies the realisation of Swaraj.[19]

It was also something of a problem for Gandhi to persuade two conflicting cultures to co-operate and ultimately he failed. Whereas his political programme was non-violent non-co-operation, that of the All-India Muslim League was based on the belief that violence was acceptable if the end result was favourable.

For the Muslim leaders the problem was how to harness religious feelings into a movement directed against the Government. By allying with Gandhi and adopting his programme, the Muslims hoped that any ideas of jihad would be forgotten. Therefore, Gandhi became the spokesman for the movement in 1919.

Gandhi did not commit himself to the Khilafat movement without careful consideration. In his autobiography he explained that he wanted to work for the removal of religious barriers while acknowledging that different religions were inevitable in society. For him the former meant giving support to the Muslims, not only because of ethical principle; but also because of the reality of Lloyd George's own admission of the

justice inherent in the Khilafat movement's demands. Gandhi wrote, "I felt, therefore, bound to render what help I could in securing a due fulfilment of the Prime Minister's pledge".[20]

Yet Gandhi undoubtedly realised the value of having Hindus and Muslims working together and he hoped to use the power thus generated to force the British to grant 'Swaraj in one year'. Nevertheless, the alliance was a fragile one, the warlike Muslims with the ever-peaceful Gandhi and supported by extremist Hindus. Mushirul Hasan has suggested that Gandhi was also responsible for urging the Khilafat leaders to intensify their campaign, in order to keep himself in the forefront of national politics.[21] He goes on to argue that the Khilafat movement, although it was a movement in which a large spectrum of the Hindu and Muslim communities combined, was just a passing phase.[22] The clash of interests between Hindus and Muslims led to the swift collapse of the alliance and the imprisonment of its leaders. To some people, the movement appeared to be the forerunner of the worst forms of communalism.[23]

Reading went to India fully aware of the problem facing him. Even before his departure he began a campaign aimed at changing British foreign policy in respect of the Ottoman Empire. Despite the evidence that this would benefit the Indian Government, his pressure, and that of others involved in Indian affairs, went largely ignored. Indeed, this policy of constantly expressing the strong views of Indian Muslims to the British Government had been begun by Lord Chelmsford. The Government of India, realising that the peace terms with Turkey were likely to be unwelcome to the Indian Muslims, began to warn Muslim deputations privately to expect the worst. They also sought to publicise their own efforts. As P.G.Robb points out, the central feature of Chelmsford's approach had been to appease the Muslim's feelings, not to oppose them, although he came close to an admission of the divergence between his policy and that of

the British Foreign Office discussing the future of Turkey.[24] In the same position, in March 1922, Reading, as we shall see, did publicly admit that the solution being discussed would not ease problems in India.

However, Reading did benefit from his flood of letters and telegrams on the subject of the British Government's attitude to Turkey. His persistence enhanced his position and contributed to eventual success in winning the support of moderate and traditional Muslims. This is evident through the letters Reading received from some of those Muslims regarded as moderate, congratulating him on his handling of the Turkish problem.

Reading started his campaign on 21st February 1921, when he wrote to Lloyd George emphasising:

> ...how important it is in my judgement to make some concessions to Mahomedan opinion if you think they can safely be made.[25]

His campaign was supported by the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, General Lord Rawlinson, who also expressed concern about the Treaty of Sèvres in February 1921. He believed that it would be impossible to control India if the Treaty went against Muslim demands.[26]

Reading left England in March 1921 full of hope, confident that agitation over past grievances could not be maintained, provided there were no further problems.[27] Those further problems came about when it was reported in the Daily Mail on 31st May 1921, that Britain intended to abandon her position of neutrality in the war in Asia Minor, as a result of hostile attacks on British subjects. Such action, wrote Reading, would have disastrous consequences in both Hindu and Muslim circles:

> ...who will look on such action on the part of the British as contemptuous disregard of Indian opinion.[28]

However, that step was still to be made and Reading had already made

gains, such as his private talks with Gandhi, since his arrival in April.

It has often been suggested that the British followed a policy of 'divide and rule', keeping Hindu-Muslim antagonism alive in order to make their own position easier. This aspect of British rule will be examined in another chapter. There is no evidence to suggest that Reading was directly instructed to follow such a policy, but, from the time of his arrival he looked hopefully for signs of cracks in the alliance.[29] In this he was helped by a certain sympathy for the Muslims' position in wanting the 'freedom' of their 'motherland'. His own political career had not been without its anti-Semitic hurdles and the idea of a nation state to which minority groups could identify must have been appealing, although he was not a Zionist himself. He acknowledged some justification for Muslim grievances over the Treaty of Sèvres, and he saw the solving of those grievances as of cardinal importance. Nevertheless, he admitted that it was the major responsibility of the British in India to maintain peace. On 4th May, he wrote to the Prime Minister:

> We can never forget our responsibility to India, where we have, generally speaking, kept the peace between the races, creeds and castes, for over a hundred and fifty years.[30]

Therefore, it is obvious that Reading's policy had to be a somewhat precarious balance between maintaining the peace yet exploiting the differences.

It was the widely varied political and religious views of the leaders of the two sections of the Hindu-Muslim alliance which gave Reading the chance, whether intentionally or otherwise, to exploit the weaknesses in the alliance. Immediately on his arrival Reading began to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the alliance, and he decided that its emphasis had changed in recent months. The Viceroy concluded that Gandhi no longer felt he would get the support of the intelligentsia for a policy such as non-co-operation, which would lead to violence. Instead

he made his appeal to the masses in an attempt to rouse the pressure of millions.[31] Reading saw the change as an attempt to create a spirit of nationalism, which would, in turn, press for independence. Such a mass movement, argued Reading, could not be ignored, and arrests and prosecutions were inevitable. It was the Ali brothers who first courted arrest.

The Ali brothers had been willing to become part of Gandhi's non-co-operation movement in 1920. They had already served time in prison between 1915 and 1919, and, following their release, had regained their positions as spokesmen for the Khilafat Organisation. As Mahomed Ali said, although their present policy co-incided with the Mahatma's, their religion did not, as Islam not only permitted the use of violence, but encouraged it, as we have seen. Thus Muslims could not be completely committed to non-violence.[32]

Initially, Gandhi's promise of "Swaraj in one year" kept the Muslims behind him. However, by April 1921, that year was drawing to a close without any perceptible results except the appointment of a new Viceroy, and the Ali brothers decided that more physical action was called for.

This action took the form of inciting Muslims to resign from the army. Reading arrived in the middle of this campaign, and, needing to establish firm control over India quickly, he indicated that he would arrest anyone involved in incitement. He wrote to the Secretary of State explaining that, in his view, the action of the Ali brothers was doing great harm, and required swift action from the Government to prevent any further damage. He wrote, "I cannot see Government authority openly and persistently flouted by incitements, direct or indirect".[33] However sympathetic he may have been to the demands of the Khilafat movement he was still a representative of the British Government.

The prospect of the arrest of the Ali brothers worried Gandhi, as it

would obviously weaken the Hindu-Muslim alliance to have its Muslim leaders in prison, while its Hindu ones remained free. In an attempt to avoid the situation he broke the principle of non-co-operation by seeking an interview with the Viceroy, to try to sort out the problem, and effect a suitable compromise. That interview, or series of interviews, was to weaken Gandhi's position, not only as a leader of the Muslims, but also in the eyes of some Hindus, as we shall see later.

Although Reading agreed to the meetings he did not hold out much hope for their success. He realised that Gandhi was under pressure as the one year drew to a close without the possibility of Swaraj being achieved. The Viceroy believed that Gandhi, in his desire to maintain the Hindu-Muslim alliance, would forgo his non-violent policies by ignoring violent tendencies within the movement. Nevertheless, the meeting took place on 14th May, although little was achieved at the preliminary session. Gandhi made four demands; that the pensions of O'Dwyer and Dyer be stopped because of their involvement in the events in Amritsar in 1919, that all Government officials involved in the affair be dismissed, that all fines be repaid, and that all unlawfully detained prisoners be released.[34] Reading, naturally, was unable to agree, and, following such demands, he was not optimistic about the success of the meeting. He wrote to the Secretary of State:

> ...to be frank I see little, if any, hope of arriving at anything satisfactory with Gandhi.[35]

This first meeting did give Reading the chance to assess Gandhi's politics. The Viceroy concluded that Gandhi was an impractical idealist, with profound religious convictions, although the Mahatma was well aware of the importance of the Hindu-Muslim alliance from his point of view. Reading wrote:

> Gandhi wishes to maintain the non-co-operation movement, and strive to increase its power at any cost...the chieftainship of the non-co-operation movement is now as important to him as any religious faith.[36]

Nevertheless, the meetings continued, and, by 19th May, some common ground had obviously been found, as Reading wrote more hopefully to London, "Altogether you will judge that I liked him, and that I believe there are possibilities for the future".[37] Although believing him politically naive, Reading found that Gandhi could express his political views with sincerity.[38]

A solution to Gandhi's problem had been found. Gandhi would persuade the Ali brothers to withdraw the statements which were regarded as incitement, and would apologise. In doing so they would avoid arrest.

After a great deal of discussion, a text for the apology was agreed on by both Reading and Gandhi. Gandhi then had to persuade the Ali brothers to accept it without alteration. Reading made it clear that he would not allow the two Muslims to put forward any conditions. Nevertheless, when Gandhi next approached the Viceroy, on 29th May, his reply was that the Ali brothers were prepared to sign the statement with some minor changes. Rather than adopt a totally uncompromising attitude Reading conceded the minor changes, arguing that it was better to have the signatures than to prosecute.[39] No doubt Reading realised that to arrest the Ali brothers while they were so popular would lead to increased violence. As it was, the apology, as we shall see, weakened the Ali brothers' position, ensuring their eventual arrest was peacefully executed.

The text of the apology was recorded in Rushbrook-Williams annual report on the moral and material progress of India:

> Friends have drawn our attention to certain speeches of ours, which, in their opinion, have a tendency to incite to violence. We desire to state that we never intended to incite to violence, and we never imagined that any passages in our speeches were capable of the interpretation put upon them....We therefore sincerely feel sorry and express our regret for the unnecessary heat of some of the passages in those speeches.[40]

As a result of the apologetic statement the Government suspended further action against the Ali brothers, and refrained from instituting criminal proceedings. However, Reading did not want to set a precedent for India by allowing 'criminals' to apologise and avoid prosecution. He made it clear that this was an unusual incident which would not be repeated. In a letter on 30th May to the Secretary of State he wrote:

> The Government of India desire to make it plain that they will enforce the law relating to offences against the State as and when they think fit, against any persons who have committed breaches of it.[41]

On 9th June he followed this statement with another identifying what he would regard as serious cases of incitement and propaganda. There were two types; speeches denouncing Government policy and exhorting disaffection, and speeches containing serious mis-statements accompanied by 'incitement to hate the Government'. In both cases prosecution would proceed immediately.[42]

There has been some criticism of Reading's action, both contemporary and in retrospect, because it was believed that the continued freedom of the Ali brothers contributed to the Moplah rebellion which raged in the summer of 1921, the causes and consequences of which will be examined later. Criticism came in August 1921, from Lord Willingdon, Governor of Madras, in whose Province Malabar lay:

I am sure you won't mind me speaking frankly and saying that this undiscipline [sic] and unrest which has been created in the country through the non-co-operation propaganda, has resulted, as far as we are concerned, in this outbreak here. I am quite convinced that the policy of leaving the leaders of the movement alone and dealing only with the rank and file when you can is perfectly useless. You know that I much disliked the policy of your getting as apology from the Ali brothers and would have been glad to see them prosecuted then.[43]

Sir Archibald Rumbold echoes that view, saying that the Moplah rebellion was the penalty to be paid by the Government of India for being seen as weak.[44] Yet there were those, such as Lord Rawlinson, who could see the purpose behind the policy of negotiation. To his friend, Earl Haig, the Commander-in-Chief wrote on 10th May 1921:

> I think he is right to try peace by negotiation before proclaiming war and even if he fails, his eventual position will be the stronger for having made the attempt.[45]

That being the case, it is necessary to try to understand why Reading acted as he did. P.G.Robb suggests that the policy of allowing important leaders to remain free had first been implemented by Sir William Vincent, the Home Member, during Chelmsford's Viceroyalty. The aim of the policy was to avoid the creation of 'martyrs' by avoiding attacks on people of importance.[46] Thus Reading was adopting an existing policy. However, it was a policy particularly suited to his nature. He had undoubtedly been sent to India as a committed member of the Liberal Party, following the failure of arch-conservatism under Chelmsford. He had no wish to play the heavy father to India, although he realised it might be necessary. As a man with legal training, he understood the value of compromise rather than conflict. He knew that the apology would weaken the Ali brothers and Gandhi, and, consequently, the Hindu-Muslim alliance. To split the alliance would make the position of the Government of India

more secure, to arrest the Muslims without first discrediting them would only have strengthened the anti-British alliance.

Certainly the Secretary of State for India was initially very pleased with the results. Reading seemed to be achieving success, and other people at home seemed to agree:

> Many people have expressed to me their belief that the recantation of the Ali brothers must detract from their political force.[47]

The effect on the Hindu-Muslim alliance of the apology seemed almost immediate. By 9th June, Reading was able to telegram to Montagu, saying that he saw signs of dissension, though faint, in Gandhi's camp.[48] He followed this the same day with a letter going into greater detail:

> From all I read and hear my impression is that the effect of the Ali brothers recantation has had a distinctly damping effect on the Khilafat supporters and the Gandhi movement.[49]

As a result of this, in Reading's opinion, Gandhi was not getting the financial and manpower support he expected. He berated his followers in a speech at Simla, saying they were not fit for 'Swaraj'. The news of the apology was, Reading thought, well received in India and many people appreciated the Viceroy's handling of the negotiations.[50]

The decline in the position of the Ali brothers became more marked during June. It seemed that the other leaders were less confident of success and less bitter towards the Government. Reading explained the decline of the Ali brothers to the Secretary of State on 20th June:

> There is no doubt that the Ali brothers' apology has reduced their influence and was a great setback to certain sections of the non-co-operation party.[51]

Then on 23rd June, he went on to explain the weakness of Gandhi's position:

> It is evident that Gandhi has been very hard-pressed by non-co-operationists on the one hand

> who have written protesting against his interviews with me on the ground that they were a direct negation of the principle of non-co-operation; on the other he has been assailed by Mahomedans who are of the opinion that he gave away their leaders.[52]

With the leaders of the movement under such pressure it was almost inevitable that they would make mistakes which would complete the work of destruction the Viceroy had started. Reading continued to gain the support of moderate Muslims by his favourable attitude as to the position of Turkey, while the Ali brothers became more fanatical and Gandhi less confident, not about the possibility of eventual success, but about the ability of the Indian people to complete a non-violent campaign. As The Times reported on 8th September 1921:

> Mr. Gandhi preaches non-co-operation to the mob, the Ali brothers talk to the Mahommedans about the woes of Turkey. Mr. Gandhi professes to be disconcerted when his dupes translate non-co-operation into terms of violence, but what has he to say when he discovers that primitive Mahommedans, when once influenced by "incendiary propaganda" forget about Turkey and start killing Hindus?[53]

It was obviously impossible to appeal to the religious fervour of the "primitive" people and expect them to remain non-violent. It was also rather absurd on Gandhi's part to believe that he could.

Following the criticism directed at them over their apology, the Ali brothers were anxious to re-establish their position as leaders among the Muslims. Some accused the Ali brothers of cowardice and although they protested, as Mahomed Ali did in the Presidential Address at the Karachi Conference in July 1921, when he said:

> Regarding the so-called statement (apology or whatever you call it) I wish to say that it was primarily meant for the public.... I want you to understand that the apology is meant for you. We can never apologise to the Government.[54]

they were not believed. Later, a letter dated 23rd July was intercepted between Mahomed Ali and Dr. Abdul Hamid Said of Rome which expanded this point, and claiming that Gandhi had not been told by Reading that the brothers were likely to be arrested. The statement of regret was not made to avoid prosecution but to allay Hindu suspicions and to prove to Gandhi that they accepted his leadership.[55] The whole letter has a hint of desperation to be believed, the explanation becoming long and involved. It could not be denied that the Government had achieved a success and the Hindu-Muslim alliance had revealed a weakness. Reading noted on 14th July that Mahomed Ali, in particular, was very angry, and was expressing that anger by making speeches against the Viceroy. Reading was ignoring these as unimportant.[56] Some of the speeches were further upsetting Ali's own followers, and the Hindu members of the alliance, as they were rather wild and high-handed. There was great activity among the Khilafat movement in an attempt to arouse unity, and this was directed mainly at British attitudes to the Khilafat.

For a while, it seemed that the needs of the Ali brothers to re-establish themselves by some decisive action, and the need of Gandhi to retain the Hindu-Muslim alliance would draw Gandhi into accepting violence However, Reading discounted this possibility, as the essence of the movement was non-violent.[57]

Meanwhile, both Reading and Montagu continued to be concerned about the Turkish situation. Reading's letters and telegrams continued to emphasise the effect the unresolved peace talks were having on India. Most notable of these is a long letter written on 11th June to the Secretary of State expressing concern about a proposed change in Cabinet policy. Reading believed that the change would nullify the favourable results he had achieved, and that it would be seen by Hindus and Muslims

as yet another attack by Western people upon the Eastern people, an attempt by Christians to destroy Muslims. As such, it would "fill the crack" so recently achieved by the Ali brothers' apology.[58]

Montagu also kept up pressure at home, so much that "people think that it is an idiosyncracy of my own".[59] In the same letter to Reading on 19th July, Montagu suggested that Reading might like to appeal to the Prime Minister as an old and valued friend; "I know how much he values your opinion, and he is inclined to think that I overstate the case". Montagu felt that Lloyd George owed it to Reading to support him, as Reading had taken on such a difficult job.

At the end of July the Ali brothers issued a further inflammatory statement published in The Independent:

> ...in the present circumstances the Holy Shariat forbids every Muslim to serve or enlist himself in the British Army or to raise recruits for it ...it is incumbent on all ulama in particular to carry this religious commandment to every Muslim soldier in the British Indian Army.[60]

This passage contravened the statement issued by the Viceroy on 30th May, detailing what he would regard as breaches of the law. Thus the Ali brothers had committed a criminal offence. There were immediate demands for the arrest of the two Muslims, but the action they took was very necessary to the Muslim leaders. Following accusations of cowardice they were obliged to court arrest in order to prove their 'bravery'. Even Gandhi was forced to concede that the steps were necessary, thus partly condoning the subversion of the military. Nevertheless, an analysis of reported attempts to tamper with troops shows thirty cases in 1920, eighty-two cases in 1921 and fifty-nine cases in 1922, a total of one hundred and seventy-one cases. Reading wrote to the Secretary of State on 22nd January 1923, "There is no evidence to show that any great

harm was being done ... it is believed that the main bulk of Mahomedan soldiers are not interested enough in the Khilafat matters to be adversely affected."[61]

Pressure for the arrest of the Ali brothers from within India came particularly from the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Lloyd, an outspoken critic of much of Reading's work. He later accused Reading of bringing further trouble to India by delaying the arrest of Gandhi, although as we shall see, he was partly responsible for that delay. Lloyd wrote to Reading on 22nd July about the subversive statement:

> I do not see myself how I can properly allow statements of this character to be made and remain passive, nor do I see how I could justify my position hereafter if I did so.[62]

Reading also felt that the Ali brothers had now gone beyond the acceptable limits, and he agreed to their arrest on 29th August when he wrote to the Secretary of State that the Ali brothers and five of their associates in Bombay would be arrested for forbidding Muslims to join the army.[63]

Further time elapsed when Lloyd himself requested a delay. In a telegram to London Reading wrote, "Ali brothers, Lloyd's view postponing arrest till after September 13th, when Mahomedan holidays expire ....This delay is regrettable, but he must judge".[64] After that date, Reading emphasised, there was to be no further delay. It is important to note that, at this stage, August 1921, it was Lloyd who advocated the 'continued freedom of Gandhi, who seemed to be courting arrest.' Lloyd wrote, "I want him left alone to accomplish his failure in the face of the public".[65] Again, when this led to increased trouble, especially with regard to the visit of the Prince of Wales during the winter of 1921 to 1922, Lloyd placed all the blame for the non-arrest of Gandhi on Reading.

The arrest was duly carried out without the expected violence. It seemed the earlier tactics of delay were to be beneficial. Reading, while not jubilant, allowed himself a hint of optimism in his report to Montagu:

> I do not wish, however, to draw hasty inferences. We must wait awhile before we can gauge future intentions of the Khilafat extremists or non-co-operators. My impression is that the arrests have created a good effect.[66]

So, it seemed that the Hindu-Muslim alliance was in serious difficulties by the summer of 1921, partly, but not totally, due to the efforts of Reading to split the alliance. The Ali brothers, with their inflammatory statements, such as those stating their support for the proposed invasion of the Amir of Afghanistan into India to remove the British, had also alienated many Hindus who had no more desire to live under Muslim rule than under that of the Raj. In the report on the moral and material progress of India in 1921 it is recorded:

> The Hindu-Muslim unity to which he [Gandhi] attached so much importance, and for which he demanded so many sacrifices, seemed to be on the point of crumbling....A large section of Hindus was being alienated from the non-co-operation movement by the manifest religious intolerance and Pan-Islamic aims of its extreme Mussalmen supporters.[67]

As we have seen, the use of religious imagery to inflame the masses could lead to trouble, as it did in Malabar in the summer and autumn of 1921. The only way to motivate the masses effectively was through the use of their religion. This, in its turn, heightened religious awareness and was bound to lead to conflict.

As has already been mentioned, some critics of Reading believed that it was his policy of allowing the continued freedom of the Ali brothers

which caused the problem. There had, however, been trouble in Malabar for many years. A number of reasons have been suggested for this. Since British rule there had been thirty-five serious incidents of communalism. The Muslims in the area numbered 953,381 in a total population of 3,015,119,[68] and were particularly fanatical. They also felt themselves isolated in Southern India, and, due to the high rate of illiteracy, particularly vulnerable to domination by Hindus and Christians.

Conrad Wood argues that one of the primary causes of these outbreaks was the resentment felt by tenant farmers in the Ernad and Walluvanad taluks towards Hindu landlords whose position was being protected by various British land tenure acts.[69] Stephen Dale agrees, pointing out that the attacks represented the continuation of the Moplah challenge to the economic and social power of the upper castes and the political authority of the Raj.[70] However, Roland Miller, while accepting that Moplah resentment of the British was a basic element, also identifies other aspects, notably religious fanaticism, born of anger and anxiety. He argues that the Moplah society had barely been disturbed by the collapse of the Moghul Empire. It was a closed community which avoided being a ghetto only because the Moplahs used the Malayayan language of Malabar, and because of their residential patterns and the need for commercial social intercourse.[71] Their isolation continued until the end of the First World War.

During 1921, Moplah fanaticism was increased by the arrival of Khilafat agitators. The Khilafat movement brought Islamic concerns directly to the centre of Moplah preoccupations at the Manjeri Conference of the Kerala Congress on 28th April 1920, and it became the immediate cause of the rebellion. Conrad Wood suggests that the idea of the invincibility of the Turkish Empire against a Christian power became

an article of faith for the Moplahs, who believed it would lead to the removal of British power in India.[72] Stephen Dale argues that the rebellion was a genuine revolt; an attempt to establish an Islamic state in southern India.[73]

The seriousness of the incident was acknowledged by the Government White Paper, Details of the Moplah Rebellions between 24th August and 6th December, in a paper prepared by the Madras Publicity Board, called Malabar and the Moplahs:

> There have been many Moplah outbreaks in the past. But the present one is different from all that have preceded it in its wide extent and evidence of systematic preparation and organization.[74]

However, the Raj contributed in two ways to the seriousness of the incident. In the first half of 1921, troops garrisoned at Malappuram were withdrawn, which suggested to the Moplahs that the war had weakened the British. The danger of this impression being given had been pointed out by various British officials in the area, notably G.W.Dance, the Collector, and R.H.Hitchcock, the Superintendent of Police.

Secondly, as signs of excitement, notably the raising of the Khilafat flag and the wearing of insignia, increased among the Moplahs, the British moved more troops into the area. Police repression exacerbated the problem, and provided the opening event of the rebellion.

Trouble began on 22nd August when it was reported that the District Magistrate and the police had tried to make arrests in Tirur, but had been attacked, resulting in two casualties and two persons missing. By 24th the District Magistrate had been forced to withdraw to Calicut, and to ask for martial law to be imposed. However, there had been hints of the

depth of the discontent as early as May, when communal tension in the area began to increase. On 31st May, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State:

> Somewhat to the detriment of Gandhi's propaganda the Khilafat movement assumed definitely [sic] religious aspect in Malabar.[75]

The main protaganists were the Moplahs, described by Rushbrook-Williams in his report on the moral and material progress of India as:

> Fanatical Muslims, poor and ignorant - under the thumb of a bigotted priesthood, they are prone to sudden waves of religious mania, which inspires with the simple desire to win the Martyr's crown after killing as many non-Muslims as possible.[76]

Victor Trench described the rebellion as a "bloodthirsty campaign of murder, arson, looting and incendiarism",[77] and Willingdon himself was a great critic of the Government's handling of the affair. As we have seen, he placed the blame squarely on Reading's policy, which allowed agitators to remain free and stir up an excitable race. On 22nd August he wrote to the Viceroy:

> But there can be no doubt that non-co-operators have been busily working quietly and stirring up the feelings of these people on the Khilafat question, and the result is the postition today.[78]

Willingdon also wrote to the Commander-in-Chief in the same vein shortly after. He emphasised his opinion that the non-co-operation campaign was causing indiscipline. However, he did acknowledge that the Government's plan of campaign was not a new one, and bemoaned the fact that India had not been properly governed for two years. He was concerned that the governing of India had been handed to Gandhi.[79] Rawlinson replied that he thought that this policy of delay was due to Reading's legal training which inculcated compromise or settlement by agreement. He tried to

persuade Willingdon that it was best to allow the Viceroy to try his own methods first, and he added, "I do not think it has done much harm".[80] Nevertheless, Willingdon's fears were real, and, in some ways, justified.

Further concern was caused by the news that volunteers were being enrolled, dressed in uniform and drilled, although the accuracy of this was later questioned. It seemed likely that the leaders of the Khilafat movement recognised how dangerous this would be. Later it was difficult to find concrete evidence of this drilling, and Reading was not unduly concerned:

> As regards the drilling on the part of the Moplahs, it is difficult to get at the facts, but our information does not suggest that it was on an extensive scale.[81]

While Reading wished to take stern action against the Moplahs, he understood that the communal tensions could only benefit him by revealing the weaknesses in the Hindu-Muslim alliance. Naturally, he would have preferred there to be no trouble, but if trouble did occur it could be used as propaganda to the Raj's benefit. He must have expressed some of these ideas to his wife's secretary, Yvonne Fitzroy, as she wrote to her father on 29th August:

> As to Moplah, H.E. seems to think it may do indirect good by showing all sincere non-co-operationists the inevitable result of their preaching on a fanatical and ignorant population, and equally the Moplahs themselves have helped by cutting the throats of so many Hindus.[82]

In any case, the position was a difficult one for the Government of India. The only way to put down the revolt was by the use of military forces, yet this step would take some explaining, both in India and at home.

The mainspring of the Moplahs campaign was the conversion, by

force or otherwise, of the Hindus to Islam. Women and children faced the additional risk of being carried off by the Moplahs. Conversion was itself risky, to repeat the Muslim creed meant a Hindu was regarded as apostate, it was a Muslims' duty to punish him with death if he reverted to Hinduism.

Trouble continued until 3rd September when the Moplah leader, Ali Musaliar, known as the Raja of Ernad, was arrested, and by the 5th H.M.S. Comus had arrived to relieve Calicut. At this point, anxious telegrams reached Reading from London demanding to know what action was being taken. There were demands in the media that the ringleaders, previously named by Reading, be arrested. The British Government expressed its concern on 26th September, and Reading was asked if more troops were necessary as isolated pockets of trouble continued to cause concern. The situation was worsened when some prisoners were moved in a luggage van in hot weather, and seventy out of one hundred died. Although the officer in charge was prosecuted for negligence, he was later acquitted. This increased anti-Government bitterness in the area, but Reading, somewhat tersely, refused the offer of more troops, saying it was the difficulty of the mountainous forest terrain, not shortage of manpower, that was causing the delay.

In answer to a question put in the Council of State to the Home Minister, Sir William Vincent, by Mr. H.D.Craik, on 15th September, an assessment of the damage was given. Twelve Europeans had been killed, and ten injured, although there were no figures for casualties among Hindus. Final assessment of structural damage was not complete, but four railway lines and two stations had been damaged, two post offices and two treasuries, containing 1 lakh 30,000 rs. cash and 4 lakhs of notes

had been looted and road telegraph links had been broken. This hardly seems to justify Trench's claim that "its ferocity and recklessness had no parallel in this century".[83]

Trench seems to have been influenced by Willingdon's own opinion of that the whole incident was unnecessary, as no doubt it was. Willingdon continued to protest to Reading that it was his action that had caused the trouble. Before the trouble started there had been persistent preaching in the Mosques about the wickedness of British peace terms with Turkey. Willingdon believed that the fact that these went unchallenged by the Raj helped to convince the Indian people that the Raj was dead or dying. Reading sent a conciliatory letter to Willingdon pointing out that the imminent arrest of the Ali brothers would help the situation, by removing the chief agitators.

In view of the Government of India's version of events, it seemed that Willingdon overreacted to the trouble. Communalism was a perennial problem in India, and this, while more serious because of its organisation, was only a local problem. The Moplahs attacked the Hindu landlords, using religious fanaticism as an excuse. No-one likes to have trouble on their own doorstep, and Willingdon obviously felt that the trouble on his doorstep was not of his making, so he therefore protested vehemently. Neither can all the blame be put on the Khilafat movement. Agriculturally the region was facing serious problems. Both famine and a failed monsoon contributed to discontent. This discontent was mishandled by the Government who did nothing in the area of agricultural reform and failed to recognise the seriousness of the original incident, which perhaps supports Willingdon's view that the Raj was seen as "dead or dying".

To Reading, the problem seemed only minor when viewed within the picture of the whole of India. Yet the initial picture created by the Government White Paper is misleading. It is impossible to find exact figures for the number of Hindu casualties, but certainly they were high. The Times of India estimated 200, The Pioneer suggested between 1,000 and 2,000. In view of the fact that the troubles disrupted the planting of crops, leading to food shortages and starvation later in the year, 10,000 is probably a conservative estimate. These shocking figures make Reading's handling of the situation seem rather callous. He did take a wider view of Indian political problems than Willingdon and he was able to understand the important benefits that the Government of India could gain from the trouble. There were benefits which were felt almost immediately, but was the cost too high? On 19th September Reading wrote to Willingdon that there were no reports of trouble following the arrest of the Ali brothers, due partly to their apology, "and more particularly to the attacks on Hindus in Malabar they have exhausted sympathy, except from extremists".[84]

The revolt also helped to improve the situation in Malabar, financially as funds were raised elsewhere for the relief of the area. Later, this money was used to set up permanent institutions to help the Moplahs. Some Hindus also began to question Gandhi's role in the affair when he was reported in the Indian press as saying that the Moplahs were provoked by the Government officials in the area. He expressed sympathy for the Muslims, action not likely to win him much support from those Hindus who feared communalism in their own areas.

Meanwhile, Gandhi faced problems elsewhere. Some Muslim members of the Khilafat movement, as we have seen, through Reading's correspondence, felt that Gandhi had betrayed their leaders, while members of his own party felt that the consultations with the Viceroy were

breaking the non-co-operation movement's policy. Gandhi did not regard the meetings in this way, but as a valid step in the maintenance of the Hindu-Muslim alliance, so vital to the eventual success of his plans. He had always said that he saw nothing wrong in presenting his case to an official, and that his approach to the Viceroy had fallen into that category.[35]

However, prominent Hindu politicians, such as Motilal Nehru, did not agree. Later in 1923, when Gandhi vehemently opposed council entry and continued to advocate the boycotting of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, the role of the original meeting must have been questioned. Even immediately after the meetings between Reading and Gandhi, Motilal Nehru wrote to Gandhi:

> Very serious questions affecting the whole movement arise for consideration. Indeed it seems to me that the whole principle of non-co-operation has been given away.[36]

The situation was doubly difficult as far as Gandhi was concerned because of the confidential nature of the meetings. Reading was determined to maintain that confidentiality, having no wish to be drawn into a public debate. Therefore, statements by the Ali brothers that their apology was not due to Government pressure could not be substantiated, thus limiting Gandhi's attempts to explain away his meetings. Not everyone, however, regarded Gandhi's lack of explanation as evidence of his guilt. Sarma, an Indian politician, told the newspaper editor, Durga Das:

> Don't you see he has failed to pull off a deal with Gandhi? He is a Jew. He does not want it to be said he parleyed with a rebel....He had to show that it was Gandhi who sought the interview, and that he scored over Gandhi by remarking that the interview was not entirely fruitless.[37]

Reading did see some benefits in the meetings, and felt that they could be resumed in the future if necessary, as he wrote to Montagu on 14th July 1921:

> I have always in mind that Gandhi is undoubtedly an enormous influence here, and that it might be necessary or desirable at some time in the future to see him again.[88]

Maybe Gandhi also hoped for further consultations, as we learn from Fitzroy's diary of 17th July that, having reached Simla, a place he was never expected to visit, Gandhi seemed reluctant to leave.[89]

However much criticism there was of Reading's policy, there is no escaping the fact that it was, at least partially, successful. During the summer of 1921 it became obvious that there was a subtle change in Gandhi's appeal to the masses. He concentrated on his social reform programme, and fund raising, and, in Reading's opinion, the cult of Gandhism was taking a strongly superstitious turn.[90]

During June 1921, traditionally a month of widespread political activity due to the lack of agricultural work, there was little political activity, a fact which pleased Reading, and gave him hope that Gandhi was losing influence. He wrote a reassuring letter to the King on 23rd June:

> He has dropped his old tack and has adopted a new one, with more social and economic motives, as yet he has achieved little success. Dissension has broken out among the non-co-operation movement.[91]

Although events after 1926 proved Reading wrong, events at the time certainly seem to indicate that Reading's assessment was accurate, at least in a political sense.

As a result of the criticism, and his lack of success in some areas, Gandhi became more vehement in his attacks on the Government. On 16th August Reading wrote:

> At the moment Gandhi is in a state of considerable irritation, owing to criticism of him regarding interviews with me. It is noticeable in the vehement tone of his articles and exaggerated statements of fact.[92]

However, Reading decided to ignore much of the vehemence, which was merely rhetoric repetition of familiar advice to soldiers and civilians to leave Government employment. He felt that if Gandhi's challenge was ignored it would not be a bombshell but a "squib",[93] resulting in further loss of face for Gandhi. To arrest Gandhi would leave the way open for a new and perhaps more radical leader, with the added advantage that a martyr was in prison.

Gandhi also urged those who did leave Government employ to abandon foreign cloth and wear homespun. Some did, so great was their devotion to the Mahatma. As Reading wrote to the King on 3rd November:

> It is a striking commentary upon the actual influence of Gandhi to make men of character leave their occupations; but it is perhaps not so surprising having regard to human nature,... that men should leave well paid and regular employment in order to take to weaving and webbing which is Gandhi's substitute.[94]

However, not everyone was impressed by the new campaign. C.F.Andrews protested about the burning of foreign cloth when so many Indian coolies were insufficiently clad. Gandhi believed the economic fallacy that destruction is the quickest way of stimulating production. Reading realised that Gandhi's boycott of foreign cloth and his advice to leave employment were doing the movement no good. In fact, the number of resignations from Government service were negligible, and the Economic Report published in August 1921 showed a slight increase in the amount of white cotton imported of 35 million yards, although grey and coloured cotton imports had fallen by 70 million yards.[95] It seemed to Reading that Gandhi's manifesto had fallen flat, and on 2nd November he wrote to the Secretary of State:

> I may be optimistic about this but the impression is gradually being produced on my mind that Gandhi has passed the high water mark of his popularity and is now in the ebb tide.[96]

In some ways that fact worried Reading. Gandhi had been a restraining influence on violent passions in India, and Reading felt that future agitators would blame Gandhi's lack of success on his belief in non-violence, thus supporting the possibility of effective violent action. Reading's policy, therefore, seems to have been one of patience and tolerance, allowing Indian politicians to make their own mistakes and thus bring about their downfall. In view of the relative peace which ensued after 1922 he regarded it as a successful policy, but others could, and did, look upon the increased incidence of communalism as a condemnation of that policy. Certainly, one cannot help feeling that the policy may have been successful as long as there was no violence.

As soon as violence did occur, as in Malabar, a sterner and more immediately successful policy was needed in order to prevent loss of life Yet, in the aftermath of the First World War, this was a time to avoid conflicts everywhere, and India was no exception.

Although Reading was optimistic, he did not wish to totally discount the possibility of further trouble; he appreciated that India's problems had not been solved during 1921, and that, until they were, non-co-operation, or some other form of political agitation, would remain.

Chapter Two; Reading and the Visit of the Prince of Wales. December 1921 - January 1922.

Gandhi was not yet completely defeated. He had made plans for the disruption of the visit of the Prince of Wales, anticipated in December 1921, which, while not completely successful, did show that he could still cause trouble.

The Prince had originally been expected to visit India in 1920 to inaugurate the new constitution, but ill health and an exhausting tour of Canada led to the cancellation of the visit. Both the Government at home and the Indian administration were therefore, anxious that the visit should go ahead in the winter of 1921-22. However, due to the activities of the non-co-operation movement in the early part of 1921 it was rumoured that the visit would be cancelled again. In April Willingdon wrote to the Viceroy warning him that the disturbed nature of the country would make the visit difficult:

> ... unless you perform a miracle this non-co-operation agitation will be in full force next cold weather and until you have got the country quieted down I feel it would be most undesirable to have the inevitable hartals and boycotting, which are sure to be set on foot.[1]

General Rawlinson was also concerned. He had heard from a colleague in London about the poor state of the Prince's health. He believed that the only way to guarantee a peaceful visit was to arrest Gandhi before the royal visit.[2] However, the Commander-in-Chief also felt the time was not opportune for arrest, as he recorded in his Journal on September 18th 1921:

> The Viceroy, rightly I think, insisted that the present was a most inopportune moment to put Ghandi [sic] in prison - To do so on top of the Ali Bros. would only be to push the Hindus and Muslims into each others arms. We want, of all things, to separate them.[3]

In view of the need to avoid pushing Hindu and Muslims together Rawlinson argued that the visit should be postponed. Also, he felt that the Prince of Wales was too valuable a person with whom to take risks. Only if the success of the visit could be guaranteed should it continue, in Rawlinson's view. He believed that there was only a 10 to 1 chance of success.[4]

King George V, however, was anxious for the visit to go ahead, and had personally asked Reading before his departure for India to assess the situation and, by June, to have reached a decision. By 3rd June Reading had made up his mind. He had considered several factors which could make the visit difficult or undesirable: the disturbed state of the country and the possibility of hartals and boycotts; the fact that some Indian Princes wished the visit to be cancelled for financial reasons; the financial problems of the Indian Government; and the fact that, following the visit in 1920 of the Duke of Connaught, a further royal visit might be unwise because the event might encourage Indians to expect large favours to be granted, as had been the custom of previous royal visits, but which were impossible in the aftermath of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. He finally concluded that the most important factor was the risk of hartals, but that to cancel the visit for that reason alone could be regarded as a success by the non-co-operation movement:

> No sufficient reason could be given for a further postponement except that the country is too disturbed. If this reason for postponement were given, non-co-operationists would regard it as a tremendous triumph.[5]

One further major consideration in favour of the visit taking place was that it had been promised, and should go ahead.

It was decided that the Prince should arrive in Bombay on 17th November 1921 unless the political situation deteriorated. In the view of Sir Algernon Rumbold the decision was a mistake.[6] In his view Gandhi regarded the visit as an insult to India. At home, however, the King and Lloyd George did not seriously believe there would be any genuinely hostile demonstrations although it was recognised that the Prince might be received with only a formal show of respect.[7]

The Prince was looking forward to the visit, although he was tired after his previous hectic tour of Canada. In his autobiography he wrote, "The East had always fascinated me".[8] However, he was a little apprehensive about Gandhi's potential, writing, "Would he try to spoil my show?!"

Within India preparations went ahead to receive the Prince. Reading was hopeful that the visit would achieve something for India. He met a delegation of Punjabi Muslims and, in answer to a question, said "I tell you, if India honours the Prince, Swaraj is within your grasp. The Prince would make his visit memorable".[9] This was a rash statement in view of the fact that the Cabinet were generally against any further changes in the Indian constitution, at least until the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms had been thoroughly tested. In fact, Reading, perhaps luckily for him, never had to explain why his statement had never been fulfilled.

Meanwhile, in Bombay, for two or three weeks before the Prince's arrival, posters and advertisements appeared urging Indians to boycott the visit. Nevertheless, for several days before the Royal visit, witnesses such as George Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay, and Lord Rawlinson, the Commander-in-Chief, reported that there were many people going into Bombay.

On the day of the Prince's arrival there were crowds of people in the city, although not all were there to greet the Prince.

The situation in Bombay was a difficult one. On the surface the visit seemed succesful, with the crowds giving the Prince a good welcome, as George Lloyd, the Governor, reported to the Viceroy:

> The crowds were immense and were continuous for 4½ miles. The cheering was also pretty continuous and the whole reception was really warm and enthusiastic.[10]

However, there were serious undercurrents as the hartal was partly successful. Crowds of non-co-operators met outside the city and when they heard of the crowds who had greeted the Prince they became angry. They took to the streets in violent demonstrations, setting fire to foreign cloth. Perhaps in the desire for dramatic effect, some authors, notably Victor Trench, have been inclined to exaggerate these incidents. Trench describes the Prince's visit as taking place, "amidst a bonfire blaze of foreign cloth and the blood orgy of class riots".[11]

In fact the trouble only started after the Prince had reached Government House, and the two groups, spectators and non-co-operators, clashed on their way home. The non-co-operators began to terrorize the loyal crowds in the back streets, welcoming the opportunity provided by the removal of the police and troops from those areas. A good impression was not provided in Britain the following day when the headlines read, "Prince lands in Bombay. Native riots"[12] giving a false impression of the Prince having to battle through hostile crowds. The disturbances, which continued with isolated incidents until the end of the visit, put a dampener on the Prince's tour.

However, by 24th December, when he departed from Bombay, the streets were densely packed and the Prince was joyfully received.

The Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State to reassure him that the trouble had not been serious:

> The disturbances that occured could not have been prevented by any human effort, but even these cannot minimise the effect of the wonderful and spontaneous demonstrations by the people.[13]

In a letter to her family, Yvonne Fitzroy, Lady Reading's secretary, emphasised that Reading was pleased with the visit to Bombay. In spite of bitter political feeling, the Prince had managed to make his charm felt and to do just the right thing.[14]

The All India Congress party had proclaimed that the hartal in Bombay would be repeated in all the major cities on the Royal itinerary, a prospect which worried Reading. However, the Viceroy had his own plans to try to ensure a welcome for the Prince should this prove necessary, although they were doomed to failure. The original idea came from Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the moderate Hindu leader, who suggested a conference to which Gandhi would be invited. In return he would stop the hartal threatened for the Prince's all important arrival in Calcutta. Reading telegraphed this idea to Montagu on 18th February, suggesting that trouble could possibly be prevented, although he suspected it might be too late to cancel the hartal. The conference would serve two purposes in Reading's opinion; it would ensure a suitable welcome for the Prince, and it would enable Reading to meet with the agitators to discuss their political programme, some of which he found difficult to understand. Since his arrival in India he had been anxious to meet in this way. After eight months of working with the constitutional reforms, he could see where improvements could be made, and this is what he wanted to discuss:

> At this moment I am not myself prepared to go further than say I can conceive proposals for amendments of the present Act with the object of improving the constitutional machinery and advancing on the road to the ultimate goal of Dominion status.[15]

One of these improvements would possibly have been to replace Dyarchy by full responsible self-government in the Provinces. This would certainly have been an improvement as Dyarchy had proved unwieldy and cumbersome, creating as many problems as it solved.

However, the Conference was not to be. Montagu refused to allow it. His objections were threefold; the members would need to be elected rather than just selected from those taking part in the hartals; the British Parliament would never agree; and the conference would achieve nothing without some idea of the end product.

Montagu was correct in thinking that some members of the British Parliament would not agree. A group of MPs, led by Austen Chamberlain, believed the reforms had gone far enough and expressed disgust at what they saw as an attempt to "buy a welcome" for the Prince. They felt that the situation was out of control and demanded some firm action by the Viceroy. Equally, Montagu did not like the idea of making bargains with non-co-operators; it would set a dangerous precedent for the future. Thus Reading's idea was abandoned. Montagu wrote to Reading:

> It appears to us that any idea of such a bargain would be most improper and certain to have unfortunate results in the future.[16]

In any case, Gandhi himself, in Reading's words, "put an end to the present discussion on the Conference," by his inflamatory writings published in Young India.[17]

The Prince of Wales continued his visit by going on to Allahabad at the beginning of December.

Here, the boycott was much more successful than it had been in Bombay, not so much due to loyalty to Gandhi as to the local hero, Jawaharlal Nehru. The Provincial Government probably made a big mistake when they arrested Nehru just before the Royal visit. The Prince of Wales described his arrival in Allahabad in his autobiography:

> When on the appointed day I emerged from the train, in full dress uniform, and started from the railway station in a State carriage, it was to be met in the native city by shuttered windows and ominous silence along the troop-lined, deserted streets. It was a spooky experience. I attempted to maintain a rigid and majestic pose in the carriage in order to show that I had risen above the insult. But curiosity got the better of me; and, peering up the empty side-streets. I was gratified to see, peeking furtively round the corners of the blocks the heads of many Indians.[18]

However, that afternoon a polo match had been organised, and the crowds, obviously thinking they had avenged Nehru's arrest, turned out to watch, laughing and cheering. Nevertheless, there was also a serious problem at the University, where the Prince was to present awards. The students were absent for the most part, although those who did attend were well behaved, in spite of being unable to get a meal due to a strike in the kitchen. The Prince was very upset by the incident. While he felt one could excuse the ignorant masses, who would follow their leader like sheep, he was distressed that educated people should ignore him. He wrote of his anger to the Viceroy:

> ...but I must say I was very angrey [sic] and felt insulted, when at the universities of Lucknow, Allahabad and Benares, practical ly all the students ... refused to meet me or attend university functions.[19]

Following the early boycott, the people of Allahabad did turn-out to greet the Prince on later occasions. On 19th December Harcourt Butler reported to the Viceroy that the Prince had had a splendid reception, but the damage had been done.[20] The Press in England featured the fact that the Prince had been ignored, and consequently damaged the sympathy towards India expressed by Liberal and Socialist groups.

After his apparent successes in Allahabad and Benares, Gandhi's requests for boycotts were ignored, and the tour continued without any other major incidents. At Poona, the Prince's visit was regarded as a personal triumph, which went a long way towards securing the success of the rest of the visit. It was important that he was well-received in Calcutta. In view of theevents of 1756 leading to the massacre of 123, as believed at the time, Calcutta held a special place in British public opinion, and a poor reception from the city would further antagonise those who remembered.

The Governor of Calcutta, Lord Konaldshay, held the opinion that the Prince's reception on Christmas Eve was comparable to the reception in Bombay, and better than expected, but he was concerned about deeper issues. He wrote to the Viceroy:

> On the surface the day has passed off so much better that I expected that I feel the surface appearance may be to some extent deceptive.[21]

Lord Rawlinson had, however, become convinced that the visit was a failure. He did not deny that the Prince's reception was good but he saw the real problem as being the boost the visit had given to Gandhi's movement. In his Journal on December 28th he wrote:

> At Bombay when the Prince arrived, really looked as if Ghandi [sic] was down and out, since then the issue of the strongly worded Govt. of India letter. urging the arrest of all who

> broke the law was hard on the assumption that Ghandi [sic] was on his last legs and that the arrest of his followers would crush the Non-co-operation movement altogether has had exactly the reverse effect.[22]

He made the same point in a letter to his friend, Lord Derby, emphasising that Government repression during the Royal visit had provided a new stimulus to Gandhi's movement.[23]

Rawlinson's view that the visit had failed is one shared by many commentators on the period. The Prince of Wales was himself initially very upset, as he felt the visit was a failure. This opinion is recoreded in a letter written on 16th December 1921 to his father, in which he wrote of his feelings that the tour was not 'doing a scrap of good'.[24] A few days later, on 28th December, he wrote to the Viceroy along similar lines:

> I feel sure that you will agree with me when I say that it is a great pleasure to work hard on a tour like this provided one can always feel that one is doing some good to the Empire, but it makes it desperately hard and a real worry and anxiety if one has a constant feeling that money and time are being wasted.[25]

In the same letter, he went on to express his concern that the tour which he suspected was going to be a failure, would be worse for the Empire in the long run than no tour at all. He later adopted a different point of view, but initial impressions are an important consideration and it was that initial impression which remained in many peoples' minds.

The Prince was also concerned about the security arrangements, which he regarded as excessive. In view of the trouble of the preceding months it was obvious that the security had to be watchful, but the Prince felt that the lines of soldiers and policemen along the roads were preventing the Indian masses from having any real contact with him.

The military lining the route were forced to face the crowds which meant they could not see the Prince themselves. Also the crowds were herded together like sheep. The Prince felt that in order for the tour to succeed it was necessary to take some risks. He wrote to the Viceroy on 28th December: "In my opinion, such severe police tactics can scarcely be conducive to encouraging even loyal natives to come and see me." [25]

As a result of this concern shown by the Prince, Reading decided that it might be possible to make some changes to the security arrangements as requested by the Prince. He wrote to all Governors on 12th January 1922 asking them to look at their security arrangements to see if they could be improved:

> I have assured him that you will make every effort to do away with too elaborate precautions. I suggest that whenever it is reasonably safe, i.e. where there is no special reason to anticipate trouble, a freer opportunity should be afforded to Indians of welcoming His Royal Highness.[26]

In theory, the non-violent, non-co-operation movement did not condone violence or assassination. However, some members of the movement had shown that they did not hold the same views. To try to decide where there was "no special reason to anticipate trouble" must have caused the Provincial Governors a great deal of anxiety.

The Prince had a further concern, the high cost of the tour. He was thoroughly disillusioned about the success of the tour and felt ashamed when he found that it had cost twenty-five thousand pounds plus many lakhs and rupees. Hough had written that the Prince's A.D.C. found it very hard to keep up the Prince's spirits in the face of the boycott and the violence, "The pomp and ceremony, Mountbatten reported, could not disguise the desperate poverty." [27]

Philip Zeigler makes a similar point when he notes a letter that Mountbatten wrote to Prince Albert on 25th January 1922 commenting on the Prince of Wales' depression, "David goes through his 'black' phases more often than ever now, poor chap." [25]

While the tour was seen as a failure by some of the participants and by the press according to reports like the one mentioned above, others did not agree. The Prince himself, as already stated, fundamentally changed his opinion. This change of view is best illustrated in two letters written within three weeks of each other. The first, written to the Secretary of State on 1st January 1922, is full of doubt and despondency. The Prince, reading newspaper reports of the success of his visit felt the people at home were being misled by descriptions of ceremonies and receptions, the success of which were hopelessly exaggerated. He went on to write, "They think my tour is a success; I must reluctantly tell you it is no such thing." [29]

As a result of this letter, both Montagu and Reading had sent reassuring letters, based on their evidence that the tour was a success. Montagu wrote on 1st February:

> And if I still have a lingering hope that you wrote to both me and to the Viceroy in a mood which reflects doubt and a characteristic underrating of the value of your own personal achievement it is because of the remarkable testimonies I have received in the opposite direction. [30]

Later in the same month the Viceroy also wrote a reassuring letter to the Prince. Reading emphasised the importance of the tour in the light of the political instability of India which made the country a more complex and difficult administrative problem than other countries within the Empire. He went on to write:

> Yet I remain strongly of the opinion that Your Royal Highness' visit is doing real good-infinitely more than you think - and I trust that events will convince you of this before you leave India.[31]

Even the Prime Minister sent a message of congratulations to the Prince in the form of a telegram, despatched in January 1922, in which he congratulated the Royal visitor on having reached the real heart of India. However, a better indication of the true state of India is given by the draft copy of that telegram, which is much longer than the final flattering message. The words edited out by the Prime Minister suggested that he was aware of the tension and trouble in India. The omitted words read:

> ... and this essential fact is but brought into greater relief by the discourtesies and disorders fostered by small minorities whose leaders have drawn upon themselves the condemnation of Indian and British alike throughout the Empire. The victory of your personality over these unavailing efforts has impressed yet more deeply upon the unfading memories which you leave behind.[32]

It is obvious therefore, that although Reading refused to acknowledge that there was any cause for concern, others were aware of the underlying tensions and the influence of agitators of the non-co-operation movement. However, it was important from Reading's point of view that the visit was seen as a success, as it was on his advice that it went ahead. Yet the Prince of Wales was conscious that all was not right in India. In his autobiography he wrote:

> Yet for all that, Gandhi's ominous shadow fell often across my path; and especially in the native sections of the swarming cities the struggle for the loyalty of the masses seemed to me to be a bidding match between the Government of India on the one hand and Gandhi on the other.[33]

However, without the agitation of the non-co-operators, crowds did turn out to welcome the Prince, suggesting that, left with a free choice Indians were basically loyal. Reading believed that this proved the tour to be a success, as he wrote to the Prince on 13th February:

> Whatever views you may hold regarding your visit, I do feel that you must be conscious of this fact - it has been proved that the heart of India is loyal to the Crown and that inspite of all attempts to spoil the effect of Your Royal Highness' presence in India - the vast majority of the people have been delighted to welcome you.[34]

In contrast to these letters which show the depression of the Prince of Wales and his uncertainty about the future of the Indian Empire, his letter to the Prime Minister on 20th January 1922 seems much more optimistic, a reversal of the Prince's opinion in December:

> I have met with such cordiality and goodwill on the part of the Princes and peoples of India during my travels that I am encouraged to hope the future of the Indian Empire will fully uphold the fine traditions of its past.[35]

Thus the Prince would seem to agree with the various Provincial Governors; who wrote to Reading describing the enthusiastic welcome the Prince had been given in their province; and with Reading himself, in believing the tour to have been a worthwhile exercise.

As to whether the tour could be described a success or a failure the truth is a little more complicated. It cannot justifiably be categorized as either, certain aspects were successful, particularly areas in which the Prince had contact with the Indian Princes, such as the opening of the Chamber of Princes in Delhi.

In her biography of the Countess of Mountbatten, M. Masson wrote that it was obvious that from the Indian point of view the Royal visit was not an unqualified success, but that the social aspects had been successful.[36]

However, one major criticism directed at the tour, and one which cannot be denied, is the failure of the Prince to make any real contact with the Indian masses. Although there were crowds to greet him, these were basically loyal Indians, the discontented groups boycotted all formal occasions. Noel Carrington, in his article, makes a fair conclusion:

> The Prince and the Mahatma had never met in person, but there could be little doubt which of them had come out top. What had the Prince seen of the real India?[37]

Nevertheless, in view of the political unrest in India, it is difficult to see how it could have been different. It seems the Prince himself acknowledged this problem, but, one must ask, what does any Royal visitor see of the real country? It is probable that expectations of the tour were too high, the Prince could not hope to achieve a reversal of Indian politics, especially as he had nothing new to offer the Nationalists. What he did achieve was valuable to those worried about the loyalty of India.

Reading, too, had learnt something from the visit. He must have begun to realise that his position was to become more difficult. He had gone to India with high hopes of working with the Liberal reform programme, the principles of which he was committed to. Now it seemed that any attempts at further liberalism on his part were to be blocked by a predominantly Conservative British Parliament.

He was disappointed, especially because he believed he could have achieved something, and one can detect bitterness, when, writing to George Lloyd on 18th February, he dismissed all thoughts of a conference; "Do not let suggestions regarding conference [sic] trouble your mind. I have no idea of it".[34] From this point on, Reading was to feel increasingly constrained by London, both in his dealings with the non-co-operation movement and in his administration of the reforms scheme.

As in many of his dealings with the Indian Nationalist movement, Reading seems to dismiss unrest as unimportant. The same view was not shared by the politicians in London, nor by some of Reading's advisors in India. The Commander in Chief and some of the Provincial Governors, such as Willingdon, were, for example, convinced that India was too disturbed for a Royal tour. This apparent naivety about the situation in India gave rise to criticism for the Viceroy. Reading believed that the visit of the Prince of Wales would serve a useful purpose in India and he seems to have been prepared to take risks.

Neither British politicians such as Montagu nor later commentators on the Viceroyalty, such as R.J. Moore seem to have been convinced that Reading's methods were suitable, yet it is difficult to see how there could have been any alternative. That being the case, Reading's attitude is understandable.

Chapter Three; Reading and the Arrest of Gandhi

January - April 1922.

As the British Government became predominantly Conservative in composition when conflict between High Toryism and Liberal reformers forced Liberal members of the Cabinet, like Barnes and Addison, to resign, so its attitude to the Indian Reform programme changed. As mentioned above this became obvious to Reading during the latter months of the visit of the Prince of Wales. The move to Conservatism by the Peacetime Coalition meant there was much criticism of former liberal policies, particularly over the handling of Gandhi. The change was also noted by others involved in Indian affairs. For example Lord Rawlinson, the Commander-in-Chief, commented on the hardening of the attitude of the British Government in his Journal on July 28th:

> It is clear that since LG's speech in the house in Feby. last, and the departure of Montague [sic] the attitude of the Cabinet has much stiffened in regard to India.'

This was a difficult change for Reading to accept. He believed he had been given, by the Secretary of State, the right to determine his own policies for India, especially with regard to the handling of Gandhi. Increasingly anxious telegrams from London show this was not true.

Evidence of the British Government's desire to influence Reading is provided by a series of letters and telegrams. These started even before the Prince of Wales' visit and came right from the top. Lloyd George wrote to the Viceroy on 21st October 1921, expressing his view that the time for patience and tolerance had passed, especially when attacks were being made upon the very foundations of Government. He felt that this problem was particularly serious in view of the fact that those Indians who were working with the Reforms must wonder who was the real power in the Raj, Gandhi or Reading.

Lloyd George went on to write;

> The British Empire is passing through a very critical phase; and it will not survive unless it shows now, in the most unmistakeable fashion that it has the will and power to stand by its policies and to deal conclusively with any who challenge its authority.[1]

In a House of Lords debate on 25th October, Lord Sydenham spoke along similar lines, expressing his sympathy for those in India who were being subjected to Gandhi's campaign. He argued that Britain's only justification for being in India was her ability to maintain law and order, and that if the British were failing to fulfil this function they should leave. He asked for evidence that the Government of India was acting in support of law and order.[3] Support for Reading came from a somewhat unexpected quarter - Lord Curzon. Curzon held Reading in high regard and the respect was returned. As an ex-Viceroy, Curzon also understood only too well the problems that could be caused by interference from the Government at Home.[4] In reply to Lord Sydenham's speech, Curzon emphasized, in his own speech, the need for a degree of independence on the part of the Government of India;

> But at this moment, in the circumstances which I have described for your Lordships, even by implication, to interfere or to dictate, or even to suggest to the Viceroy and his Council that they ought to take this or that action, with the imperfect information at our disposal and at this great distance of space would be undesirable or unwise.[5]

Meanwhile, in India, the question of Gandhi's arrest had already been carefully considered by the Viceroy and his Council, and by the Provincial Governors. At the time of the arrest of the Ali brothers, correspondence mentioned above shows George Lloyd was anxious that Gandhi be left free in order to emphasise his failure in public.

In any case, at this stage, Gandhi had committed no great criminal offence; his campaign had largely been a vocal one, urging non-co-operation, not civil disobedience. Reading agreed to Lloyd's request on the understanding that Gandhi's continued freedom depended on there being no change in the nature of his campaign, such as tampering with the armed forces or the police. He was prepared to accept that hartals were a legitimate form of expressing grievances, but he realised that the line had to be drawn somewhere, as he explained to Lloyd on 29th August 1921:

> Again, respect for law and authority must be enforced, particularly now Government has been extremely tolerant, but it must not let it be thought that just as hartals etc., happen as part of the non-co-operation movement, so seduction of soldiers and police can be added with impunity. [6]

Reading understood that to arrest Gandhi at this point might cause a violent reaction, and he wanted to choose his time carefully. The Viceroy, along with other officials in India, was aware that as long as Gandhi's campaign was having little success, there was always the possibility that he would try to make himself a martyr by courting arrest. Lord Rawlinson mentioned this possibility in a letter to Willingdon on 29th August, when he wrote:

> I am inclined to think he will play the martyr and comit [sic] himself quite soon for that purpose, for politically he is in the soup. He has made too many Himalayan Errors + he knows it. [7]

Similarly, Reading commented in a letter to the Secretary of State on 17th July; "I see the possibility of Gandhi's bombshell becoming a squib." [8] This was especially true if Gandhi's challenge to the Government was ignored.

In July and August 1921 this was possible as there was nothing new in Gandhi's exhortations to the non-co-operation movement, simply the repetition of familiar advice to soldiers and civilians to leave Government employment. Consequently, a calculated decision was taken by the Viceroy and his Council on 18th September, to allow Gandhi to remain free, as recorded in Rawlinson's Journal:

> The Viceroy, rightly I think, insisted that the present was a most inopportune moment to put Ghandi [sic] in prison - To do so on top of the Ali Bros. would only be to push Hindus and Muslims into each others arms.[9]

Rawlinson went on to comment that Reading fully recognised that the eventual arrest of Gandhi would be necessary but that "we want to catch him on a really good issue," in order to be certain of a conviction.[10]

However, for a while after the arrest of the Ali brothers it seemed likely that the Government of India would be unable to delay the arrest of Gandhi. It quickly became obvious that Gandhi wanted to be arrested. The fact that the Ali brothers were in prison and he was free did nothing for Gandhi's popularity, and so he began to court arrest by threatening to enter the martial law area of Waziristan, on the Afghan border. Reading was concerned when he realised what was behind Gandhi's actions. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 15th September, emphasising the problem:

> ...he may possibly court arrest in order to show that he is solidly with Mahomed Ali and thus try to bridge over the rifts that have occurred in consequence of the Moplah disturbances between the Mahomedans and the Hindus."

Gandhi's campaign included the signing of a manifesto declaring that it was contrary to national dignity for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and, more especially, as a soldier.

This manifesto had little effect, and few Indians left Government service. Nevertheless, it was necessary to decide what action should be taken against Gandhi, as the document could be considered seditious. On 9th October, Rawlinson recorded in a letter to Clive Wigram:

> It is practically certain that we shall decide tomorrow to arrest Mr Ghandi [sic] [12]

However, in view of the Prince of Wales' imminent visit, the timing was not ideal.

Consequently, the decision was taken not to arrest Gandhi. Although there were a number of vague factors in favour of the arrest in October, no one reason seemed concrete enough to justify the arrest of Gandhi. Issues that were considered by the assembly included the effect inaction was having on moderate Indian opinion, which saw this as weakness, and the impression given by the Ali Brothers' arrest that the Muslims were being persecuted. Also considered were such factors as the time of year and the start of the cold season, and the possibility that if no action was taken discontent might spread. Although all important considerations, they depended on emotions rather than hard facts.

In contrast the points in favour of non-arrest at this time seemed much more concrete to those considering the problem. For example, the fact that Gandhi's programme was not really successful meant that his continued freedom would serve to emphasise his failure, resulting in loss of influence. The breakaway from the non-co-operation movement by the Muslims, caused by the arrest of the Ali brothers, and by the intellectuals due to outbreaks of violence, was a valuable lever that might be lost if the arrest of Gandhi resulted in a closing of Indian nationalist ranks, and this had to be considered.

There was also the possibility that Gandhi would become a national hero if he were to be jailed, causing greater unrest and disorder for the visit of the Prince of Wales. Finally the possibility of the revision of the Treaty of Sèvres would further split Gandhi's supporters by pacifying the Muslims.

It was the threat of disturbances during the royal visit which finally decided the question. If the visit was postponed, in the opinion of Sir William Vincent, the Home Member, the arrest of Gandhi should take place immediately. The visit went ahead, and Gandhi remained free.

Reading believed that Gandhi's continued freedom was essential to the internal peace of India, as his role as leader and controller of the non-co-operation movement was vital. The Viceroy telegraphed his view to the Secretary of State on 5th November:

> Gandhi is the appointed dictator and can do as he pleases. If he is arrested another will take his place and carry on in Gandhi's name with the additional stimulus that Gandhi, the saint, is in prison.[13]

A major factor for consideration before any decision could be taken to arrest Gandhi was the attitude of the moderates. The Government needed to retain moderate support, and although some were becoming anxious over the apparent inaction of the Government, others held Gandhi in high esteem, regardless of his methods of protest. Popular veneration for Gandhi from such different sections of society made any decision to arrest him a difficult one.

Nevertheless, the demands for Gandhi's arrest continued. On 9th November 1921 Sir William Davison, former legal advisor to the Foreign Office, tabled a Commons' question for the Secretary of State. He asked:

> ...the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the seditious speech which has been made by Mr. Gandhi at Delhi, in which he urged civil revolution and non-co-operation on the part of the soldiers and all Government officials; and whether he will ascertain from the Indian Government and inform the House why no proceedings have been taken against Mr Gandhi who has repeatedly made use of the same seditious expressions as those for which the Ali brothers have recently been prosecuted and convicted.[14]

Luckily, from Reading's point of view, Montagu was able to persuade Davison to withdraw the question, on the grounds that to say anything publically would be detrimental to Indian security. In the view of the Secretary of State the British public were reading about the problems caused by Gandhi for the visit of the Prince of Wales, and were becoming angry. On 26th January 1922 Montagu wrote to Reading explaining that, in his experience, some members of the public believed that the Prince had been insulted by India, and particularly by Gandhi. They wanted his arrest and could not understand the delay.[15] Even Reading's Liberal friends in the Cabinet began to question the direction of his policy. Montagu summed up their worries in a letter to Reading in his letter of 26th January 1922:

> You are, of course, aware that public opinion here is becoming, even in the circles most favourable to the Government and in Cabinet itself, more and more perplexed by non arrest [sic] of Gandhi.[16]

Within India, too, there was pressure from various Provincial Governors for action, most particularly from George Lloyd, Sir Harcourt Butler and Lord Willingdon. Following his expression of the belief that Gandhi should be allowed to fail in public,

Lloyd seems to have changed his mind, becoming concerned that Gandhi's plans must inevitably lead to violence, and that he should, therefore, be prevented from continuing. Lloyd wrote to the Viceroy on 7th January:

> The essetial point is that if the present policy of Gandhi is allowed to continue unchecked; it will create a situation ending inevitably in violence in which Gandhi could not control even should he wish to do so.[34]

Reading replied on 10th January pointing out that he believed it would be a tactical error to arrest Gandhi at that point, as he had committed no new crimes. He argued that arrest would only antagonise the moderates and might cause the one thing that Lloyd had been anxious to avoid; the fusion of moderates and extremists.[18]

Butler also complained that the action his Provincial Government was taking against non-co-operation could do no good while Gandhi was left free to recruit new members and direct fresh action. Francis Watson suggests that Willingdon, too, criticised the Viceroy in letters to London and to his fellow Governors.[19] Among his correspondents was Lord Rawlinson, to whom he wrote on 25th January 1921:

> I have always said that this campaign ought to have been stopped at once. But I sincerely feel that for over 2 years we, i.e. the Govt. of India have refused to govern, but have allowed Gandhi and his top friends to go about doing what they like, leaving us, the local Govts., to deal with the smaller fry.[20]

In August 1921 Rawlinson seems to have supported Willingdon. In his reply he wrote that he agreed that action should have been taken against Gandhi.

Yet once the question was discussed in the Legislative Assembly, Rawlinson became convinced, as mentioned above, that the decision to delay was the correct one.[21]

Reading ignored all the advice and pressure. He was determined, however much he was criticised by those who thought him weak and indecisive, to wait until he was ready. Mark Bence-Jones wrote that there were those who hoped the new Viceroy was going to take a strong line and that this group now began to feel disappointed.[22] B.R.Nanda also commented on the anti-Semitic view held by some politicians, that India was being lost because it was in the hands of two Jews.[23] H.M.Hyde maintained that Reading did allow criticism to force his hand when he finally agreed to Gandhi's arrest.[24] However, the truth is much more complex. Reading did make plans to arrest Gandhi at the beginning of 1922, but these were only implemented after many delays, during which time Gandhi's influence increasingly declined. The fact that the arrest was carried out without violent reaction would seem to indicate that the time chosen by Reading was the best, but whether this owed more to luck than to planning is difficult to decide. Certainly the mistakes Gandhi made, for example, promising 'Swaraj in one year', could not have been anticipated by Reading, who could not have hoped to delay indefinitely. Perhaps the well trained legal brain was quick to seize on the mistakes of others, as any good barrister must do.

Gandhi finally, and not without some doubts, decided to launch a campaign of Civil Disobedience. He had tried constantly to prepare the Indian masses for a non-violent campaign,

but he accepted that to launch such a campaign would mean an end to all Governmental control in the area chosen. In November 1921 Gandhi described civil disobedience thus:

> Mass civil disobedience is like an earthquake. Where the reign of mass civil disobedience begins, there the subsisting Government ceases to exist.[24]

One area of Gujarat informed Gandhi that all preparations for a civil disobedience campaign had been made. The form of the disobedience was to be a refusal to pay land taxes. Gandhi visited the area in January 1922, and found that the people were deeply committed to the campaign. However, Reading felt that Gandhi was unwilling to start the campaign. He was sure that Gandhi did not want to use his final weapon and that he must realise that violence was inevitable once the campaign had started, regardless of what he might preach.[25]

In many ways it was a mistake on the part of Gandhi to allow such a campaign to begin. His non-violent movement, as we have seen, was beginning to break up, as the Muslims in Malabar became more violent, and moderate Hindu opinion was alienated by the threat to law and order. Perhaps Gandhi hoped to strengthen the alliance by taking such a step; certainly Muslims were demanding more aggressive action. Nevertheless, the importance for the Government of the Bardoli campaign soon became obvious. On 1st February, Reading wrote to Montagu:

> Partly as a result of Gandhi's attitude at the Bombay conference, and partly from fear of the consequence of civil disobedience, moderate opinion in the country has steadied.[26]

In a letter the following day to the King, Reading expanded on this theme: "I cannot but think it will rally to the Government the support of a large majority of the thinking people of the country."[27]

Moderate Indian opinion, such as that represented by Sapru, certainly felt strongly about the dangers inherent in the launching of a campaign aimed at breaking down law and order. Sapru wrote to Reading on 13th February asking the Government to exploit their moral advantage over Gandhi by emphasising the dangers to law and order of the civil disobedience campaign.[28] At home, too, Montagu became aware that there had been a swing in public opinion. On 11th February he wrote again urging Reading to take action while he had the advantage. This was, perhaps, just the moment Reading had been waiting for, - a weakness in the opposition of which he could take advantage.[29] In January 1922, in answer to pressure from the British Government, he had suggested that there were no concrete grounds for prosecution and that public opinion would believe the arrest was purely due to the failure to arrange a conference over the Prince of Wales' visit, a failure for which Gandhi was being blamed. Reading believed that Gandhi was requesting a conference in order to gain time and delay the use of civil disobedience:

> The only thing that will safely give him the time he requires without in the least injuring his position in public estimation is a conference; because as long as it is under discussion or being held, Government cannot touch him without putting themselves in the wrong; if it fails he can easily lay the blame on Government and if it succeeds he has won without firing a shot.[30]

However, the declaration of civil disobedience campaign, which was obviously being planned, according to police reports, would provide the charges needed to secure a prosecution. The essential weakness in Gandhi's position, Reading believed, had been displayed. He wrote to the Secretary of State with a hint of jublilation, on 14th February:

> I have always, as you are aware,
> thought civil disobedience the best
> battleground for us, and particularly
> this year when the crops are good.[31]

He also pointed out that there was an acute division in the ranks of the non-co-operators. This division was further widened by two related events. The first of these was the outbreak of violence at Chauri-Chaura in which twenty-two policemen were burnt alive by rioting crowds. This was the most serious of a number of violent outbreaks throughout the country, and it greatly distressed Gandhi. He decided he was no longer in a position to lead a campaign in which his principles were under threat. Therefore, he suspended the civil disobedience campaign to the dismay of his followers. To them it seemed like a retreat. The Nehrus had believed that the launching of the civil disobedience campaign was to be the final assault on the Raj. Jawaharlal Nehru explained his feelings:

> Must we train three hundred and odd
> millions in the theory and practice of
> non-violent action before we could go
> forward.[32]

At the same time he also wrote a letter to Gandhi that was so cold that it was described by Gandhi as a 'freezing dose'. Even Gandhi's personal secretary, Mahadev Desai, was shocked by the cancellation, describing himself as 'absolutely unhinged'. Lajpat Rai, one of the Hindu representatives who met with Gandhi and the Muslims on 22nd March 1920 to plan the non-co-operation campaign, wrote in a circular letter; "Our defeat is in proportion to the greatness of our leader....Mahatmaji pitched his standards too high." [33]

Gandhi tried to explain his actions. In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru dated 19th February he wrote:

> I assure you that if the thing had not been suspended we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle, but essentially a violent struggle.... The cause will prosper by this retreat.[33]

Equally angry over the cancellation of the campaign were the Muslims. Violence did not upset them in the same way as it did the Hindu members of the non-co-operation movement; they could see no good reason for the cancellation and they felt betrayed. The communal alliance disintegrated and tension between the two communities reappeared. Long - suppressed feelings of antagonism could no longer be controlled and there were some Hindu-Muslim clashes which further served to alienate moderate Hindu opinion. However the Government, and particularly Reading, were pleased to see these signs of disintegration, although they would naturally have preferred there to be no violence at all. In a letter to the King on 2nd February Reading had argued that Gandhi's frequent changes of direction were losing him support as a political leader.[34] Reading credited this apparent indecisiveness to the fact that Gandhi could see the possibility of failure. If the civil disobedience campaign should fail at this early stage, that method of protest would have less impact in the future.

Nevertheless, Reading continued to delay until 10th March when Gandhi was finally arrested following the formal declaration of a civil disobedience campaign in Bardoli. Ironically it was the same day as Sir Edwin Montagu, a popular figure to Indian politicians, was forced to resign. There were no riots or disturbances associated with the arrest, which would seem to indicate that thetime chosen was right. Reading believed this was due to the weakness and failures Gandhi had displayed.

By toying with civil disobedience Gandhi alienated many of his supporters and was in fact, arrested as he slipped downhill towards obscurity and failure. Other onlookers at the time commented on the skill of the timing. Sir William Vincent, the Home Member wrote, via the Viceroy, to his friend Lloyd Evans, on 22nd March:

> ...apathy everywhere displayed during trial and sentence of Gandhi proves that Government [sic] of India chose the right moment. During last two, three weeks non-co-operation seems dwindling as though withered at roots.[35]

Other people made comments along similar lines. Lord Rawlinson greeted the arrest as a success because it caused no trouble and also because trade between India and Britain had, in his opinion, improved as a result of the arrest. Investors had been unwilling to consider India during the unrest. Economic problems in India were serious in 1921 and '22 and Rawlinson thought that one of the areas hardest hit by economic recession was the military budget.[36] Yet, from his point of view, financial considerations were of vital importance, as the military had an essential role to play in the maintenance of internal order. He believed that the arrest of Gandhi provided at least a partial solution on both counts. Lord Stamfordham also wrote saying how pleased the King was that the arrest had taken place without protest.[37]

Reading later claimed that the calm reaction to the arrest was due to his careful planning, but initially even he was surprised by the lack of trouble. Immediately after the arrest he wrote to the Secretary of State saying that the calmness "was hardly expected".[38] Ever the opportunist he quickly saw that the lack of trouble could be used as a vindication of the unpopular policies of the Government of India.

Reading continued to be pleased and triumphant at what he saw as justification for his policy of patience.

In successive letters to the Secretary of State, now Lord Peel, Reading placed increasing emphasis on the evidence of Gandhi's decline because of his political failures. On 23rd April he wrote:

> Gandhi's career seems to have been seriously affected by the Bardoli policy. His influence began to wane from that moment. His power was ebbing when his arrest took place.[39]

He followed this with an even stronger condemnation of Gandhi as a politician when on 15th June he wrote:

> ...it is due to the complete failure of Gandhi as a politician or leader of public thought during the last few weeks immediately before his arrest. He went slipping down the hill and was arrested in the course of his descent.[40]

Although Reading believed this to be the case, others do not agree. Co-inciding with the arrest came the resignation of Edwin Montagu, who was popular in India for his part in the Reforms scheme. The reasons behind Montagu's resignation will be examined later, but it is interesting to note that the King commented in a letter on 14th March to Reading that the lack of excitement over Gandhi's arrest may have been partly due to Montagu's resignation.[41] In the King's view this was a much more important incident. Certain sections of Indian society, particularly the Muslims, were shocked by the resignation. They believed Montagu to be sympathetic to their problems. Whether this would have been enough to keep India calm is debatable. It is important to consider whether the Muslims, with their own leaders in prison, with the increase of communal tension, and with their feelings of betrayal over the cancellation of the civil disobedience campaign at Bardoli, would have joined with the Hindus in any sort of protest over Gandhi's arrest.

As this does not seem very likely, and as the Muslims were more inclined towards violent protest than the Hindus it seems that Reading's assessment is the more correct. Gandhi's weaknesses had led to a decline in his support.

Other critics of Reading put a less favourable interpretation on the lack of violence. Some, such as G.Woodcock, suggest that Gandhi himself wanted the arrest, to allow himself a period away from the Indian masses to rebuild his damaged reputation. Gandhi wrote, "My removal from their midst will be a benefit for the people."[42] B.R.Nanda argues that it was Gandhi's actions, rather than those of the Viceroy, which ensured that there was no violence accompanying the arrest. Gandhi instructed his followers to maintain absolute discipline, and he was obeyed.[43]

None of these points seems to answer the problem. Gandhi undoubtedly did need time away from the Indian masses who were disheartened because the final attack on the Raj, promised by the Civil Disobedience campaign, had not taken place. Eventually Gandhi was able to regain his place as leader of those masses, but this was not during his imprisonment, the effect of which was not to enhance his reputation, or immediately afterwards. It also seems unlikely that Gandhi, who could not prevent violence at Chauri-Chaura while he was free, should be able to influence his followers so that he could ensure peace while he was in prison.

Meanwhile, Gandhi was put on trial under Judge Broomfield on a charge of sedition. Before being sentenced he was allowed to make a statement in justification of his actions. He explained to the court that following the Rowlatt Acts, which gave the Government of India such tremendous control over the people he felt obliged to take action against such a theft of personal freedom.

He went on to say:

> We want to compel its [the Government of India's] submission to the people's will .... Lord Reading must clearly understand that the Non-co-operators are at war with the Government. [44]

While sympathetic to many of the points made by Gandhi, Judge Broomfield had no option but to sentence him to six years imprisonment. Again it seemed the waiting had paid off. The views expressed in the Council of State on 18th September 1921, that it would be appropriate to wait until Gandhi had committed a criminal offence, had been justified.

So, in the final assessment, was Reading successful in handling Gandhi, or was the image of the British Raj tarnished by the affair? Reading was totally convinced that his policy had been the correct one, and that Gandhi was, by April 1922, a spent force in Indian politics. On 13th July Reading wrote to Asquith explaining his view that the delay had been essential:

> ... although I daresay you wondered why I didn't strike sooner ... You will, I am sure, understand why I thought it better to let the futility of the various promises of Gandhi be exposed as they would inevitably - for he promised Swaraj for December and the January etc. until it became apparent he could not 'deliver the goods.[45]

In a letter to the King, summarising the effects of Gandhi's arrest on the public as he saw it, Reading wrote on 4th May:

> I was certainly fortunate in the time chosen for people generally had become tired and longed, I think, for a little peace. Moreover Gandhi had made many promises which he had not been able to fulfil.[46]

For the remainder of Reading's Viceroyalty this continued to be true, it was only after the arrival of Lord Irwin in 1926 that Gandhi's power again began to increase.

Some historians agree with the Viceroy's interpretation and are prepared to admit that Reading used his legal brain to determine that delay was the best form of attack. For example, Percival Spear argues that Reading "divined the essential weakness of the Hindu-Muslim coalition", and thus arrested Reading when he was discredited.[47]

Reading did not, however, claim that his policies had contributed a major part to the decline of Gandhi; rather, he argued that Gandhi's own mistakes were responsible for his decline. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 5th December, explaining his analysis of the situation:

> The arrest of Gandhi and the removal of his disturbing influence was a necessary and important step, but the decline of both the non-co-operation movement and of its leaders dates not from the arrest but from the issue of the Bardoli resolutions which left the agitation without any clearly defined and intelligible objective.[48]

If Reading had no plan other than to delay arrest in order to defeat Gandhi the whole scheme does seem rather weak. At the end of 1921 there were indicators that Gandhi was losing ground: the fact that his promise of "Swaraj in one year" had not been achieved; the resurrection of communal violence in Malabar and the arrest of the Ali brothers all pointed to this. However, Indian activity during the visit of the Prince of Wales, although not totally successful, had helped to restore some of the prestige Gandhi had lost. Therefore there was no guarantee that further delay, after January 1922, would lead to a further weakening of Gandhi's position. One successful campaign, along the lines of Bardoli, could have repaired all the damage.

If this is true, some authorities, such as Sir Algernon Rumbold, are justified in their interpretation of Reading's policy as weak rather than strong.

It has been suggested that the Government of India was too cautious, wanting to avoid any confrontation, especially after the events of 1919, and because relations with Afghanistan were strained. However, this meant that the Government of India missed the opportunity of reinforcing the might of the Raj by showing that it was committed to the removal and punishment of dissident members. They had lost the initiative; Gandhi had the upper hand. Thus confidence in the Raj was damaged and those to whom law and order was important drifted away from the support of the Government, instead favouring the Indian National Congress as an alternative. Rumbold goes so far as to say that the weakness Reading displayed made the task of successive Viceroys more difficult.[49]

On the other hand, the measures taken by Reading, which resulted in the temporary collapse of the non-co-operation campaign, may have made his successors' task easier. On his release from jail Gandhi had to begin again to build up his position. Certainly Reading admitted that his own position had been made easier as opposition to the Government was, henceforth, directed through more conventional channels.

Chapter 4; Reading and the Muslim Problem, 1921-1923

Although the arrest of Gandhi was being discussed as a solution to India's political problems during the early months of 1922, Reading remained convinced that his major hope of success lay not in the removal of Gandhi, but in the splitting of the Hindu-Muslim alliance, through the appeasement of the Muslims. His son recorded a letter the Viceroy wrote to him, in which Reading said he saw Mahomed Ali as the link between Muslim and Hindu, and that trouble between Mahomed Ali and Gandhi would lead to the collapse of the bridge between Hindu and Muslim.[1]

That the principle of 'divide and rule' existed in India was always denied by Reading when he returned to England. On 28th July 1926, he said, in the House of Lords, that he had seen no evidence that the principle of 'divide and rule' had been applied.[2] Jawaharlal Nehru did not believe this to be true:

> To all these methods [of the Government] must be added the deliberate policy of British rule, of creating divisions among Indians, of encouraging one group at the cost of another.[3]

B.N.Pandey, in his book, The Break-up of British India, agrees with Nehru's interpretation and seems to go as far as to suggest that the communal riots were actively encouraged by Government officials as well as by those upper class Hindus and Muslims who wanted to see the nationalist movement collapse.[4] However, this view is not shared by R.J. Moore, who argues that the Government rode out the non-co-operation campaign by "pursuing a policy of studied forbearance".[5]

According to official statistics, there were eighty-eight communal riots from 1923 to 1927, resulting in over 400 deaths and 5,000 injuries.[6] It is important, therefore, to examine the causes of communal tension in order to determine the exact role of the British in its manifestations. Some Hindu historians certainly blamed the British for favouring the

Muslims. However, some Muslim historians believed that communalism came into being because the Muslims were not a nation. Mushirul Hasan suggests that violence was not endemic in Indian society and that the majority of Indians lived together without communal antipathy or bitterness.[7]

In examining the origins of communalism, a number of factors have to be considered. Firstly, an important factor in some provinces seems to have been uneven educational development. In Bengal, for example, where Muslims made up 54% of the population, but where they were mainly peasants, the imbalance between Hindus and Muslims in education had not changed significantly, and, according to Mushirul Hasan, this was one of the sources of communal rivalry. However, in provinces where Muslims were more advanced this was not the case.[8]

The leaders of the non-co-operation movement, themselves, must take some of the responsibility for the increase in communal rioting. The Indian Communist Party believed that it was the use of religion in politics which was the root cause of communalism:

> If the hostility against British Imperialism is made a religious issue, the hostility this aroused can, at any moment, turn into antagonism among the two great Indian communities.[9]

Francis Robinson points out that in April 1921 some ulama objected strongly to the alliance with the Hindus and demanded that its scope be defined according to religious rules.[10] Increased religious awareness led to the emergence of the shuddi, sangathan, tabligh and tanzim movements, all of which served to emphasise the differences between Hindu and Muslim rather than unite them. All were founded on the assumption that their religion was based on a set of infallible beliefs. Their principle centres were the towns such as Agra and Allahabad, where communalism was evident. Communal tension was also apparent

in other revivalist centres, such as the United Provinces, Bengal and Punjab. Over 50% of those killed or injured between 1923 and 1927 were victims of riots in the Punjab, United Provinces, Delhi and the North-West Frontier Province.

Obviously, the nationalist movement and Gandhi had some initial success in uniting a number of incompatible and antagonistic elements, but religious exhilaration betrayed them. However, Mushirul Hasan believes that this is a misleading view, because it ignores material forces that could bring about unity."

The way in which Muslim politics developed is also an important contributory factor in the rise of communalism. Many Muslims had long been in favour of separate electorates. In the Muslim Address to the Viceroy in 1906 separate electorates were demanded, and in 1909 these were granted by the Morley-Minto reforms. In 1913 at the Agra meeting of the All India Muslim League, these demands were extended, although Jinnah and Mazhar ul Haq attempted to persuade their fellow Muslims to abandon the resolution favouring separate electorates. This was voted down by the United Province politicians.

Some Muslims wanted these concessions because of their number, social status, local influence and social requirements. Mushirul Hasan suggests that their aim was to secure for themselves a strong position in the new power structure.[12] In the United Provinces, according to Francis Robinson, communalism developed due to the weakening of the Muslims' position in municipal government.[13] Although, by 1915, the Muslims held more elected majorities in the towns than they had done in 1909, they had been kept powerless on the Legislative Council and the Municipal Boards by the spread of communal politics.[14] Up to 1909 in the United Provinces, despite general electorates, no persistent communal friction was evident. According to David Page, Muslims did not suffer losses as a result of general electorates.[15]

Consequently, additional constraints were placed on Muslim political activity, although demands for separate electorates continued.

A major cause of communalism, however, was British political practice. Separate electorates were divisive and the British were responsible for introducing those with the Morley-Minto reforms. Exactly why the British took such a step is debatable. David Page suggests that it was an attempt by the Raj to shore up a crucial part of its system of control. As in the case of the general electorates, it was an attempt to extend and broaden the support of its traditional allies.[16]

The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms retained and gradually expanded separate electorates, and devolved very real power into Indian hands. This led to the development of supra-communal parties at Central and Provincial Government level, and the virtual elimination of the Muslim League. Devolution allowed Hindus and Muslims to operate together at landlord level, thus contributing to the development of a stronger nationalist movement. These landlords then used communal tension to generate support for their co-operators, as the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, Dunnett, points out. Upper-middle class and public figures were responsible for introducing communal tensions from above, in an attempt to secure the base of their support.[17] The situation in Lahore was similarbetween 1919 and 1920 and communal excitement had been deliberately promoted by those principally involved in the election, according to the Commissioner.[18] In the United Provinces similar tactics were used to emphasise the political differences between Swarajists and liberals.

After 1925 the Muslim League revived, and provided a platform from which Muslim politicians demanded communal representation in the Legislative bodies, separate electorates at local levels and the

reservations of positions in the public services. These demands led to a growth in the competition between Hindu and Muslim elites.

However, if the Raj did not deliberately carry out a policy of 'divide and rule', some of their actions contributed to the split between Hindu and Muslim. The proclamation by Queen Victoria in 1858, committing the British in India to religious neutrality, was not openly tampered with. There is no evidence that the British used 'agents provocateurs' to stir up riots, but district officers did not always act as quickly or as firmly as they could have done when rioting broke out. For example, in Kohar in November 1924, the Governor admitted that he had delayed in the use of troops.[19] In general, the British seemed anxious to prevent violence. In 1924, Reading suggested that each Province should call on influential local leaders to form a central committee which would settle religious disputes. The Government avoided meddling in affairs which seemed likely to arouse religious passions.

Nevertheless, Mushirul Hasan does suggest that the Government cannot be exonerated from the charge of fostering religious separatism and exploiting religious differences.[20] David Page identifies evidence of this in Bengal, where Mr. Abdur Rahim, the adviser to the Bengal Government, advised that concessions should be made to Muslims in an attempt to weaken the support for C.R.Das. Page believes that the attitude of the British was that, provided communalism did not lead to a political chaos through which enemies of the Raj might benefit, it was an acceptable counter-balance to excessive nationalist zeal.[21] This attitude was also expressed by Lord Birkenhead in 1925:

> I have placed my highest and most permanent hopes upon the eternity of the communal situation.... between these two communities lies a chasm which cannot be crossed by the resources of political engineering.[22]

Certainly, while negotiations for the arrest of Gandhi were taking

place, Reading maintained his pressure on the Home Government for a revision of the Treaty of Sèvres. As we have seen, this pressure began even before Reading left for India and led, indirectly, to the resignation of Edwin Montagu and the final collapse of the Hindu-Muslim alliance. In any case, continued communal problems and tensions were also weakening the alliance. The arrest of the Ali brothers had left a whole section of the Indian population leaderless and frustrated.

It was obvious to Reading that nothing was as important to the security of India as the removal of Muslim grievances and the splitting of the alliance. He consequently and frequently urged that Britain should take a definite stand as the champions of Islam rather than leave that role to France or Italy. Not everyone agreed; the General Election of 1918 had been won by Lloyd George on the platform of the heavy punishment of Britain's former enemies, and these included Turkey. While the Prime Minister may have had more liberal tendencies, these were carefully supressed in order to keep the support of the British public.

An ex-Viceroy, Lord Curzon, now Foreign Secretary, and left with the task of negotiating new peace terms with Turkey, was angry over the Government of India's pressure on behalf of the Muslims. To Montagu he wrote, "is Indian opinion always to be the final court of Moslem opinion."[23] Lloyd George knew that problems were being caused by the Treaty of Sèvres, having been frequently informed of this by Reading, Montagu and Rawlinson, the Commander-in-Chief, who had all pointed out the effects on India of the destruction of the Turkish Empire. The Prime Minister acknowledged as early as 16th August 1921 that he had "no doubt that the Treaty of Sèvres will have to be reconsidered."[24] Unfortunately for the security of India nothing was done immediately, but the promise of some change stirred up the Muslim population. It also became known that Lloyd George had made some secret plans to support the Greeks in Smyrna. Leading Conservatives, such as Lord Birkenhead and Curzon, would have

been willing to reach an agreement with Kemal Pasha, as France and Italy had done already.

Even Reading's personal appeal to his friend on 19th July 1921 does not seem to have convinced Lloyd George that there was a serious threat of violence among Indian Muslims.[25] The Viceroy suggested to Montagu that they should simply try to persuade Lloyd George to revert to Britain's pre-war policy towards Turkey, whereby covert support was given to the Ottoman Empire against Russia. This, he believed, would partly satisfy Indian Muslims.[26]

George Lloyd, Governor of Bombay, added his support to the views expressed by Montagu, Reading and Rawlinson; one of the few times he and Reading seem to have agreed on policy. He wrote to Montagu on 14th October explaining how difficult it was for him to govern in view of Britan's anti-Islamic policy:

> With all respect I do insist that the Cabinet at Home must make up their mind whether they want an anti-Islamic policy or India, and they cannot have both.[27]

However, fear of further German aggression and the need to ensure that another war was impossible meant that, for the time being, those responsible for British Foreign policy had to neglect their consideration for India, in order to provide security in Europe.

In India, Reading kept up his pressure. In November 1921 he was visited by the moderate Muslim leader, Mohamed Ali Jinnah, who was hoping that Reading would say something definite regarding British policy towards Thrace and Smyrna. Reading was not impressed by Jinnah, and he wrote to Montagu on 2nd November:

> Jinnah's personality, as distinguished from intellect, did not favourably impress me, I thought I discerned strong anti-British feeling, although masked at moment [sic] and some want of scruple.[28]

Increasingly, Montagu despaired of the British Foreign Office ever

understanding the problems their policy was creating in India and he was worried that he was unable to give the Viceroy the help and support he needed. On 3rd December he wrote to his friend Grigg:

> The Foreign Office attitude always reduces me to despair. They know that H.M.Government's policy with regard to Near East [sic] whatever its merits, has caused the greatest difficulty in India.[29]

Meanwhile, in some areas, such as the United Provinces, Khilafat agitation increased while the cult of Gandhism seemed to wane. This caused concern among some Hindus and also contributed to the eventual collapse of the Hindu-Muslim alliance. Particularly worrying were the speeches of the new Muslim leader Hazrat Mohani, who spoke provocatively about changes of creed, stressing that those who had converted to Islam due to communal pressure would be severely punished if they later re-converted to Hinduism.

Finally on 14th February 1922, Lloyd George made a speech in the House of Commons which in some ways made the situation more difficult. While acknowledging that the position in India caused 'grave concern', he would not admit that it was 'critical', The fact that the situation was not serious was 'due to the British presence'; if the British were not in control he expected there to be 'tragic consequences'. He went on to agree that one of the unfortunate consequences of the First World War was the deterioration of relations between Britain and Islam. This he blamed on German diplomacy; 'their one victory'.[30] However, he believed the problems could be solved by future Foreign policy:

> The strength of British rule in India comes, not because we have given way to one faith, because it was menacing, at the expense of another, but because we have quite fearlessly held the balance between Mohammedan and Hindu and every other religion, and the principles we have applied in India, we must apply in the settlement of the Turkish Treaty.[31]

This must have come as something of a suprise to both the major religions in India. The Muslims did not want a balance, they wanted the preferment of their wishes over the future of Turkey. Equally, some Hindus, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, believed that the Government of India was already favouring the Muslims at the expense of the Hindus, in the hope of splitting the alliance against the Raj.

A situation therefore developed in which a number of problems were drawn together to place a great strain on the relationship between those responsible for Indian affairs and those responsible for British Foreign policy. The opposing attitudes were obvious; the Viceroy's pressure for a stand in support for Turkey, and the intransigent attitude of Curzon who favoured a pro-Greek policy, coupled with Lloyd George's own difficulties in view of his election promises to deal harshly with Germany and her allies. Contributing to the division between Indian and European affairs was the increasing Hindu-Muslim tension in India. In any event, Reading and Montagu were unpopular in traditional conservative circles due to an element of anti-Semitism, as we have seen. A critical point in relations between the two Governments had been reached, and the conflict was to lead to Montagu's resignation.

The resignation crisis began when Reading telegraphed the following message to the Secretary of State on 28th February:

> We desire to take this opportunity of reiterating our conviction as to the imperative necessity of conciliating Mahomedan opinion by modification of Turkish Peace Terms, particularly in regard to Constantinople, Thrace and Smyrna. We believe that the appeasement of 70 million Mahomedans of India and the consequent relief to a situation of real danger to the tranquillity of India is of the utmost importance.[32]

Reading also asked for permission to publish the telegram to prove

to Indian Muslims that the Government of India was working hard to see

their wishes fulfilled, and to ease the tension in India. This telegram was received by Montagu and circulated to other Cabinet ministers for approval, but there was no Cabinet meeting planned - Lloyd George was in Paris, the reins of Government were in the hands of Austen Chamberlain. On Saturday 4th March Reading telegraphed again asking for a reply as he regarded the situation as serious, as Montagu later explained to Lloyd George:

> It was only after I received an urgent telegram on Saturday, repeating the request for permission to publish and asking for an immediate reply that I felt it my duty to accept the responsibility of sanctioning publication.[33]

Without waiting for the approval of the Cabinet, Montagu gave Reading permission to publish the telegram. In any case, he felt that agreement from the rest of the Cabinet was unnecessary, since the views of the Government of India were well known. Similar telegrams expressing those views had been published in the past, as Reading pointed out to Lloyd George when, on 4th May, he wrote,"the telegram only contained what has been said before."[34]

On 6th May the Cabinet met but the telegram was not discussed. Lord Curzon was very angry when he finally learned of the publication. He believed that his task of negotiation would be made more difficult if the Turks suspected that they could use Indian unrest as a lever to ensure more favourable peace terms. Curzon therefore protested to Chamberlain, who wrote to Lloyd George. The Prime Minister returned on 9th March and demanded Montagu's resignation, which he got on 10th March, the date also set for Gandhi's arrest. Lloyd George also apologised to Curzon for what he regarded as Montagu's folly:

> I feel I must write to tell you how deeply I regret that your most difficult task has been further complicated by Montagu's folly. It is very hard on you.[35]

Curzon replied that he agreed his task had been made more difficult by the publication:

> It was very good of you to find the time to write the word of encouragement in a task which our recent colleague certainly did his best (I should hope without conscious deliberation) to render impossible.[36]

There were, no doubt, others in the Cabinet who were glad to see Montagu resign. His past performance was little recommendation in their opinion. He was known to have a preference for 'soft' government in India at a time when re-awakened interest in the Empire was demanding greater control, and High Toryism had become the dominant trend in the post-war coalition. Montagu's judgement, moreover, was not to be trusted; the repeated delays in the arrest of Gandhi destroyed what little faith the majority of the Cabinet had in the Secretary of State's policies. The Unionists went so far as to suggest that the letter was a private one which should never have been published, and that Montagu was in breach of confidence.[37]

Nevertheless, not everyone was pleased at the turn of events. Reading was shocked; he and Montagu had worked well together and he felt in some way responsible, as he explained to Willingdon on 21st May:

> I am dreadfully sorry about it, for I cannot but feel that I am indirectly the cause, in as much as I asked for permission to publish the telegram.[38]

He even offered his resignation, but this was refused. He was informed that the Government at Home attached no blame to the Government of India. However, Reading was still concerned about his position, especially when he read suggestions in the press that he had been part of a conspiracy against Lloyd George.[39] The two had long been close friends, although that friendship had been strained by events in India, particularly by Lloyd George's unwillingness to alter British Foreign policy in order to bring peace to India. Reading was, nevertheless,

upset that anyone should accuse him of treachery:

> Had I thought you entertained any such idea
> I should not have remained in my present
> position a day longer than was necessary.[40]

Willingdon was also very upset by Montagu's resignation. He wrote to the Viceroy on 13th March:

> Why on earth is Winston allowed to go on
> his wild career about Kenya and Edwin gets
> the sack when he allows the publication
> of views which have often been expressed
> before by the Government of India.[41]

Perhaps the worst effect of the resignation was felt by the Indian Muslims who believed they had lost a friend and supporter. Montagu received many letters and telegrams from Muslim groups in India expressing regret and some anger at the resignation. The telegram sent by the Muslim Legislators on 11th March expressing their shock is typical of many letters and telegrams sent during March and April:

> Mr. Montagu's resignation has shocked India.
> Mr. Montagu was India's best friend and one
> of her greatest secretaries.[42]

Other Muslim pressure groups were more outspoken in their protest.

In the Punjab this resolution was put to the Legislative Council by Khan Bahadur Mian Fazl-i-Husain on 21st March:

> It is the resignation then which is the
> root cause of the sudden shock to us
> and created the feeling of consternation
> throughout India. This resignation has been
> deeply deplored.[43]

The Bengal Legislature wrote to Montagu on 17th March, saying that the members of the Legislature believed:

> ...that Mr. Montagu has been sacrificed for his
> devotion and loyalty to a higher and more
> exalted ideal of the British Commonwealth
> than that represented by the short-sighted
> policy of the Foreign Office, which has failed
> to realize that immediate publication of
> Government of India despatch was imperative
> in interests of peace in India and conciliation
> of Islam.[44]

One group of Muslims in England also felt they should contact Montagu to express their regret. The Imam of Woking Mosque expressed his opinion when he wrote on 2nd May:

> It had long been my intention to seek an opportunity for expressing to you personally my appreciative gratitude as an Indian and a Muslim, for the wise and human statesmanship which has always distinguished your Indian policy, and for the quick sympathy and cordial understanding which you have invariably shown towards my countrymen.[45]

In view of the obvious sympathy and distress of the Muslim community it is ironic that Montagu had considered resigning at the end of July 1921 in an attempt to end the Punjab disturbances which had been caused by events at Amritsar, the results of which could not be forgotten. Montagu hoped his proposed resignation would be the final expiation and he seemed little disturbed by the prospect of such a step. However, he was dissuaded from this action by Reading, who did not think that Indians would regard it as an expiation. He did not agree that India would be moved by such a step, as he wrote to Montagu on 5th August 1921:

> Your proposal is bold, dramatic and self-sacrificing and by reason of those qualities would have an immediate and stirring effect on the public mind of India.[46]

However, he did not think it appropriate at that time. With the Ali brothers still free, this was probably a fair assessment, although the news did come as a shock to India in 1922.

In any case, Montagu's forced resignation had little to do with his Indian policy; that only provided Lloyd George with the means to remove someone he had come to regard as an enemy. Montagu, himself, believed he had been sacrificed as a scape-goat to appease Conservative opinion, which regarded his India policy as too 'soft'.[47] More than that however, his political beliefs were no longer in line with those of Lloyd George. Since 1918 he had been persistently dissatisfied with Government policy, and not only with regard to India. From 1920

onwards, in fact, there is evidence that Montagu had Asquithian sympathies. His progressive policies were constantly at odds with the Prime Minister's attempts to pacify the Conservatives. He was also in conflict with Churchill over the position of Indians in Kenya. It had been suggested that Edward Wood (later Lord Irwin) should be made Under-Secretary of State for India, a step designed to please the diehards. Montagu was not prepared to accept this and so appeared as a challenger to Lloyd George's political leadership.[48]

Lloyd George, in turn, felt threatened by Montagu's progressive policies, and used Curzon, who had a low opinion of Montagu both as a Liberal and as a Jew, to remove him. Anti-Semitism now surfaced in Britain. After Montagu's resignation, Curzon had a letter from Sir Walter Lawrence on 14th March, expressing sympathy that Curzon's task had been made more difficult, and bitterness over Montagu's action:

> My inference is that he deliberately created this situation to get out of office before the crunch came in India. He suggests intrigue - he who has intrigued with his agents in India, British and Indian, to be made Viceroy.[49]

Lawrence went on to blame India's problems on the "intrigues and methods of this mischievous Jew".

Conservative opinion was further satisfied by the appointment of Viscount Peel as the new Secretary of State. However, Montagu had achieved his purpose. The problems being created in India by British Foreign policy were brought to the fore by his resignation. Both Government and people began to realise that the pro-Turkish sympathies of Indian Muslims could no longer be safely ignored.

Those Conservatives who favoured the appointment of Peel believed that the pace of reform would now slow down. Nevertheless, Peel was able to understand and appreciate the grievances of the Muslims, and he agreed with Reading's assessment of the problems. Thus pressure for a

revision of the Treaty of Sèvres continued under the new Secretary of State. Reading was quick to make his views known.[50]

The British Government's Turkish policy, as we have seen, created an atmosphere of mistrust in India; and the idea had been implanted, partly by Gandhi, that the British were anti-Muslim. This was not true, although some members of the Cabinet, such as Lloyd George, were pro-Hellenic. The Prime Minister did have secret plans to support the Greeks in Smyrna, according to Cowling.[51] Leading Conservatives, such as Birkenhead and Curzon, did not necessarily agree with this policy, as we have seen.

Nevertheless, some Muslims counted Britain among their friends, notably the Sharif of Mecca. Reading always regretted that the Islamic movement in India was pro-Turkish and therefore anti-British. He felt, perhaps without reason, that he had in some way failed because he had been unable to prevent the spread of such propaganda.

However, the British Government continued to disregard Muslim opinion by following an apparently pro-Greek policy. This came into evidence in August 1922 when the advance of Kemal Pasha's forces provoked the 'Chanak Incident.' At Chanak the British army stood firm at their base against the advancing Turks who wisely decided not to attack. When the peace conference finally met at Lausanne on 19th November the Turks were given the territory anyway.

Although the Turks had halted their advance voluntarily, and had respected the neutral zone around Chanak established by the Treaty of Muldania, the whole incident was mis-interpreted in India. The Muslims had been excited by early Kemalist victories against the Greeks and they believed that Turkey should not be deprived of her gains. Reading was very concerned that Lloyd George's actions would cause further trouble.

During the summer of 1922 there was less activity on the part of Muslim extremists and they began to drift away from the Hindu-Muslim alliance. Reading credited this partly to his policy:

> All the information that comes to me indicates in a larger measure than I had expected the tendency of Mahomedan opinion to abstain from further active co-operation with the extremist Hindu, because the satisfaction of a large number of the Indian Moslem extremists have felt with the action taken by myself and my Government to support the more reasonable Moslem demands and which culminated so dramatially in the resignation of Mr. Montagu.[52]

Reading was grateful for this trend, especially since he saw it as the fulfilling of his policy. In his speech to the Central Legislature on 5th September, he pointed out that he and his Government had done their utmost to impress the Muslim point of view on the British Government. He commented, "It is gratifying to observe that the activities of my Government have not been without effect upon the Muslim population of India."[53]

The gap between Hindu and Muslim was further widened by Gandhi's choice of his successor as leader of the non-co-operation movement, Ajmal Khan. He suited no party; Hindus disliked him and refused to accept his nomination, extremist Muslims thought him too weak and liable to compromise, and moderate Muslims were generally upset because the Hindus would not accept a Muslim.

Reading felt that Britain's attitude over the Near East would revive the Hindu-Muslim alliance. On 20th September he wrote to the Secretary of State:

> ...the moderate Mahomedan is our friend and in particular since the publication of the telegram at the end of February which caused so much trouble, he is convinced that the Government of India is trying to do its legitimate best for the Indian Mahomedans and to represent their views and therefore he wants to work with us and not against us.[54]

Later, extremist Muslims claimed that the British garrison at Chanak was

preventing Turkey from reaching her full territorial potential, as Reading explained on 1st October:

> The excitement among Mahomedans generally in this country is daily increasing in intensity and is directed especially against Graet Britain as the only power that is checking the Turkish triumphant march into Thrace.[55]

Fortunately, from Reading's point of view, the alliance was not re-made, and the divisions created, whether deliberately or merely by force of circumstance, were more significant than Muslim concerns over Chanak.

Thus, by October 1922, Reading seemed to have succeeded in this area. He was able, in a letter to the Secretary of State on 3rd October, apparently to dismiss the Hindu-Muslim alliance as never a serious threat:

> The Hindu-Mahomedan entente has been essentially a combination of parties, whose real aims were profoundly divergent, it has never been more than skin-deep and friction between the two communities ...has become too acute recently to be denied even by the extremists.[56]

The 'divergent' aims of the Hindu-Muslim alliance had become obvious over the Turkish question in the sense that the ideal solution for the Muslims was not the ideal solution for the Hindus. Without the backing of the non-co-operation movement, moderate Muslims were more willing to accept that the Government of India was trying to influence British Foreign policy.

Reading felt that as long as the Muslims continued to believe the Government of India was doing all it could, even though the methods might not be seen in public, they would remain peaceful.

At this point the Turks made their own contribution to peace in India. By the opening of the Lausanne conference on 19th November Mustafa Kemal had declared Turkey a republic with himself as president. The Sultanate had been abolished, and the Sultan was in exile. By March 1924 the post of Khalifa had been abolished also. At Lausanne, Curzon was successful in making a favourable settlement, with the British

retaining Cyprus, and Turkey being set up as a nation state. Initially, reactions to the Treaty of Lausanne in India were mixed; most Muslims were sympathetic to the Sultan and did not want to see the Khalifa lose temporal power. The Central Khilafat committee even went so far as to warn members of the movement not to become too complacent in the light of victory. As far as they were concerned, the Khalifa still needed protection. Nevertheless, once the Khilafat was abolished, the cause which the Indian Muslims had supported was effectively removed. Under Mustafa Kemal, Turkey began to recover, further calming the fears of Indian Muslims.

Meanwhile, the Treaty of Lausanne was signed on 24th April 1923, and Muslims in India publicly expressed their gratitude to the Viceroy and his Government for their sympathy and support, in the Muslim Legislators' Address on 26th July:

> Indeed the genuine interest evinced by Your Excellency ever since you assumed your high office...inspired us with the hope in September last...that the only constitutional way open to us of successfully helping our Turkish co-religionists was to approach the representatinve of our august Sovereign. It is our pleasant duty to acknowledge that the hope has been realised.[57]

Although by the end of 1923, Reading's aim, as expressed to his son, appears to have been achieved, this owes as much to the nature of the Hindus and Muslims in India as to any skill by the Viceroy. The differing religious and political attitudes of the two groups meant that disputes between them were inevitable. Reading's support for the Muslims over the future of Turkey may have contributed some small part to that inevitability, but the impression remains that the Viceroy should have done more to bring peace to India. For example, more encouragement could have been given to his proposed scheme for a committee of senior religious leaders who could discuss disputes. This idea was taken by his successor, Lord Irwin, and did have some success.

It also seems that Reading was inclined again to ignore or "gloss-over" the seriousness of the situation. In October 1922, he had written that it was an alliance that was never more than "skin-deep". Yet some of those who were members of that alliance, such as Mahomed Ali, felt a genuine, deep and emotional commitment to it. This commitment cannot easily be dismissed.

Chapter Five; Reading and the Working of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, 1921 to 1926.

The removal of Gandhi following his trial and the collapse of the non-co-operation movement resulted in the division of that movement. Some former members of the non-co-operation movement wished to continue Gandhi's policy of boycott; they became known as the "no-changers". Meanwhile, some politicians, known as the "pro-changers", led by Motilal Nehru and C.R.Das wanted to fight the reforms from within the Legislative Assembly. They founded the Congress-Khilafat-Swaraj Party, or simply the Swaraj Party. They aimed to work destructively from within the Assembly to block any Government measures with which they did not agree.

The new constitutional Assemblies, in which the Swarajists hoped to conduct this campaign, were largely the work of Sir Edwin Montagu, during his time as Secretary of State between 1917 and 1922. Montagu had initially suggested a series of reforms for India before he was appointed Secretary of State. He regarded his eventual appointment as "carte blanche" for introducing his reforms scheme.[1] The scheme was first discussed in Britain in 1917, and from the start presented serious problems. Montagu wanted the reforms to propose eventual self-government for India, but he recognised that there were major obstacles inherent in Indian society which could prevent this, notably the Caste system, and Hindu-Muslim antagonism. Nevertheless, he believed that India had to begin to take some responsibility for her own future. From the British point of view there were three major problem areas to consider before moving towards self-government: defence, the minorities and the princely states, but Montagu was insistent that progress must be made. He wrote to Austen Chamberlain on 7th August 1917, explaining why:

> If we do not use the word "self-government", I do not believe any announcement will fulfil its

> purpose and the fact that we have avoided using it will be pounced on by the Home Rulers.[2]

However, on 14th August it was decided that the new goal for British policy in India was to prepare her for self-government within the Empire. Montagu travelled to India in person to hear what Indians thought of the proposals. The joint report the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and he produced formed the basis of the Government of India Act 1919. The Act provided for the provision of an Executive Council of four Europeans and three Indians and a Central Legislative Assembly consisting of two houses, the Council of State and the Assembly. In the Provinces, one chamber councils were to be set up and a policy of dyarchy introduced. This system transferred the administration of certain portfolios, such as education, public health and local government, directly to Indian ministers. Remaining areas, such as defence, finance and famine relief, were under the control of the Viceroy. The Viceroy also had powers of certification, with which he could, with the approval of London, override all opposition and pass any laws and taxes he thought were necessary.

However, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were, perhaps, too cautious. David Page suggests that there was no desire in Britain to bestow the tried and tested mother of parliaments on India, and that Britain only introduced the system reluctantly.[3] Anil Seal argues that Britain wanted to pull resources out of India, not put their own in. Therefore, an administrative system had to be developed which would finance itself.[4] In any case, the whole scheme was seen as experimental.

The Indian politician, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, identified the main cause for concern among Indians as the time factor:

> But the provision with regard to successive stages and the reservation of the power to determine the time and manner of each advance have caused, in this country, widespread discontent.[5]

The second problem, according to Sapru, concerned the continuing existence of the Secretary of State who had final control over the Viceroy and thus over the Legislative Assembly. He could give the Viceroy the right to use certification to introduce anything previously rejected by the Legislature. Worse still, in Sapru's view, was the fact that much of the correspondence between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State was private. Montagu described relations between himself and Reading as "intimate".[6]

Thirdly, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Services had a place in the Council of State. Even in a semi-developed constitution this should not have been possible, according to Sapru. Finally, the reforms were not really democratic. Universal suffrage was not introduced and the franchise was restricted to 3% of the population. However, future prospects were good as politicians after 1920 were able to exert enough pressure to force the Government to consider changes in policy. In order to create a democratic system it was also necessary to introduce popular education, and, by making education a transferred subject, literacy did spread quickly.

For many Indians the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were not enough. Some, like Jawaharlal Nehru, had expected a real step towards self-government to be made at the end of the First World War. Instead they found there was little advantage. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote:

> All the unending talk of constitutional reform and Indianization was a mockery and an insult when the manhood of our nation was being crushed and an inexorable and continuous process of exploitation was deepening our poverty and

> sapping our vitality. We had become a derelict nation.[7]

P.G.Robb puts the view that it is debatable "how far the reforms marked a substantive change in British attitudes". He points out that in Assam an Indian was put in charge of the police, judiciary and prisons, but George Lloyd, in Bombay, used Indian inexperience as an excuse for refusing to allow an Indian to hold the Law and Order portfolio.[8]

Nevertheless, the reforms did have some benefits for those prepared to work with the scheme. Through the Indianization programme, Indians were to be included in essential services, however gradual the process might be. Sapru wrote:

> Extremely limited as the powers and functions of Councils and local bodies might have been before the Act of 1919, it would be impossible to deny that these bodies partook of the character of, or were intended to be, self-governing institutions.[9]

Reading was, however, totally committed to the reform programme when he arrived in India in 1921. He felt there was a certain appeal in initiating liberal reforms among a people with little political knowledge.[10] He was determined to secure a fair trial for the reforms. On 12th May he wrote to Montagu about Chelmsford:

> ....he joined you in initiating the greatest reforms India has ever known. Certainly I shall never be able to strike so epoch making a note."

In a number of speeches following his arrival in India Reading spoke of his delight at the constitutional reforms which had been introduced; he wished India luck in her steps towards equal partnership with Britain but he warned her that she would only advance by constitutional means. He would not be pressurised by lawlessness into accelerating the programme.[12]

In spite of his conviction that the reforms were essential for India, Reading could see that there were potential problems. As early as December 1921, barely one year into the scheme, he identified areas which could be improved, as noted above. However, right from the start he encountered opposition from London about the spread of the reforms. It quickly became obvious that there was a deep split in the British Parliament. Everything that Reading tried to do to advance the reforms and give India a greater share in her government was blocked by the Government at home, particularly after Montagu's resignation. Further reform was also blocked by the British military and civil servants in India, many members of the bureaucracy were unwilling to yield their position in India. Some were critical of the scheme, claiming that it would not work. George Lloyd, for example, wrote to Sir Harcourt Butler on 12th September 1923:

> Let me invite you to turn to that chapter... of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms scheme, and you will see how "woolly" has been the process of thought in regard to those [sic].[13]

Reading had previously emphasised the problems in a letter to the Secretary of State on 5th January 1922:

> I always have before me the difficulty of reconciling altogether in the present condition, the British and the Indian view. The British want their own countrymen to remain the dominant administrative force, the Indians on the other hand, wish to take the responsibilities on their own shoulders.[14]

Reading was worried that if evidence of the various views on the reforms was ever made public the reforms could be seriously jeopardized. In any case, he argued that the situation in India had changed so

drastically in 1921, due to the spread of nationalism under Gandhi, that the reforms were already outdated in the eyes of the nationalist movement by the beginning of 1922.

Following the arrest of Gandhi and the resignation of Montagu, Reading wrote personally to the Prime Minister, asking him to ensure that the reforms continued:

> It is essential to assert continuance of reforms and that resignation does not involve disagreement between Montagu and Government of India regarding policy affecting non-co-operation leaders.[15]

Although in 1921, Reading had been in favour of some minor modification of the 1919 Act, it would be wrong to think that he was advocating radical revision of the reforms. Neither he nor the British Government wanted the move toward self-government to be swifter, which may partly account for Montagu's forced resignation, as Rawlinson concluded:

> The fact is that the Home Government, having introduced the Reforms scheme, are now afraid they are going too fast. They are trying to put on the brake, and the machine is inclined to run away from them.[16]

Rawlinson also believed that the reforms should be allowed to run their full course, uninterrupted by further enquiry or investigation, to give India the chance of advancing to Dominion self-government. From the evidence of a letter written to Reading, Rawlinson's position is made clear:

> As regards the extension of Reforms I have all along maintained the attitude that the time has not yet come, and that the machine has not been properly tested and have steadfastly set my face against any change at present.[17]

Although that was also Reading's position he was careful not to

make it public knowledge in India. The concern in India about the timing of the next stage was still further heightened when Lloyd George made a speech in which he emphasised what some Indians had suspected; that the reforms were an experiment:

> Those changes are in the nature of an experiment, a great and important experiment, but still an experiment .... Whatever the success of Indians either as Parliamentarians or adminstrators, I can foresee no period when they could dispense with the guidance of a small nucleus of British Civil Servants and British officials in India.[18]

Naturally, the speech shocked many in India, and Reading was very angry that such a thing could be said in public. The Secretary of State tried to calm Reading's anxieties by suggesting that Lloyd George only meant that complete Indianization was not yet possible, so making the retention of a British element a necessity. However, he could say nothing to convince Reading that, in Britain, the reforms were regarded as anything other than an experiment. In fact, he was sure that was how many people viewed them:

> Over here the new reforms are undoubtedly regarded as an experiment which may succeed, or which may fail, but which certainly has not at present proved, and could not in so short a time, be pronounced a success.[19]

As Reading later pointed out to Austen Chamberlain, agitation for increased power had begun almost before the ink was dry. Indeed, the Viceroy felt that many Indians believed he had been sent to India for the purpose of advancing the reforms. He wrote:

> I pointed out the absurdity of wanting to destroy or alter machinery which had not even yet been set up and properly tested.[20]

The Swaraj Party forced a measure through Congress in September 1923, allowing Council entry, just in time for the 1923 elections, at which they did well, winning thirty-eight seats. Thus an opposition party was formed and the reforms could be tested throughly. Shortly after the Swarajists joined the Assembly, the question of an earlier revision and expansion of the reforms scheme was again raised, when a member of the Swarajist Party, Rangachariar, suggested the appointment of a Statutory Committee. As a result, Reading, in consultation with his Government, presented a three point programme. The first point dealt with the working of the existing system in consultation and co-operation with Indians. That being fulfilled, the second and third points were concerned with the appointment of a commission. The idea, particularly the third point, which suggested an early appointment of the commission, was vetoed by Lord Olivier, the Secretary of State. As far as he was concerned, an earlier appointment would suggest to Indians that the reformed constitution would be superceded without further attempt to work it. He made it plain, in a speech to the House of Lords on 26th February 1924, that he was not prepared to go any further with the reforms.[21] Reading believed that the Secretary of State was mistaken in this attitude. The Viceroy said of his own plan:

> I cannot see why these proposals would have been regarded as an admission that both Governments were prepared to consider super-session of the reformed constitution without further attempt to work it. The whole purpose of the plan was to make the reformed constitution acceptable to those who would already have shown a desire to work it and not wreck it.[22]

Such a step as the earlier appointment of a commission would be well received in India, in Reading's opinion. The moderates had been anxious to have the question of the advance of the reforms re-opened since Reading's arrival in India, and there would be a better chance of uniting the independents and the moderates against the Swarajists, who would not accept anything the Government did.

In assessing the progress and success of the reforms scheme, an exercise undertaken annually by the Government of India after 1924, it is necessary to examine the two types of government introduced; that carried out by the Central Legislature and that by dyarchy.

Much of the work of the Central Government, for example in economic development, Indianization and foriegn policy, will be examined later. However, it is important to consider here the serious weakness the Indians saw in the Legislature - the right of the Viceroy to use certification. The procedure was first used by Reading in 1922 when the Legislature introduced the Repeal of the Press Act. The Act had been introduced to protect the Princely States from the spread of subversive literature. In 1922 Reading thought that the protection was still necessary and that it was the Government of India's duty to provide it. Thus, he used his power to override the Legislative Assembly.

However, it was the need to certify the salt tax which caused Reading the most heartache. After a number of deficit budgets it was necessary to increase the Government of India's revenue and salt tax was a way of doing this. The move was first considered after the budget of 1922, but Reading felt that such a step would only aggravate the political problems which were beginning to subside. He notified the Secretary of State of

his views on 23rd March 1922:

> If I restore the proposals my action would have a very serious effect upon the Reforms, and I cannot imagine a worse tax for the first exercise of the Viceroy's powers of restoration than the salt tax, traditionally unpopular politically, falling largely upon the very poor and capable of gross misrepresentation to the masses by the agitators.[23]

In any case, such duties went against Reading's liberal principles, and when it was finally essential to certify the salt tax he admitted as much to the Secretary of State:

> I hated - as you can well imagine - the imposition of a tax which affected all the people by its incidence, however small the contribution might be from each, by my own action.[24]

Once a Bill had been certified by the Viceroy it became known as an Act of the Indian Legislature, although the Legislature had no control over the final draft. Sapru felt that if certification was used it would be more understandable to make a distinct category for it, such as calling it an "Act passed by the Governor-General".[25]

With the entry of the Swarajists into the Legislative Assembly it seemed likely that Reading would have to use certification more frequently in order to govern. This is exactly what the Swarajists wanted, in order to prove that the constitution of the 1919 Act was a sham. Reading recognised that this policy, which he regarded as foolish, would seriously damage the reforms, but he would not shirk his duty and would continue to govern with his powers:

> I never did believe that they could carry out their threats because the position became so illogical and absurd if all demands were refused.[26]

In less controversial areas the Legislative Assembly carried through a number of reforms which would be regarded as a success. These included the repeal of the Rowlatt Acts and other repressive measures; the virtual removal of racial discrimination in the administration of civil justice, the rapid Indianization of the Civil Service and the army, the application of the principles of fiscal independence, the introduction of a programme of retrenchment in public expenditure and the adoption of a plan to nationalize the railways.[27]

Despite this progress, there was little support for the constitution among certain political groups. The extremists, who continued with the policy of boycott, appealed to religious prejudice in order to show how inadequate the constitution was by emphasising the difference in representation between religious sects and between castes.

Reading was concerned that the Legislative Assembly was not making full use of its potential because of the attitude of those members who attempted to block all measures with which they did not agree. In his speech to the Assembly on 28th June 1923 he congratulated the members on what they had achieved, but he warned them against taking a too narrow and restricted view of their real influence:

> You may, perhaps, find the place [sic] of progress too slow, but can you point to greater achievement for India during so brief a period of time? Would other means have accomplished so much?[28]

One important question to consider is whether the Central Legislative Assembly in any way prepared the Indians to govern themselves. Reading was concerned that the moderates, in particular, were losing out because they did not have effective party organisation. When the reforms were

introduced they were directed at those who were loyal to the Government of India, and Montagu hoped the scheme would help the moderates to break away from Congress. In this hope, Montagu was to be disappointed, as the moderates lacked drive and energy.[29] This view was shared by George Lloyd who decided that the moderates were "practically useless" as "a force in Indian politics".[30] Reading, as a dedicated member of the Liberal Party, tried to prepare the moderates for a proper electoral campaign in 1922, but found it very difficult as there was no history of contests of this nature in India. Although it was not possible to prepare for the 1922 campaign, the moderates were better organised in future campaigns due to Reading's involvement. As Reading wrote to Goschen, Governor of Madras, on 22nd September 1925:

> Even more important than a programme - valuable as that will be - is, in my opinion, the necessity for organisation, organisation and organisation. It is here that the Swarajist has the advantage over everybody and it is the secret of his success.[31]

In view of the strength and commitment of the Swarajist Party, an organised moderate party was essential if India was not to become a one party state, as the election results of 1925 show:

Membership of the Assembly:	1925
Swarajists	42
Moderates	27
No Party	15
Independents	7
Loyalists	6
Liberals	2
S.G.P. Committee	2

[32]

Despite the strength of the moderates, the Swarajists were easily in control as they could generally depend on the votes of some of the independents. Nevertheless, the moderates were able to form an opposition, although P.G.Robb argues that "no-one believed for long that

a moderate alternative was reliable or promising".[33] However, Sir Basil Blackett, Finance Minister to the Executive Council, wrote to Cook, Commissioner of the Burdwan Division of Bengal, on 25th June 1924:

> It is this evidence of the educative value of what we are doing that heartens me. If we can hang on for a few more years, educating more and more people in the responsibility of representative government, may India after all not justify our hopes and become...capable of self-government.[34]

It is obvious that the reforms and Reading's implementation of them could have prepared India for self-government. However, weaknesses in the legislative system remained during 1925. For example, the Viceroy's powers of certification weakened the Assembly and the franchise remained narrow. Not least, the Swarajist Party was unwilling to co-operate with the Viceroy.

The area of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms which presented the most difficulty as regards workability, was dyarchy. The intention was to give Indians control over certain areas, known as "transferred subjects", within the Provincial Governments. Unfortunately, the scheme proved clumsy and difficult to operate.

Failure in most areas was due to lack of political knowledge among the Indian ministers, to the lack of a party structure, and to limited finance. Only Willingdon, in Madras, seemed able to make a real success of the scheme. In a letter to the Viceroy on 3rd April 1921 he stated:

> I've been tremendously struck by the way our people have tumbled to Parliamentary ways and methods at their first session.[35]

All the same, he admitted anxiety over the dyarchic idea, which he disliked.

In all other areas dyarchy was less than a success. Nevertheless, in only two areas, Bengal and the Central Provinces, was it a complete failure.

The first official assessment of the scheme was ordered by Reading on 21st April 1923, when he circulated to all Provincial Governors a list of questions to be answered. These included such points as the extent to which the Provincial Governments had been unified and the extent of the influence of the members over the public. Governors were also asked how much they had had to intervene to overrule ministers and whether their ministers were truly representative. An assessment was made of the organisational skills of both ministers and parties, and of the President of the Council.[36]

The views expressed in response to the questions varied considerably Some Provincial Governors, notably Kerr in Assam, commented that the reforms seemed to have had little effect on organisation or administration in their areas. Lytton, Governor of Bengal, suggested that lack of political opportunism had led to the weakness of his Provincial Government. However, Maclagan, Governor of the Punjab, had the opposite to report:

> But the increased freedom now enjoyed by the Local Government has given facilites for the more rapid trans-action [sic] of legislative business than before the Reform.[37]

In the United Provinces too, the Legislative Assembly had established itself as a "promising Parliamentary body" according to Whyte's report.[38]

However, one of the major problems affecting the dyarchic system continued to be that of the 'consultations' which took place. Sapru wrote:

> There have been complaints heard in various quarters that, excepting in Madras, the principle of joint deliberation has not been followed. By some it was followed only for a limited time.[39]

Willingdon openly admitted in his reply to the Viceroy's circular, dated 11th June 1923, that he had ignored dyarchy,[40] and this conclusion was supported by Sapru, who wrote, "The observation has been made that Dyarchy succeeded in Madras because it was ignored".[41] Willingdon's implementation of the dyarchic process was made easier by the fact that he had been encouraging party politics in Madras before the scheme began, consequently, the parties already had an organisational structure. Although this worked in Madras, not everyone thought it was the right approach. Blackett wrote to Cook on 25th June 1924:

> Lord Willingdon is, I'm afraid, doing damage in the opposite direction by his airy assumption that control from above will easily be possible when you have got provincial autonomy in his sense.[42]

In 1924, the Reforms Commission enquiry was scheduled to take place, so the 1923 exercise of assessment was repeated, this time in the form of an official document to be presented to the Committee. However, Reading also asked all the Provincial Governors for their own personal opinions, in a letter on 21st May 1924:

> I attach great importance to knowing what the head of the administration personally feels regarding these questions.[43]

By this time the Swarajist Party was making itself felt in some Provinces. Kerr, Governor of Assam, reported that he was having difficulty in working the constitution because of this.[44] Wilson, Governor of Bihar, shared this view, writing to Reading on 1st July 1924:

> The system cannot work at present because the Ministers, if defeated on any issue of importance, would have been defeated by the votes of the Swarajists, who are not prepared to accept the responsibilities which opposition means.[45]

Throughout 1924, the nationalists continued to demand that the reforms programme be "speeded up". However, with the passage of time, those

administering the scheme became convinced that no further advances should be introduced until the first stage of the programme had been fully worked through. In their replies to the 1924 surveys, many Provincial Governors expressed this view, giving a variety of reasons for their opinions. Sly, Governor of the Central Provinces, felt his Province was too backward to have effectively tested the reforms, especially in view of financial stringencies imposed during the first session.[46] Coatman agrees with this view, citing lack of party structure and financial stringency as the causes of the failure of dyarchy.[47] Others, such as Sir Henry Wheeler, now Governor of Bihar, felt that the prospect of further advance was unsettling the Indians, resulting in the partial failure of the existing scheme.[48] Wilson, now retired, when consulted, wrote:

> What India wants at the present time...is a clearly defined policy from which there shall be no change for some years to come. That there is a possibility of amendments to the 1919 Act is read into the Government of India's letter and this has had a most disturbing and most unfortunate effect on my Indian colleagues who want to run with the hare and hunt with the hound.[49]

Nevertheless, some Provincial Governors were prepared to be more optimistic. Goschen, Governor of Madras and inheritor of Willingdon's policies from 1924, wrote on 4th August:

> I have been struck by the loyalty of the ministers, their genuine attempt to work the constitution in accordance with its rules, and their progress in accepting the principle of joint ministerial responsibility.[50]

Even Wilson was forced to admit the basic loyalty of his former ministers, although he despaired at the deficiencies of their political education. Maclagan concluded that his ministers did not really see any need for alterations in the existing arrangements.[51]

To conclude the report to the Reforms Commission, Sir Malcolm Hailey

submitted a summary of some of the problems preventing the further advancement of the scheme. These included the position of the Indian Princes, European and commercial interests, and the minorities. However, he did not totally dispel all hope of further advancement at the end of the trial period, although he made it clear that the British Government would judge the timing and manner of such a step.[52]

At the same time some Indian politicians, including Jinnah and Sapru, submitted a minority report condemning dyarchy and demanding the introduction of Provincial autonomy. The report included evidence from various groups to support the view that it was the existing system which was causing problems of communalism. For example, Barkat Ali, the Punjabi Muslim League representative, submitted that the large towns, where communalism was rife, would be easier to control with Provincial autonomy.

At the time the Reforms Commission report was made in 1926, accounts appeared in some British newspapers alleging that dyarchy was unworkable. For example, this report appeared in The Times on 17th May 1926:

> Dyarchy is a troublesome system; it has worked badly in some parts of India, it has not developed a real political sense in the people, there are no Parliamentary parties.... Yet the signatories conclude things might be worse, certain signs of progress may be detected here and there.[53]

However, Reading was unable to accept that dyarchy was unworkable; he argued that The Times report was an unfair account because the reporter used only the evidence of ex-ministers. In his opinion, any consultation with Provincial Governors still working in India would prove that the situation was improving, as Indian ministers gained experience and political awareness.[54]

Despite the optimism as to the eventual success of the reforms as expressed by some of those working with them, the scheme failed to achieve

its objectives. There can be no doubt that The Times report of 17th May 1926 was a condemnation of all that Montagu had wanted to achieve. As The Times said, the situation could have been better. Montagu's great dream for a programme of reforms, leading to Dominion status, had gone wrong. The reasons for this failure lie both in India and in the British Government.

Although the nationalist movement, and particularly the Swarajists, are partially responsible for the failure due to their attempts to wreck the scheme, more of the blame lies with the British Government who were barely committed to the reforms, even while Montagu was Secretary of State. He had only succeeded in getting the reforms passed with great difficulty and after his enforced resignation, successive Secretaries of State rejected any suggestions that the scheme should be advanced. The message seemed to be that India should wait until the end of the first ten years before any revision of the 1919 Act would take place. Some commentators, such as Sapru, found it hard to believe that any change would take place even in 1929:

> I am personally of opinion that the arguments which hold good today against further advance will hold equally good in 1929.[55]

There can be no doubt that Montagu intended to work the reforms through fully. He had written to Reading on 21st July 1921:

> We have got to recognize that government does not merely mean political reform, but the substitution of an indigenous administration for a foreign administration.[56]

As we have seen, Reading, too, was committed to the scheme, and in the early years of his Viceroyalty also believed that improvements could be made. Yet this situation was to subtly change.

With the resignation of Montagu came the appointment of Viscount Peel, as conservative with regard to Indian self-government as his predecessor

had been liberal. It seems likely that his appointment had been intended to slow the rate of reform. R.J.Moore comments that while Indian conservatives were prepared to accept dyarchy in order to acquire Provincial autonomy, they could not be expected to work it with the liberal spirit Montagu intended.[57] The Conservative victory in Britain's General Election of 1922 secured Peel's place as Secretary of State, and enabled him to concentrate on India's problems. To this end he asked for a summary of the situation from Reading. Reading emphasised, in his reply on 5th December, the good work he felt had been done to remove the distrust of the British Government which had inspired the non-co-operation movement, and to prove the good intentions of the reforms scheme:

> We spared, therefore, no effort to bring home to Indian opinion the reality of the Reforms and our determination to give them every chance of success.[58]

But Reading's attitude also began to change around 1923. He no longer favoured any change in the 1919 Act, although the reasons for this are unclear. It could be that he was influenced by the obvious opposition to change from the Government at home and from his Governors in India. It is also possible that his experiences in India had convinced him that Indians were not ready for self-government. Whatever the reason, he telegraphed to the Secretary of State on 14th January 1923 emphasising his doubts about the appointment of an investigative committee into the Civil Service. He explained that the appointment of such a committee would be likely to seriously disturb the existing situation by renewing expectations of constitutional advance, as events proved. Against the Viceroy's advice a Royal Commission, under Lord Lee of Farnham, was appointed.

It was soon obvious to Lee that Indian nationalist opinion favoured advancement. In conversation with Mr. Sastri, the Indian told Lee:

> ...that since Montagu had left the India Office he did not consider that the Reform policy had been fairly worked; that the Secretary of State interferes too much and will not allow the Viceroy to settle even the little things as he should.[60]

Reading believed, no doubt correctly, that the situation in India would deteriorate rapidly if it could be suggested that the reforms failed because of any fault on the part of the British administration. Thus, he always tried to soften any blows the scheme was given by London. In any case, although against any advance in the reforms, he continued to believe that they could be made to work through their proper channels. Consequently, he was upset when circumstances forced him to use certification, believing that such autocratic action on his part would eventually turn Indian opinion against him. The first time he certified the salt tax he expected, and got, criticism, but according to his letters, he found that Indians were generally still friendly towards him, certification had not caused them to believe that the Viceroy was not committed to the reforms, although they were "grieviously disappointed".[61]

Reading tried to reassure the Secretary of State that the phase of disruption and criticism would not last. Violent attempts to force changes in the scheme might have ceased if Indians could see that progress was being made. Unfortunately, during 1923 and 1924, there were further moves in Britain against the reforms, as we have seen, under Lord Olivier and later under Lord Birkenhead. Indians became increasingly convinced that Britain intended to prevaricate as long as possible, and they became increasingly mistrustful of the British.[62]

When asked for evidence of this mistrust, Reading pointed out that the Swarajists had revived their old war cry of "exploitation". In his opinion the Swarajists were making increasing propaganda out of old

injustices, such as the fact that India had not been given self-government at the end of the First World War. They also emphasised that the war had caused economic problems for India, and that Indians were still discriminated against in Kenya and South Africa, also parts of the British Empire. The Swarajists supported these claims by emphasising the slow rate of Indianization, the failure of the reforms to finance 'nation-building' departments such as education, the slow decrease in military expenditure, the alleged favouritism shown to British manufacturers and the measures taken to punish and repress disorder.[63] Later in 1924, Indian politicians began to speculate about the lack of advancement. Reading wrote to the Secretary of State on 10th July 1924:

> It is amusing to note the various speculations as to which is the more liberally inclined in regard to the future of India, whether it is the reactionary Viceroy and his Council that blocks the way, or whether it is the Secretary of State in a Labour Government who dares not move ahead because of the Liberals on one flank and the Conservatives on the other.[64]

The latter explanation seems likely. Certainly, the evidence of Reading's correspondence during the summer of 1924 would seem to suggest that he intended to try his utmost "to administer the Reforms...and continue as on the planned road".[65] He wrote to Lord Chelmsford on 22nd May 1924, expressing very strong views on the future of the reforms:

> We must strive to the utmost of our human capacities to ensure the success of the Reforms, strive genuinely, honestly to prevent a break down and never allow ourselves to fall back upon the difficulties and obstacles India has put in our way until she has succeeded, by her Extremists, (Heaven forbid it!) in bringing the Dyarchy and the Constitution generally, to a complete standstill.[66]

He wrote on a similar theme to Wilson in August, again emphasising that the Government should do all it could to ensure the success of the reforms patiently and tolerantly. Only if all else failed and the

constitution collapsed should they revert to the old system.[67]

Nevertheless, the Viceroy did, during 1924, and with the agreement of Lord Olivier, take the reactionary step of dismissing the Provincial Government in Bengal and reverting to the old methods of government. Bengal's Provincial Government had proved unworkable when its members failed to pass a budget. The Labour Government in Britain must have felt itself under great pressure from a British public who continued to set great store on the "glory of the British Empire".

Although the constitution was suspended in Bengal, safeguards were included in the Bengal Ordinances designed to protect all legitimate political activity, and to allow it to develop. However, the move only served to emphasise the power of the Viceroy.

The death of Montagu in 1924 caused further concern to many in India. Although he had taken no part in Government since his resignation, he remained influential enough to safeguard the scheme. Reading wrote to Wilson on 20th November, expressing his sorrow not only at Montagu's death but also that he had not lived long enough to see if the reforms worked:

> Montagu's illness and death came as a shock. I am afraid he was very disappointed by the reception of the Reforms Scheme during the few years of its existence. Whatever criticism may be directed against him, he had vision, and for a time was absolutely single-purposed in his determination to carry through to success.[68]

Reading also explained that he did not think it was Montagu's fault that the reforms were not totally successful. Events in India contributed to failure; the non-co-operation movement had hindered the scheme's early development, the Swarajists then hampered further progress from inside.

Following the death of the last real champion of Indian reform there was a pronounced move away from commitment to the scheme. This was made obvious by the appointment of Lord Birkenhead as Secretary of

State for India in December 1924. Birkenhead was, by his own admission, the one member of the Cabinet who had opposed the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms.[69] He believed that India would not be capable of ruling herself for several centuries. He wanted to see the maintenance of British prestige in India, regarding Britain's role as of vital importance, a trust which must be firmly administered. He made all this clear to Reading very quickly. On 22nd January 1925, he wrote:

> I, as you know, never liked or believed in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, although I realised that dyarchy was an indispensable experiment in attempting to begin drafting Western parliamentary institutions on an Oriental population, wholly uneducated for their receipt.[70]

However, he was forced to agree, in the same letter, that the reforms had worked more smoothly in many parts of India than he had expected. Consequently, he was prepared to give them a fair chance. Nevertheless, he made it very clear that he was not going to consider any changes in the programme until the initial ten years were over. He wrote to the Viceroy on 29th January, emphasising this point:

> I am quite clear that I ought to say plainly and with the authority of the Government that in no case except that of minor corrections will there be any review or extension of the Reform Act until the date prescribed by the Act itself.[71]

Birkenhead, in the words of his son, "put his finger on the real obstacle to democratic institution",[72] the fact that such great animosity existed between Hindu and Muslim. According to his son the first Earl wrote, "All the conferences in the world cannot bridge the unbridgeable".[73]

Birkenhead's opinion here is important, as the period after the introduction of the reforms contrasts sharply with the period preceding them with regards to incidents of communal violence. As the non-co-operation movement broke up, some politicians, such as Malaviya, realised

that communalism was a useful tool for splitting Muslims from Hindu politicians such as Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1926, Malaviya's proposals for the Congress Party programme (to work with the reforms) were defeated by Nehru's proposals for reaffirming faith in civil disobedience.

David Page emphasises that this communal war cry was particularly effective in the United Provinces' municipalities, and could also be used to rally support for the Brahmin Party in Provinces such as Bombay and the Central Provinces, where Muslims were less of an obstacle to office acceptance.[74]

By this time Birkenhead's view was shared by other members of the Cabinet; most felt that no further reform should be granted, regardless of demands. Even Reading was beset by belated doubts. He wrote to the Secretary of State:

> I find myself wondering - and have always wondered ever since I came here, whether it was wise to begin such a complete devolution of subjects as happened when the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were started. It was starting [sic] to me to find immediately I had embarked on my Viceregal career that my powers and those of my Government were so extra-ordinarily limited in relation to transferred subjects.[75]

The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, therefore, failed to solve India's problems. Much of the blame for this lies in the reforms themselves and in the attitude of the British Government to India. Since 1909, when Muslims first began to demand separate electorates, divisions had been created which made it impossible for genuine Indian nationalism to develop, in the opinion of David Page.[76] Some unity of purpose had been pssible during and immediately after the First World War but the Raj continued to treat the Hindus and the Muslims as two groups. As we have seen, Reading, in the pressure he applied on the British Government over the amendment of the Treaty of Sèvres, repeatedly put the Muslim point of

view. The demands of the Hindus' for Swaraj seem, therefore, to have been largely ignored.

With the introduction of dyarchy, communal antagonism became a permanent feature of Provincial politics. David Page points out that separate electorates provided the Government with communal allies, and enabled them to control many Provinces without Congress support.[77]

The role of the Viceroy in the success or failure of the reforms is also critical. As in many things, it seems that Reading did not do enough. The reforms scheme was intended to prepare Indians to rule themselves, yet little seems to have been done to provide political education even for traditional Raj supporters such as the moderates. Both Swarajists and the Raj appear to have believed that the Indian masses needed to be led from above. The attitude of the Provincial Governors, such as Lloyd, who believed that Indian politicians were not experienced enough to take charge of major portfolios, further limited the political education of those Indians. Reading seems to have done little to promote the role of Indian politicians.

As in so many situations, Reading also appears to have had doubts about his own commitment to certain ideas and philosophies. It could be argued that he was too easily swayed by the need to please all those involved, at a time when India needed someone of singular purpose.

Nevertheless, much of what happened with regard to the reforms was inevitable. Having seen the introduction of change it was obvious that Indian politicians would not be interested in a "half way house" solution. Credit must be given to Reading; he dealt with demands for reform without forcing the Indians into widespread violence.

Chapter Six; Reading and the Indian National Congress 1922-26.

It is necessary to consider the role of Indian politicians in assessing the success or failure of dyarchy. Without Gandhi's leadership some of the non-co-operators abandoned their policy of boycott of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Therefore, the Indian National Congress became an important factor in the Legislative Assembly. Prior to the reforms, organisations and rivalries had begun to form. In 1917 these were classified as 112, but, in Anil Seal's opinion, this classification was weak as each local party expressed local grievances.[1] The actual number of political groupings must, therefore, have been much higher. However, Congress was not a constant or self-generating force politically. Membership and activity fluctuated, and there was no single, nationwide issue to unite the members for some years after 1921. At the height of the non-co-operation movement membership was 1,945,854. With the collapse of the non-co-operation campaign membership declined, falling to 18,339 in 1925. The spread of membership was uneven. For example, of the 2,374 members in Maharashtra, half came from just two areas, Satara and Poona.[2]

Therefore it can be seen that Congress was not truly representative of Indian society. It was dominated by representatives of certain interest groups in addition to its uneven membership patterns. For example, in the Hindu areas of north India a significant number of members were from powerful mercantile families. Between 1885 an 1914 there were eighty-six active delegates, defined by J.R.Mclane as delegates who were elected three times or who made speeches five times. Of these eighty-six, thirty-eight were Brahmins and a further nineteen were members of professional commercial or warrior classes.[3] Elsewhere, Congress represented a cartel of discontented journalists and lawyers, in the view of Tribune on 10th December 1881. D.A.Low argues that in its early days the Congress was

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Gandhi himself led the fund raising and the financial position of Congress did improve. By 1921 the movement could call on huge resources which made it possible to expand Congress activity on an impressive scale. Some of the money was used on what the Congress felt were "nation-building" campaigns, such as the promotion of Khaddar or cotton spinning, the establishment of "National Schools" and the removal of untouchability. After the collapse of the non-co-operation movement Congress still had a definite role to play in the political structure of India. It saw its own role as stabilising Indian politics and providing the basis of a new Indian state.

Between 1920 and 1922 members of Congress took part in the boycott of the new Legislative Assembly. They rejected the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms as inadequate, and they also recognised that to participate in the reformed constitution made then liable for blame if the reforms failed. The essential distinction between Congress and the Raj would thus be removed. The Congress tried hard to maintain its individuality, even when they came under the influence of Gandhi after 1920. Although Congress did follow Gandhi's lead against the salt tax, and his support of traditional industry, it did not denounce modern large-scale industry and therefore retained its individuality.[10]

The idea of the boycott of the Legislative Assembly had been Gandhi's. However, according to R.A.Gordon, he found it difficult to get support in those regions where the nationalist politicians felt they were prepared for full Provincial autonomy, such as the United Provinces.[11] Council boycott did not appeal to those who felt they could win the elections of 1920. However, Sumit Sarkar argues that although electoral calculations played a part in the decision by various politicians to

support the boycott, the force of real anger over the Punjab and Khilafat issues must not be ignored. For example, on 27th June 1920, Motilal Nehru wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru:

> My blood is boiling over since I read the summaries [of the Hunter Report] you have sent. We must hold a Special Congress now and raise a veritable hell for the rascals.[12]

The difference in the motivation of the members of Congress was recognised by Gandhi. He saw the future of Congress as a return to basics. He refused to accept that Congress was a political party, he believed it contained many different parties, although one might be dominant. Therefore, he argued, it was more like the British Parliament than any party in it.[13] In this belief Gandhi was justified, the Congress was factionalised, unable to agree on the future of the reforms. R.A.Gordon identifies three factions; Tilak and Das and the Home Rule League, Besant and the theosophists, and the moderates. Gordon also argues that it was this division which made it possible for Gandhi to intervene.[14] Not all members agreed with the non-co-operation campaign. Mohamed Ali Jinnah voted against Gandhi at Amritsar and gave a qualified acceptance to the reforms, which he had every intention of working with in order to secure an early revision. He believed, in F.Robinson's opinion, that non-co-operation was politically irrelevant, and he condemned it unequivocally.[15]

Nevertheless, Congress followed Gandhi's lead and the boycott went ahead. R.A.Gordon disputes the theory that Congress supported non-co-operation because the reforms were inadequate. Rather, he believes, the boycott of the Councils was an afterthought. The major aim of the nationalists was to build up their own Provincial support; all India politics took second place.[16]

However, the seats boycotted by the campaigners were filled by

moderate Indian politicians such as Sastri and Malaviya. The absence of radical politicians did prove something of an advantage to the Government of India by allowing the first legislative Assembly to work without internal disruption.

After Gandhi's arrest in 1922, those politicians who had not agreed with the policy of boycott became dominant. At the start of 1923, Congress met at Gaya and it was obvious that the delegates were divided as to future policy. As we have seen, Congress split into those who wanted to continue with Gandhi's policy, the "no-changers," and those who wished to take part in the 1923 elections, the "pro-changers". Throughout 1922 the struggle for the control of Congress had been intense. At the end Motilal Nehru and C.R.Das, leaders of the "pro-changers, were defeated and so broke away from Congress to form what was to become known as the Swaraj Party. Nehru did not intend that his new party should be a rival to Congress but rather an integral part of it.

From that point on many Indian politicians became committed to fighting the next elections and to disrupting the reforms from within. Gandhi did not support the new party's decision. He wrote to Nehru from prison, "I rejoice because the victory gives you joy, but I cannot enthuse over it".[17] In reply, Nehru wrote:

> Mahatmaji says entry into councils is tantamount to participation in violence. I understand this to refer to the fact that the councils are established by a Government which is based on violence. I maintain that no-one living under such a Government can help participating in violence to that extent.[18]

Reading now had two new political adversaries to deal with, very different from Gandhi; C.R.Das and Motilal Nehru. Das was a barrister,

as Gandhi was, but initially Reading did not regard him as highly as he did the Mahatma. On 5th July 1924 he wrote to Sir Harcourt Butler:

> ...in my opinion Das is a much more mischievous and sinister figure than Gandhi.[19]

Lytton also regarded Das with suspicion. On 31st December 1924 he wrote to Birkenhead:

> I should not myself rely on anything he said unless it coincided with his personal interests. I think he is entirely unscrupulous and devoid of any constructive political ideas, I think he feels, however, that his personal popularity is waning and his policy, like that of Gandhi's, has produced nothing of value to anyone.[20]

Yet these criticisms were, in some ways unjust. It became known that Das had opposed Gandhi from the start. Reading wrote to Birkenhead explaining that Das, "did not believe in it [non-co-operation], he had little faith in either its principles or its future".[21] He had intended to speak out against the scheme at the 1920 Nagpur Conference of the Congress. He did not do so because of the strength of the support behind Gandhi. Subhas Bose points out that Das did not give in to Gandhi at Nagpur. Rather, he entered into an agreement with him, based on the heavy stress placed by Gandhi on the principle of "Swaraj in one year".[22] However, Durga Das, the newspaper editor, emphasised that C.R.Das continued to believe that the policy was wrong, and that Gandhi was leading them into a political wilderness and away from constitutional struggle.[23] In 1921 this would seem to be a reasonable assessment of the potential of the non-co-operation movement.

Motilal Nehru was a different proposition. Like Gandhi, he had been in prison. Yet Reading never felt that he was in control of his party or his followers. Rather, he felt, the party controlled Nehru.

Reading also believed that he and Nehru had something in common, he thought Nehru was a liberal constitutionalist. By 1924, however, they had never met. As far as Reading was concerned this omission was due to the attitude of the Swaraj Party. However, Nehru was almost certainly anxious to avoid the kind of criticism Gandhi had suffered through his private meetings with the Viceroy. Nevertheless, Reading saw Nehru as the possible focus of an effective liberal opposition in India if he could get his party to follow him.[24] At Calcutta, Gandhi had been prepared to modify the non-co-operation resolution to win over Nehru, and at Nagpur he was eager to draw Das into the net.

The entry of the Swaraj Party re-awakened interest in the workings of the Legislative Assembly. In the run up to the 1923 elections there were many more reports of proceedings in the press than previously. The organisation of the Party was good and the campaign it carried out was vigorous. In their manifesto they made three major demands; the suspension of all repressive laws and the unconditional release of Gandhi, the immediate calling of a round table conference to discuss the advance of the reforms and the release of all political prisoners.

Congress support had grown in the years 1920-23. However, Anil Seal suggests that although parties continued to develop in the Provincial capitals, these parties felt little allegiance to Congress, they supported it only when it suited them. When it did not they left Congress to their rivals.[25] Government support had also grown amongst the liberals and, in particular, among the Muslims. The Muslims were pleased with the advantages they had gained from the constitutional reforms and with the Government's handling of difficult situations. In the elections the Swarajists gained seats in most Provinces, although they had the majority in only one. In the Central Provinces they controlled forty of the

seventy-two seats, and also had the support of some of the moderates. Elsewhere they did well in Bengal, where they held thirty-six of the ninety-six seats. Yet the moderates also held their position. In Bihar they controlled twenty-three of the fifty-six seats, and in the Punjab they had nineteen of the thirty-nine seats.

In the elections for the Legislative Assembly the Swaraj Party were, if anything, less successful. Forty-five of the Assembly seats were undecided by the middle of December, and in no Province did a majority of the seats go to the Swaraj Party.

Nevertheless, there were now enough Swarajists in the Assembly to disrupt the workings of the reforms. However, if it meant an end to rioting in India, Reading was satisfied. He wrote to the King:

> It is some advantage that the agitation is turned into constitutional channels instead of Gandhi's methods which, from present appearances, are now in complete disfavour.[26]

That did not mean, from Reading's point of view that all difficulties were ended. Although C.R.Das had persuaded Congress to enter the Assembly, the new Swaraj members did not intend to work with the reforms, but rather against them. At the opening of the new Legislative Assembly Motilal Nehru said in his speech:

> Personally speaking I think there is no constitution for India. I refuse to believe in this constitution. .I agree to come to this Assembly and I am bound by the rules. That is the only thing I consider binding. I do not think that anything deserves the name of a constitution for a country, in which the people of the country did not have a vote.[27]

He went on to say he believed it was right to "destroy things of evil" and that he regarded the constitution as evil. Nevertheless, the

activities of the Swaraj Party during the Parliamentary sessions 1923-26 were largely ineffective. They failed to prevent the Government from passing its budgets, due to the Viceroy's ability to certify. After 1923 the budgets showed a surplus, and this helped to convince the moderates that Reading's economic policies had been correct.

In spite of his relief that protest was now directed into constitutional channels, Reading was aware of potential difficulties. The first major area of conflict was to be the budget. Before the elections the Swaraj Party had not made their future tactics absolutely clear, but Reading supposed they would be obstructive. He wrote to Sir Harcourt Butler on 1st March 1924:

> I do not yet know definitely what course the Nationalists or Swarajists will pursue regarding the Budget...I most earnestly hope that they will not have recourse to purely obstructive tactics, but I have no reason to expect they will refrain.[28]

The problem over the budget was caused by the existence, for the first time in a number of years, of a surplus in the 1923-4 budget. The surplus had been created by the retrenchment of the Indian economy by Inchcape and by the imposition of the unpopular salt tax which Reading felt was necessary, and which he had passed by certification against the wishes of the Assembly. The Swaraj Party advocated the removal of the tax but Reading and his advisors wished to use the surplus to bring about a reduction in the Provincial contributions. The Viceroy and his Council thought this was most important as it would immediately free more money for the transferred subjects such as health, education and agriculture. As we shall see, Reading suggested a compromise solution, a cut in the rate of salt tax and a cut in the Provincial contributions. It was this compromise which was rejected by the Assembly. Thus Reading

was forced to certify the budget again. The Swaraj Party regarded this use of certification as a spectacular defeat for the Government, and an endorsement of their policy. The rejection of the budget had been possible due to co-operation between the Swaraj Party, the moderates and the Muslims. By forcing the Viceroy to use certification they hoped to prove that the constitution was unworkable.

Reading did not accept that his Government had been defeated. He felt that, although the Swarajists had persuaded the moderates to vote with them against the Government, some members felt that the policy was illogical. Reading wrote to the King on 13th March 1924:

> The Swarajists would vote against the reforms unless they could immediately get self-government, they held out against the budget but the policy was so illogical that some disintegration resulted, leading to a complete reversal of the policy.[29]

During their first year as members of the Government, the Swarajists also gained a notable success in Bengal. In that Province, C.R.Das and the Muslims were successful in the elections, although their alliance was an uneasy one, due to the reluctance of the Hindus, who held the largest share of the posts in the Services, and who did not relish minority status, to co-operate fully. As David Page points out, it was essentially an alliance for opposition.[30]

As that opposition, the Swarajists, while not the majority in the Council, could count on the support of some of the members of the other three parties,to such an extent that they were able to make Bengal ungovernable under the reformed constitution. Violence was common, although that had been the case since 1912. The leaders of the non-co-operation movement had been arrested at the end of 1923 but trouble continued only somewhat abated. In the following months, however, the

Government did not submit to Das. Indeed, in Page's opinion, they concentrated their efforts on driving a wedge between Das and the Muslims. Through the use of patronage the Government was able to create a support group in Bengal, largely out of the pre-1920 Muslim political groups who were willing to work with the Raj.[31] Sir Abdur Rahim, the Executive Councillor for the Bengal Government, persuaded the Government to make concessions in those areas where Das had the strongest support; in urban areas by reviewing the position of Muslims in the Services, and in rural areas by extending education.[32]

As the Bengal Government became factionalised it was necessary, on 25th October 1924, to pass the Bengal Ordinances, suspending dyarchy and giving total control of the Province to Lord Lytton, the Governor. The old autocratic method of government was restored, although certain safeguards were written into the Ordinances to allow for legitimate political activity where any existed. The Swarajists again regarded the implementation of the Ordinances as a successful part of their policy of disruption. However, there was very little protest from the people of Bengal, only the press campaigned against the Ordinances.

About the same time as the dispute over the budget occurred, arrangements were made for the release of Gandhi. At the beginning of 1924 Gandhi had become ill, and had undergone surgery. Immediately, his Indian supporters began to demand his release, and a great deal of anxiety was expressed by Indian nationalists. Reading found himself in a difficult position. There was a risk that if Gandhi was not released there would be outbreaks of violence, which would disrupt the industrial economy of Bombay, which was just recovering from the effects of the First World War. However, if Gandhi was released it was feared he would join

his friends in the Swaraj Party, further disrupting the constitution. Nevertheless, Reading thought there were several good reasons for Gandhi's release. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 2nd February 1924, explaining that many Indians were in favour of the release. He also felt that Gandhi could restrain the Ali brothers and might cause a setback for the Swaraj Party.

Ideally, Reading hoped to impose certain conditions on Gandhi in order to maintain control over him immediately after his release. However, the Bengal Government, under Lord Lytton, informed the Viceroy that this was not possible as there were no real grounds for compromise.[34] Reading wrote to Willingdon on the subject on 14th February:

> For your private ear I was most reluctant to arrive at the unconditional release; although release of some kind was imperative. I should have preferred technical detention of a character that would have enabled us to keep Gandhi's political activities in check.[35]

In fact, Reading's fears proved unnecessary as Gandhi imposed limitations on himself. He felt himself bound to abstain from any political activity for the remaining length of his sentence.

According to Lord Rawlinson, the news of Gandhi's release was quietly and well received and he concluded that it was also beneficial for the Government of India.[36] However, Lytton was not convinced. He felt that the release of Gandhi had discredited the Central Government and had caused his Provincial Government serious problems. However, these could not simply be blamed on Gandhi; they had existed for some time before Gandhi's release. Lytton wrote a very critical letter to Reading, who replied on 25th February, that Gandhi's release was not due to leniency but to clemency to Gandhi following his serious operation:

> I have not a shadow of doubt that it would have been absolutely inhuman to send Gandhi back to gaol in his then condition, and I certainly never would have countenanced it.[37]

Later Reading also assured Lytton that he had arrived at the decision reluctantly in view of the disturbances in the first year of his Viceroyalty, and that he would not allow such trouble to be repeated:

> The only observation I would make is that I would never let matters proceed for two years as they had before I arrived here, but would be in favour of prompt steps if they became necessary.[38]

In fact, Gandhi's release achieved little, and, perhaps, no-one had really expected that it would. As Reading wrote to Lytton on 1st March, "I never thought for one moment that the release of Gandhi would improve the situation in the slightest degree".[39]

The major problems as far as the Indian National Congress was concerned were that Gandhi continued to advocate his policy of non-co-operation and he condemned Council entry. This served to emphasise the divisions in Indian nationalist politics and weakened the position of the Swaraj Party. During April 1924 attempts were made to reach a compromise, and these resulted in a patched-up formula which it was hoped would appease public doubts but which barely concealed the inner divisions. Nevertheless, Gandhi continued to refuse to endorse the policy of the Swarajists and remained convinced that the way to self-government lay in non-co-operation.

An agreement, aimed at preserving a degree of unity, was finally reached between Das and Gandhi. The pact hung on the "spinning franchise", which introduced compulsory spinning or loss of office for all members of the Swaraj Party. At the 1925 Congress session this was introduced

and hotly attacked by Motilal Nehru who had no faith in the Khaddar cult. However, it was imperative for Gandhi and his followers to be kept within the Congress fold. All recognised this fact and so the resolution was eventually carried, although the clause about loss of office was removed for the sake of compromise. On 10th October, Reading wrote to the King:

> Gandhi seems willing to accept complete defeat and to make [sic] surrender to Das and Motilal Nehru, in which case there will be apparently a united Congress.[40]

By the beginning of 1925 the rift still existed. Reading concluded that it was Das and Nehru who controlled Gandhi, although Congress worked hard to convince Indians that Gandhi was the real leader of Congress. Reading felt that Gandhi wanted to regain his position. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 1st January 1925:

> It is pathetic to observe the rapid decline in the power of Gandhi and the frantic attempts he is now making to cling to his position as leader at the expense of practically every principle he has hitherto advocated.[41]

Reading continued to believe that Gandhi's real mission should be as a social reformer rather than as a politician. On 16th February, Reading wrote to Wilson:

> It has always seemed to me that the idol's feet became of clay when he touched politics. I am afraid it is difficult to combine the role of a saint with that of a politician.[42]

He felt that a degree of personal vanity still dictated Gandhi's actions. He also felt that too much was promised in Gandhi's name. When it became obvious that the promises would not be fulfilled, Reading believed that disillusion would set in and Gandhi's zenith would pass.[43] However, it seemed this did not really bother the three leaders.

The political situation continued to be tense; Gandhi's release seemed to have unsettled Congress, who could not be certain as to the position he would take, or to the strength of his support. Meanwhile, by March 1925, Reading believed that he detected a sense of dissatisfaction among the Indian people with the same old policy of disruption. As we have seen, the moderates, in particular, were more willing to co-operate. When the surplus budget of 1925 was again defeated, in spite of a further cut in the salt tax, some Indian moderates began to question the value of a purely destructive policy. Notable among these was Lord Sinha, who began to take an active interest in politics during the summer of 1925, campaigning in favour of co-operation. Reading added his own plea for co-operation to that of Sinha's. In his Viceregal speech to the Legislature on 17th August he said:

> I argue in favour of recapturing that atmosphere of goodwill in England in which the Reforms took their birth, and insist that nothing could be won by force or threats.[44]

The Swarajists election campaign of 1925 argued that there were no signs on the part of the British Government of any desire to forward the reforms or to assist in any advance. Yet, as Goschen, Governor of Madras, pointed out to the Secretary of State on 11th August 1925, they seemed to have nothing constructive to offer as an alternative:

> Of one thing I am sure, and that is that if they are to be successful and maintain their position, they must abandon the communal cry and fight the election on a definite programme. The communal division was a temporary expedient and in political affairs its importance is waning.[45]

Reading appears to have agreed. In a letter to Goschen he pointed out that the Swarajists were suffering serious difficulties because they had achieved nothing, and had, in the eyes of their critics and some of their

supporters, actually contributed to the strength of the Government, initially by allowing the Legislative Assembly to exist without effective opposition,and later by forcing the Viceroy to use certification to rule as he wished.[46] This view is rather misleading, it was only Reading's impression, and there is little evidence to prove that Indian politicians really felt this way. Also, it is important to remember that the existence of the power of certification meant that the Government of India could do as they wished, and Reading did not need to be concerned about the future of the Swaraj Party.

Reading continued to be optimistic about the decline of Congress, as he saw it. He wrote to the Secretary of State that they seemed to have nothing new to offer at the 1925 Committee meeting and that Gandhi seemed to have no influence.[47] Even Nehru seemed hard-pressed by the end of 1925, forced by criticism to make wild attacks on all those who did not appear totally committed to his policy. The threats he made against the Government seemed vague, and Reading wrote to the Secretary of State on 19th November:

> His speeches make the impression on me of a man who is very hard-pressed and finds his only hope of salvation in a fighting, defiant speech for the purpose of rallying his supporters.[48]

As far as Reading was concerned, these events served to emphasise the deterioration of unity within Congress, particularly evident after the death of C.R.Das, in June 1925. While Congress did not become pro-government, which Reading did not really expect, defections from Nehru were encouraging. So also, was the showing of the moderates, with improved organisation, in the 1925 elections, when they gained twenty-seven seats.

The evident divisions in Congress were not enough reason, in Reading's opinion, to believe that Congress was no longer an important force in Indian politics. He recognised that it would take only one Congress success or one failure on the part of the British to weld them together again.[49]

Reading's role as Viceroy should, therefore, have been to see that this did not happen. He had certain factors in his favour, and, although Congress did have some successes in 1925, notably in the defeat of the budget and in gaining the suspension of the constitution in the Central Provinces, Reading believed he had prevented Congress from becoming a mass movement. From the start, he had refused to accept the Swaraj Party as a political party in the traditional British sense. He accepted that Das and Nehru held similar views but argued that these views were not necessarily the same. Nor did he believe that Das and Nehru would ever command mass support in the way that Gandhi could. As far as he was concerned, Gandhi's importance as a motivator of the Indian masses lay not in his political programme, but in his religious one. His gospel of love and purity was what moved the masses and Nehru, in particular, had appeared unimpressed by such ideas, as we have seen.

In some ways Reading underestimated the power of Congress in this belief. B.R.Tomlinson points out that, just as a central government existed in India, with increasingly distinct functions and roles, so also existed an all-India political organisation, with a matching structure of centralised authority, which was becoming increasingly powerful.[50] During the Viceroyalty of Reading's successor, Lord Irwin, Congress showed that it had developed into an organisation with enough support and political awareness to be consulted about the future of India.

Reading also underestimated the role played by the members of Congress who adopted the "no-change" policy, in the emergence of Congress as a mass movement. Although the "no-changers" did not take part in the elections for the Legislative or Provincial Assemblies they were not idle. They concentrated on constructive work, for example in relief work after the Bengal floods of 1922, when they contributed more than the Government of India. They also worked for the development of "National Schools" and did social work amongst the untouchables, who found considerable social benefit in the Khaddar campaign. These schemes were largely short-lived; as we shall see the "National Schools", for example, could not compete against the pull of Western degrees and job prospects. Equally, the Khaddar campaign was, admitted Gandhi in August 1927 to Motilal Nehru, "an uphill stuggle".[51] However, the various campaigns of the "no-changers" had considerable political importance in that they made Congress available to the masses, particularly in rural areas. This mass support was proved by events in 1928, and it was this development that Reading failed to predict in his assessment of Congress' future.

Similarly, Lord Birkenhead, as Secretary of State for India, also underestimated the real strength of Congress which he dismissed with "complete and withering intellectual contempt" according to his son.[52] Birkenhead did not believe that Congress was truly representative of the vast illiterate mass of the Indian people. He thought the motives of its leaders were purely self-advancement. Neither Reading nor Birkenhead realised that the real problem facing Congress was that having shown that dyarchy was a sham, Congress members were unsure what to do next, as the Viceroy and the Governors could still use certification to pass the legislation they needed to govern. As soon as Congress developed an effective political campaign in the form of civil disobedience in 1928, their real political strength was realised.

Yet Congress is an important factor in assessing the successes and failures of the dyarchic system. In order to succeed, dyarchy needed two conditions; the commitment of the British Government to the futherance of the reforms, and the co-operation of those Indians educated enough to express a political view. Without that co-operation, dyarchy would not be given the time or space for a fair trial. While the instigators of the reforms were fortunate that non-co-operation gave them four years without internal interruption, it was not long enough for dyarchy to become an intrinsic part of Indian political thought.

Dyarchy was workable in some form or another in most Provinces. Only in Bengal and the Central Provinces did it have to be suspended. The system could have been made to work well, although it was clumsy. In many cases, Indian ministers, supported by members of the I.C.S., did make valuable decisions.

However, as we have seen, those required to operate the system did not regard it favourably. Neither the British politicians nor the Indian leaders used dyarchy as a genuine training ground for responsible government. Reading claimed that he used dyarchy to improve the political expectations of the moderates, but, as we have seen, his own commitment to the reforms wavered in the face of opposition from both the British Government and Indian politicians. The Swarajists did not set themselves up to teach politics to the masses. They hoped to remain the mouth-pieces of Indian political thought, and to exercise their own judgement. Consequently, dyarchy failed to fulfil Montagu's expectations, although it did provide a valuable staging post for Indian nationalism. As Indianization of the Services took place Indians were trained in the administration of local government, this would prove useful later.

In the growth of Congress and in the operation of the dyarchic system, Reading appears to have played a passive rather than an active role. So much more could have been done in, for example, consultation with Congress leaders, the development of political education, and in the encouragement of those who were operating dyarchy, yet Reading failed to take advantage of the situation, and appeared, with Birkenhead, to dismiss Congress as a political force. The 2nd Earl of Birkenhead speaks of Reading as controlling India with a "firm hand",[53] but there is little evidence that he exercised any control over them at all. Indeed, provided there was little violence, Reading's powers of certification meant that Congress caused him only limited concern. Rather, Congress developed, in spite of its factions, and without the help of the British, a real political strength.

Chapter Seven; Reading and his handling of others in India, 1921-26.

Alongside his difficulties in dealing with Indian political movements, Reading also faced problems in dealing with those whose role it should have been to support the maintenance of the Raj. Previous Viceroys had traditionally been members of the British aristocracy; the Readings broke that tradition. Among the British community in India were those who felt that the Readings were not the right choice for their high position. Iris Butler, in her biography of Lady Reading, quotes one prominent official:

> We trembled when we heard the Readings were coming. JEWS TOO. We knew that they had brains, but it was the social part we felt so alarmed about.[1]

However, it was not only socially that Reading was different from expectations. There was also a great political divide between Reading and many members of the British community. Three Governors, in particular, caused Reading some problems during his Viceroyalty, and there must have been times when Reading wondered if these three supported him or opposed him.

The first serious clash came between Reading and George Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay. Lloyd was a traditional, conservative Governor, who was opposed in principle to any advance towards a more liberal constitution. Although the unrest he had witnessed since 1919 had made him doubtful about the future of India, he felt more optimistic after a preliminary meeting with Reading in 1921. Lloyd later admitted that he was impressed by Reading's subtle mind, believing him to be capable of dealing with the leaders of the non-co-operation movement.[2]

Yet he was not over-optimistic. He felt that Reading, while not actually indecisive, was slow to make decisions. In part, this concern of Lloyd's is born out by General Rawlinson who also commented, in his journal, that Reading found it hard, if not impossible, to make a swift decision. He wrote on June 13th 1922, after a meeting with Sir Harcourt Butler:

> [Butler] thinks that Reading would not act quickly enough or firmly enough, in a crisis, and I am inclined to agree. He, R, cannot make up his mind in a hurry and is wanting in courage.[3]

Conflict between Reading and Lloyd first began over the handling of the Ali brothers. Lloyd felt that the agreement made in 1921 put him in an impossible position as a Provincial Governor. He believed, and not without some justification, that to take no action against seditious statements made his position untenable. Reading was very concerned about the criticism, especially as, initially, Lloyd has expressed the opinion that to obtain the apologies would be "splendid" although they were no guarantee of the Ali brothers' behaviour in the future.[4]

The tension between Reading and Lloyd increased between October 1921 and the beginning of 1922 over the issue of the arrest of Gandhi. With the proposed visit of the Prince of Wales, Lloyd felt that Gandhi should immediately be arrested to prevent the possibility of trouble. Reading, as we have seen, was inclined to attempt negotiation again, although the terms agreed previously, in the handling of the Ali brothers, had not been totally adhered to. In Lloyd's opinion negotiation with "rebels" should not have been part of British policy in India, which he believed should centre on the maintenance of law and order. However, he acknowledged that such a policy as that advocated by the Viceroy could be the result of concern for the success of the Royal tour.

Nevertheless, like Reading he could see that some revision of the 1919 Government of India Act would be beneficial.

He wrote to Reading on 23rd December 1921, suggesting that the Viceroy consider changes regardless of the effect on political opinion in India, which he did not feel would be serious:

> I do not deny that it would be criticised or that the extremists would fail to try and make some capital out of it; on the other hand I think there would be less criticism than you suppose.[5]

However, he did not believe that the possibility of such changes should be used as bargaining counters, or that negotiation about them should delay the arrest of what he regarded as dissident elements. Again, Lloyd was justified in his concern; either the Government admitted that the 1919 Act had weaknesses, in which case it should be altered; or it believed totally in the Act. Other Provincial Governors, such as Willingdon, were concerned about Reading's hesitation and Lloyd again protested that if it became known that Gandhi's arrest had been planned and then cancelled, Bombay would become impossible to govern. Reading and his Council were difficult to persuade, so Lloyd tried to apply pressure with the unwitting help of another Governor, Lord Willingdon of Madras.

While not as antagonistic towards Reading as his colleague Lloyd, Willingdon did present Reading with a number of problems. He was outspoken, and tended to go his own way, regardless of the dictates of the Central Administration. This tendency to interpret and act independently was obvious right from the start of Reading's time in India. In April 1921, in spite of the lull elsewhere, or maybe because of it, Willingdon wanted to act openly against Gandhi, using all his available resources to defeat what he regarded as a revolutionary movement. At this point, no doubt, Reading did not want openly to oppose Willingdon, yet he could see no real need for such action at that time. He replied to Willingdon's request on 18th April 1921:

> You are proposing a new policy which will involve serious consequences, for you desire openly to array the Governor and all his forces to march upon the enemy whom you describe as revolutionary. I am watching this movement and all its actions with the greatest care and am prepared with you to take strong measures if I am convinced of the need of them. Except for your views of events in Madras, Gandhi does not not, at present, seem to me to be making progress.[6]

Such open-ended replies to his Governors are typical of Reading's handling of situations. Perhaps this was due to his early legal training, the need to keep various options open, to examine all sides of an argument and only to reach a conclusion when all aspects had been examined. Certainly, it is this which led to accusations of indecisiveness from his contemporaries. Yet, inspite of his ability to offer opinions, Reading did have his own ideas about the outcome of any problem. Generally, Reading's ideas were implemented, although he did not issue direct instructions. Willingdon took no action against Gandhi in April 1921.

Later in 1921 Willingdon caused Reading further anxiety when he made a speech condemning the Viceroy's handling of Gandhi and the extremists. This not only led to problems in India, but also to apprehension at home, as British politicians began to question Reading's policy. Nothing was officially said as Parliament was closed for its summer recess, but the Secretary of State wrote to Reading on 5th September:

> I cannot help thinking that if Parliament were sitting, there would be widespread demand to know what you are contemplating.[7]

Reading dealt with the problem by promising Willingdon strong action, yet leaving the extremists the right to appeal to the Central Government if they felt they were being unfairly treated. This, too, led to an angry outburst from Willingdon who felt that to allow such rights of appeal was a reflection on his administration. Again, Reading's reply was tactful, but without any direct instruction:

> I cannot see why a right of appeal should imply any doubt of you or your co-administrators. It never occurred to me when I was Chief Justice of England that there was any reflection on me because there was a right of appeal to superior courts.[8]

No more was said on the matter. It was interesting to note that Reading considered Willingdon to be "vague". He wrote to the Secreatry of State on 19th June 1924:

> He has especially the gifts of charm and sympathty, but is too delightfully vague to satisfy my more precise mind.[9]

Yet Willingdon, like Lloyd, had his own ideas about the arrest of Gandhi. As we have already seen, he placed the blame for the Moplah risings firmly on Reading's delay in arresting the Ali brothers. Lloyd and Willingdon found they had views to share about Gandhi's arrest. Consequently, in February 1922, they met together in Bombay and travelled to Delhi to present a united case to the Viceroy. Both were determined to resign responsibility if their problems were not satisfactorily solved. Willingdon wrote to Reading on 27th February explaining his position:

> When I left Bombay with him our main object (at all events as far as I was concerned) was to express ourselves stongly on the subject of Gandhi being allowed to "run out", and throw in our hands unless we could be assured on certain matters.[10]

However, before he could take such a drastic step, Willingdon realised that Lloyd had become almost obsessional about the arrest of Gandhi. It became obvious to the Governor of Madras that Lloyd's proposal owed more to this obsession than to any desire to improve the situation in India. In any case, Willingdon was not totally opposed to Reading, although Lloyd might have believed otherwise. Consequently, Willingdon withdrew from his agreement with Lloyd and apologised to the Viceroy.

Lloyd remained very angry and not without some justification. He felt that the vacillation of the Central Assembly would make it difficult to achieve unanimity and desiciveness in the local assemblies. He and the Government of Bombay had repeatedly pointed out that law and order could not be maintained unless Gandhi was arrested. If the Central Assembly failed to carry out the arrest, the Bombay Government would suffer a loss of credibility.

Reading became very worried about the obsessional nature of Lloyd's attitude. In reply to Willingdon's apology, he wrote, "At the early part of his stay here, Lloyd, I am sure, was scarcely himself, and, indeed, his condition rather alarmed me".[11] On the same day, 2nd March 1922, Reading also wrote of his concern to the Secretary of State:

> He was, in my judgement, obsessed - I cannot use any other word - with the effect the postponement had had upon his own position - not so much even that of the Bombay Government as that of Sir George Lloyd. He was very insistent that it had destroyed his influence.[12]

Nevertheless, the news of Gandhi's peaceful arrest did calm Lloyd, although he did suffer severe nervous strain and remained bitter about the Government of India. He was careful in the future to keep all his contacts with the Viceroy correct and proper. However, following the resignation of Montagu, whom he had regarded as a confidant, he felt isolated and insecure, which, no doubt, contributed further to his poor health. In August he discussed his feelings with General Rawlinson, who recorded in his journal:

> Today I had a long talk with George Lloyd who is bitter with the Viceroy.[13]

Eventually, the state of Lloyd's health forced him to return to Britain, although his political career did later continue when he became High Commissioner in Egypt.

Reading's handling of the problem seems somewhat unsatisfactory. If he believed, as his letters of 2nd March seem to suggest, that Lloyd was either ill or obsessed with personal glorification, the Viceroy should surely have taken direct or decisive action, even to the extent of having the Governor recalled. Yet he failed to do so. One possible reason for this failure is that Reading realised that the delay in arresting Gandhi had caused unnecessary stress for Lloyd, and thus he, the Viceroy, was partly responsible for Lloyd's problems. Yet this seems unlikely. Perhaps Reading's judicial mind prevented him from making a decision without examining all the evidence. However, whatever the reason, the incident does reveal a weakness in Reading's administrative skills. Definite action should have been taken, if Reading really believed what he wrote.

The third Governor to cause Reading anxiety was Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal. Lytton, like Lloyd, was a conservative Governor. He believed in taking strong action against dissident elements, and he had been very satisfied with the arrest and imprisonment of Gandhi in 1922. At the time he had informed the Viceroy that his travels around the country had convinced him that the non-co-operation movement would never recover from such a blow.[14] Trouble started between Lytton and Reading when news of Gandhi's release was revealed by the press. Like Lloyd, Lytton argued that his position was weakened, in the eyes of his friends and the provincial government, by such displays of leniency on the part of the Central Administration. He wrote to Reading on 12th February 1924, expressing his view:

> This action has come as a complete bombshell and has left me without a word of defence to all the friends of Government who complain bitterly that this concession to Swarajist opposition has finally destroyed what little influence and authority they possessed.[15]

In addition, he was naturally dissatisfied that he had only learnt the news through the press. He claimed that such action shook his faith in the Central Administration.

Reading replied in typical fashion, careful not to offend Lytton by suggesting that his attitude was wrong. He pointed out that the Bombay Government, which had not been inclined to be sympathetic to Gandhi previously was prepared to be lenient now. More important, in Reading's opinion, was Lytton's accusation that the Central Government had lost face by releasing Gandhi. He believed that Lytton had acted precipitately in so openly criticising the Government. He wrote to Lytton on 25th February:

> I was somewhat surprised by your letter of the 12th instant with reference to the release of Gandhi in as much as I should have thought you would have desired to see the statement forwarded to Local Governments at least before informing me that the foundation of your confidence in Central Government had crumbled away. However, perhaps you thought that strong expressions in a personal letter from you to me were not to be regarded too seriously, and especially from a Local Governor to a Viceroy whom he knew personally. There let it rest.[16]

Perhaps Reading should have been firmer and more direct in his admonition, as Lytton did not "let it rest". He continued to be very outspoken and critical of Reading over the release of Gandhi, claiming that many of his difficulties in Bengal could be attributed to the action. This claim was rather an exaggeration, as there had been problems in Bengal since 1920, when the non-co-operation movement became active in the area.[17] Nevertheless, Lytton persisted with his criticism, finally forcing Reading into making a much sterner response:

> I strongly resent your observations about the Government of India for which you have not the faintest justification, and I can only express my surprise that you should have written to me in such terms.[18]

There the matter did rest, although Lytton was not satisfied and remained resentful. However, elsewhere in India, Gandhi's release caused few problems, and Lytton found no allies against Reading. Lytton also tried writing to Lord Olivier, the Secretary of State, but gained little satisfaction from that quarter as Olivier was not a good correspondent, rarely replying to letters. The Secretary of State had also been known to breach confidentiality, using Lytton's letters in a way their author had not intended. It was only with the appointment of Lord Birkenhead as Secretary of State that Lytton found an outlet for his bitterness.[19]

In view of Lytton's gratification at having found a correspondent, it is, perhaps, not surprising that his letters became increasingly more critical of Reading's administration. In December 1924 there was an incident in Mirzapur Street, in Calcutta, when a bomb was thrown at an informer. It missed, and the wrong person was killed. The only eye-witness was the original target and the prosecution of the bombers was withdrawn, as Lytton felt the witness was in too much danger. Reading was shocked by this action, although the Bengal Ordinances did allow imprisonment without trial. Lytton found Reading's attitude hard to accept, and he wrote to the Secretary of State on 11th December:

> I ...felt that it was late in the day for the Viceroy now to complain of the continued use of the most important of all powers, namely, imprisonment without trial.[20]

The letters included increasingly bitter attacks on Reading, especially as Lytton was hoping for leave of absence under the new Act of Parliament, to which Reading did not agree. The Viceroy felt that other Governors should have priority, as they had been refused leave previously. Lytton particularly wanted leave in 1925 to see his son, and his attacks on Reading became rather more personal than political.

Political criticism did continue: for example on December 24th 1924 he attacked the Central Government, claiming they had no knowledge of local conditions. He used this claim to justify his direct personal correspondence with the Secretary of State, whom he kept imformed of the state of affairs in Bengal.[21] It is difficult to see how this correspondence served any useful purpose for the Central Administration.

However, Lytton's attacks on the Viceroy were no longer always constructive criticism but had become a personal vendetta against someone Lytton regarded as socially inferior. He also wrote, in the same letter of December 24th:

> The Readings have taken out seats in the cathedral on Xmas day and we are obliged to go to the synagogue and pray for the Jews!![21]

Such personal attacks could not be allowed to continue, regardless of whether the letters were private or personal, and Reading was forced to issue a directive to all Governors. In future, they were bound to inform the Viceroy before writing to the Secretary of State on matters of political importance. Such confusion and individualism could not be allowed to continue, as Reading pointed out to the Secretary of State on 5th February 1925:

> During my Viceroyalty on various occasions I have found that letters and telegrams were passing from the Presidency Governors, unknown to me, to the Secretary of State with reference to actions I had taken, or to responsibilities which rested upon me and not to the Presidency Governors. Peel was particularly careful to inform me when such communication reached him. They emanated ... from George Lloyd, but also from Lytton whose action finally caused confusion and loss of time.[22]

Thus Lytton's vitriolic attacks on Reading were stopped. Yet, again, it seems Reading delayed too long before calling his subordinates to order.

As we have already seen one of the weaknesses of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, in the eyes of Lord Sinha, was that they continued to allow private correspondence between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. How much more dangerous was the private correspondence from the Governors to the Secretary of State who were supposed to recognize the Viceroy as Governor - General, and who were often severely critical of his administration? However, preventing such correspondence could have proved extremely difficult. Reading's success in this area is, therefore, important.

In the event Lytton did not get his leave in 1925 as Reading returned to England himself, leaving Lytton as Acting-Viceroy. No doubt the break eased tension between them, although no sooner had Reading returned than he had to refuse Lytton an equipment grant of £500, which Reading felt was an unnecessary expense if the Governors managed their finances adequately.[23] The tension between the two was still evident in 1926, as Butler wrote to Lady Fitzroy, Lady Reading's secretary:

> I hear that the Lyttons are most hostile to the Readings still. Calcutta is not big enough to hold a Viceroy and a Governor.[24]

It is obvious, therefore, that relationships between the Viceroy and certain of his Governors were far from ideal. This was not unusual. It had happened during the Viceroyalty of Curzon. Yet there were faults on both sides. Reading, for his part, seemed to be unable to make full use of the Governors, one of whose roles was to advise the Viceroy about local conditions. As in the case of Lloyd's demands for Gandhi's arrest, Reading persistently ignored the advice of his Governors, preferring to make his own examination of the facts. This increased his workload immensely, leading to delays and accusations of indecisiveness. There is no doubt that Reading's legal training influenced this desire to study all aspects of every question, but, having reached a decision, Reading's second weakness was in in-

ability, except under extreme pressure to offer a definitive statement, thus ending all dissension.

The Governors, for their part, should not have allowed their frustrations to spill over in to personal attacks on Reading. It seemed that those in authority in the Raj had failed again to work together as a team, as they had failed so often in the past. Yet again, the Raj failed to present an united front to the Indian nationalists, thus weakening the Government's position.

Under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms over four hundred of the Princely States were retained, and the Princes were given their own form of assembly, known as the Chamber of Princes. All the states were under British protection. Reading had been forced to use certification to maintain this protection when the Legislative Assembly repealed the Press Act in 1922. In order to prevent the spread of subversive literature in the Princely States, new, protective legislation had to be passed.

Generally, Reading's relations with the Princes were good, although the Earl of Birkenhead, in his biography of Lord Irwin commented, "It was curious how few of the Princes seemed to have liked Reading".[25] One such Prince was the Maharaja of Gwalior, who complained to Curzon:

> Reading is a very weak Viceroy. He never reads a file or studies a subject, but has people in who state the case to him orally, just as though he was a lawyer in chambers, and then decides.[26]

However, this view is probably biased as Reading had little time or respect for the Maharaja, who ruled his state harshly. In the view of H.M.Hyde, the Viceroy had a "premonition of the [Maharajah's] ... evil ways".[27]

The Princes were generally allowed to rule in their own way, under the watchful eye of the British Government's representative.

However, during his Viceroyalty, three Princes did force Reading to take action against them, due largely to their attitude to an equal judicial system and to poor leadership.

The Maharaja of Nabha presented the first problem to Reading; although initially the case did not seem serious the issue dragged on for several months. The problem seemed two-fold; firstly the State of Nabha had a long history of misrule, which was revealed by a Government investigative team in in July 1923. Evidence gathered by the investigators suggested that the Maharaja had systematically brought the courts and the police under his direct control. Also the Maharaja had committed offences against the neighbouring state of Patiala, and it was complaints from that state which led to the original investigation. It is worth noting, however, that the Maharaja of Nabha was known to be a supporter of the Indian nationalist movement, whereas the Maharaja of Patiala was subservient to British rule.

However, a third problem was revealed by the investigation when it became obvious that the Maharaja had been giving support to the Akali Sikhs, who were in dispute with the Mahant, or resident Holy man, of their shrine, over financial matters. The Sikhs had tried to occupy the shrine but the Mahant had called in Muslim troops to enforce his rights and one hundred and thirty Sikhs were killed. The Mahant was later arrested and imprisoned, but the incident caused a great deal of disgust among the Sikhs, who were grateful for the Maharaja of Nabha's support.

The action Reading decided to take had to serve two purposes; to regularise the administration of the State and to remove the Maharaja from Sikh politics. Consequently, Reading had to act cautiously.

The Sikhs respected the Maharaja and there was the possiblity of unrest if steps were taken to arrest and imprison Nabha. Therefore, the Maharaja was allowed to abdicate in favour of his infant son, and the state was to be administered by the British until he reached his majority. The Maharaja was also to be allowed to retain his title, his salute and an annual allowance. He would not, however, be allowed to visit the Punjab without the permission of the Government of India.

The solution seemed more than fair but it left a major problem. If further, and more serious, scandals were revealed by the investigation the Maharaja could not be prosecuted for them. However, Reading felt his action was justified as he explained to the Secretary of State on 12th June 1923:

> I recognize that when we have taken over the administration, scandals may come to light later on if the rumours I have heard are true, for which,under the settlement we shall not be able to punish him. But, in the first place without enquiry it is impossible to say what truth there is in these stories, and, secondly, I feel that anything which could be gained by prolonging the proceedings would be outweighed by the advantages ...[28]

Ultimately it was Reading's aim to have the whole issue solved as quickly as possible and with the minimum of trouble. Later the Viceroy may have wished he had dealt more harshly with the Maharaja as trouble continued, stirred up by the Akali Sikhs. They were upset and frustrated that a Sikh state should have been brought under British control, even temporarily. Sikh politicians were pressurized, and the Sikh community threatened to make a religious issue of the case, sending Sikh bands into Nabha. On 30th July Reading telegraphed to the Secretary of State:

> This is represented as attack [sic] against integrity of State and as attempt by Government to turn Nabha into British District It is also freely stated that... Government has designs on religion of Tikka Sahib, a child of four years.[29]

Reading was not unduly worried by the Sikh unrest. The Sikhs' campaign was engineered by the Siromani Gurdwar Parband-hak Committee in order to keep alive Sikh extremist agitation which had previously had no real objective. Although he recognised that the Sikh movement could be dangerous if it became a purely religious pressure group, it seemed unlikely that the case of the abdicated Maharaja could be made into a religious issue. Reading wrote to the Secretary of State on 25th November 1923:

> The decision to espouse the cause of the Maharaja of Nabha was adopted with hesitation and in all probability under pressure from behind. The endeavours to give a religious significance to this action were puerile and carried no conviction. It was a challenge, on a purely secular issue, to the authority of the Government.[30]

Sikh frustration did result in violence in February 1924 when pilgrims marched to the shrine at Jaito. To prevent trouble the authorities tried to limit entry to the shrine to groups of fifty. The Sikhs refused to comply, and some fighting broke out, in which twenty-one people were killed. However, an enquiry, headed by Mr. Balwant Singh, proved that the Sikhs had attacked first. From then Sikh agitation died down.

Meanwhile, Reading was forced to threaten much more serious action against the Maharaja, as Nabha refused to hand over his title deeds or pay his reparations to Pataila. Reading informed the Maharaja that his state pension would be witheld unless he conformed to the agreement.[31]

As the deeds were gradually released it became evident that the Maharaja was trying to line his own pockets by disposing of state lands.[32] It was a further year before the state was fully under British control. Reading's hopes of a speedy and trouble-free solution were not, therefore, fulfilled.

Another long running dispute involved the Nizam of Hyderabad. The basis of the dispute had actually been laid down in 1800 when an agreement had been made between the then Nizam and the British Government. The Nizam promised to make an annual contribution to the British administration to cover the cost of troops used to maintain law and order in Hyderabad. By 1848, the Nizams had fallen behind with the payments and the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, whose aim was to extend the influence of the Raj, annexed the State of Berar, part of the territory held by the Nizam, as compensation. The revenue of the state was calculated at 50 lakhs per annum. In return, the Nizam was allowed to keep a force of 5,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry. Any surplus income from the state was also paid to the Nizam.[33]

The situation was formalised by Lord Curzon in 1902 when he arranged for the State of Berar to be leased, in perpetuity, by the British. In 1902, all parties had seemed satisfied with the agreement made, which was particularly favourable to the Nizam.

However, the Nizam's son, who succeeded in 1911, did not agree. He demanded a re-examination of the 1902 agreement and invited Reading to Hyderabad to discuss the matter. Reading refused the inviatation, for reasons he explained to Willingdon on 10th July 1923:

> I am not disposed to go out of my way to visit His Exalted Highness the Nizam. I had to instruct our Resident to make representations to the Nizam after the Prince of Wales' visit there in reference to a want of proper ceremonial attention to His Royal Highness,

> and although the incident is closed by my message and the Nizam's acceptance for the future of the views I caused to be expressed, I am not particularly anxious to do him the honour of a Viceragal visit.[34]

Such an incident may seem very minor, but Reading placed a great deal of importance on the ceremonial process, so much so that it had become something of a joke in Viceregal circles. In fact, the lack of "proper ceremonial attention" was regarded as an insult by Reading. Consequently, he was antagonistic towards the Nizam and he was prepared to use his full legal talents to oppose the claims of the Nizam to the overlordship of the State of Berar. Certainly there were moral grounds for opposition; ninety percent of the population of Berar was Hindu, and in a time of increasing communal tension the people were not willing to return to the control of the Muslim Nizam.

The Nizam argued his case on the grounds that the Britsh had taken advantage of his father's insecurity. He wrote to Reading explaining his case, on 25th October 1923:

> I cannot but regard it as an unfortunate circumstance that my father, who was known to be of a shy and nervous disposition, was unaccompanied in the Audience Room. The preliminaries which were discussed before the question of the Berars was reached were very disconcerting.[35]

The Viceroy did agree to investigate the Nizam's claims. The investigation took over a year, and it was not until March 1925 that Reading was able to give the Nizam his answer. As far as the Viceroy was concerned, the investigation had covered old ground, it was not the first investigation of the 1902 agreement, and no new evidence had been revealed to suggest that the agreement was anything but legal. In fact, Reading was very critical of the Nizam for making accusations which he could not prove.

The Nizam, not satisfied with the decision, became angry and bitter about the control the Raj had over his state. He asked Reading to reconsider, claiming that the Viceroy had not fully examined the evidence, and suggesting that he would no longer accept the Sovereignty of the British over Hyderabad if the decision went against him:

> The rejection by His Majesty's Government of my claim to the restoration of the Berars can only be, in fact, expressing its views, but it cannot impose on me or my House any obligation to treat the subject as closed or regard the claim as barred for all time.[36]

The major cause of his distress and anger was that he saw his role as Nizam as that of equal partner, with the British Raj as an ally rather than as an overlord. He asked for another commission of enquiry to be set up with a British chairman with legal and judicial experience. Reading could not allow there to be any doubt that there was no such thing as an equal partnership, and he issued an absolute rebuttal of the Nizam's claims, along with a strong statement emphasising the absolutism of the Raj on 27th March 1926:

> The Sovereignty of the British Crown is supreme in India, and therefore no Ruler of an Indian State can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing.[37]

That being the case, Reading stated that the Raj could intervene in the internal affairs of an Indian state whenever it felt it necessary.

Undoubtedly, the Nizam had chosen a bad time to press his claim, the Viceroy was fully cognisant of the law. Perhaps the apparent leniency the Viceroy had displayed elsewhere in India convinced the Nizam that his claim would be sympathetically heard. Perhaps he was also shocked to find that Reading could act firmly if he felt that the supremacy of the Raj was threatened.

The most serious breach of the law by an Indian prince which Reading had to deal with concerned the Maharaja of Indore and possibly his whole court, who were implicated in January 1925 in a plot to kidnap Mumtaz Begum, the Maharaja's mother-in-law, and return her to Indore. In the attempt a Mr. Bawla was murdered when he tried to prevent the kidnapping. Again, Reading was forced to take immediate and firm action; to delay in a case of a serious breach of the law would have alienated the Princes. An investigation into the administration of Indore was called for by the Advocate-General, Mitter, and the Solicitor to the Government, Dunlop, who both agreed that it was impossible to say whether the Maharaja was involved on the evidence available. They believed that the Maharaja must have known of the plans and argued that an investigation might reveal evidence of this.[38]

Before an investigation could be implemented the Maharaja offered to abdicate. Reading wanted to avoid any secret agreement, although it was not certain the Maharaja had been involved in the plot, the possibility of prosecution had to be considered. Reading wrote to the Secretary of State on 30th January 1925:

> We must be able to show that our own attitude has been perfectly transparent and that there has been no concealment and nothing in way of secret agreement [sic].[39]

The Maharaja offered to abdicate in favour of his son and, as it became increasingly likely that no case against the Maharaja would be proved, this was accepted and the case dropped. It seemed probable that the Maharaja had expressed regret at the departure of Mumtaz, and others had taken it upon themselves to see she was returned.

There is no doubt that in these six cases the nature of Reading's Viceroyalty becomes obvious.

PAGE NUMBERING AS ORIGINAL

He had no desire to dominate, preferring to persuade, which contributed to the view that he was weak and indecisive. Yet the results he achieved were satisfactory and he avoided the antagonism that would have been caused by a dictatorial attitude. In his dealings with the Nizam and Lytton he showed that he could give direct instuctions if he felt it necessary. However, as the King's representative in India he should have done more to uphold the image of the Raj, by exercising greater control over his subordinates. However, due to the temperaments of all those involved, trouble may have been unavoidable.

Chapter Eight; Reading and Indian Economic Problems 1921 to 1926

One of the major problems faced by Reading during his Viceroyalty was that of the serious financial state of India. There had been a series of unbalanced budgets since the war, partly due to the difficulties of finding working capital both prior to 1914 and in the 1920s, and partly due to the inability of the British to import the necessary heavy machinery during the war years. Due to the world situation in the 1920s the rupee exchange collapsed and the depression of world trade after the First World War affected India badly. Coupled with these problems was the need for heavy military expenditure, due to the situation in Afghanistan and the North West Frontier Province between 1918 and 1921. Between 1920 and 1922 the budget was in deficit by Rs 84 crores. The economic consequences of this were to place great strain on the agricultural and lower-middle classes, whose earnings did not keep up with inflation. This also contributed to political unrest in India and aggravated nationalistic feeling.

On 1st June 1921 the Secretary of State wrote to the Viceroy expressing his concern at the unbalanced budgets:

> Every letter that I read or see makes me convinced that the Government of India will never run smoothly until the Government of India is self-supporting.[1]

However, Indian nationalists did not believe that the British ever intended India to become self-supporting. Jawaharlal Nehru argued that the British Government intended India to stay dependent on Britain. He wrote, in an article:

> They deliberately tried to prevent change except so far as this was necessary to consolidate their position and help them in exploiting the country and its people to their own advantage.[2]

Due to the unbalanced budgets the Government was forced to intervene in the economy of India with retrenchment, increased taxation and protection, all of which were contrary to Reading's liberal principles. Yet circumstances forced him to act, and it is possible that more would have been achieved in the area of economic progress if it had not been for political unrest distracting the attention of the Indian administration. The expense of maintaining law and order meant that finance was limited for the transferred subjects, such as education, irrigation and health, and also for the extension of the railway network. The problem was compounded by the fact that political unrest gave the impression that the Government of India was insecure, thus discouraging private investment, as Reading informed the Prime Minister in 20th September 1922, when he wrote of the view of India:

> The more Britain invests in India the deeper embedded will be the roots of her administration in India.[3]

Indian nationalists, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, were very critical of the Government of India's economic record. Nehru quoted figures which, he argued, proved that there had been no industrial progress during the period of the Raj. Indeed, during that time, there had been a growth in the rural population from 55% in the mid-nineteenth century to 74% by the 1920s.[4] This particularly affected those areas which had been longest under British rule, such as Madras, which was among the poorest Provinces in 1921.

Even some members of the British administration felt that the Indian economy under the Raj was badly managed. Lord Rawlinson, the Commander-in-Chief, felt that the expense of maintaining Imperialistic ritual ought to be ended:

> After two year's experience of Indian government, I have come to the conclusion that it one of the most uneconomical in the world today....I ask myself whether there is any real need to maintain all these relics of grandeur.[5]

Victor Trench also emphasises the fact that Madras, Lord Willingdon's Province, was industrially weak, as it lost out to more progressive Provinces, such as Bombay, and to cities such as Ahmedebad.[6]

Yet these views are somewhat over-critical. The Government of India was aware of the problems, and it would be wrong to say there was no economic progress during the Viceroyalty of Lord Reading. Perhaps the balancing of the budget was the most important achievement in this period, although this was only achieved with the introduction of very unpopular measures, both to Indians and to the British administration in India.

It became essential that some action be taken when the 1922 budget showed a deficit over estimated expense of Rs 9,16,28,000, the fifth in a succession of deficits. The 1921 budget had a deficit of Rs 18 crores, some of which had been covered by a new taxation of 20% on luxury goods, which included confectionery, cars, clocks, watches and jewellery. In introducing the budget on 1st March 1921, Lord Hailey, the Finance Minister, warned that the situation was likely to get worse.[7] As predicted, even these measures failed to reduce the deficit, and following the presentation of the 1922 budget, the members of the Legislative Assembly demanded that the Government of India introduce a retrenchment scheme. Nevertheless, in the opinion of some British politicians, the Assembly showed a real sense of political responsibility by passing the budget. Lord Rawlinson noted:

> There were no silly demonstrations such as walking out of the House - a procedure some extremists had talked of - and the House behaved in a way which shows it has a real sense of its responsibilities.[8]

The Government of India agreed to retrench; steps were taken towards increasing revenue by the introduction of the salt tax. As far as the Government of India was concerned, such indirect taxation was essential if India's budget was ever to balance, as it was seen as the only way of taxing the majority of the population, who were mainly self-sufficient, and therefore avoided the tax on goods. Nevertheless, Reading was not pleased that he was forced, by circumstances, to introduce such an unpopular tax, affecting all sections of the population of India. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 9th March 1922:

> I need not tell you that I hate all these duties, as I am sure you do, and indeed we can only have recourse to them because there is no other way of raising revenue.[9]

There was strong opposition to the tax from Indian nationalists who claimed that it placed an excessive burden on the poorest classes who depended heavily on salt to flavour unpalatable food.[10]

Demands for retrenchment came at a convenient juncture. In Britain, the Geddes Committee had just proposed measures for the retrenchment of the economy, and it was possible to recruit certain members of that Committee to complete a similar examination of expenses in India. Reading acknowledged that the financial situation in India had become critical during 1921 and that action was imperative. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 15th March 1922:

> Matter [sic] has become one of prime importance in view of the attitude shown in non-official opinion in this country, both European and Indian, after publication of Budget, as to imperative necessity of reducing present scale of expenditure."

The composition of such a committee did, however, present a few problems.

In view of the demands for further moves towards self-government, the

correct balance of Indians and Europeans was essential. The Chairman, if he was British, had to be someone of solid reputation, otherwise Indian nationalists were likely to demand the appointment of their own candidate. The man chosen was a Scotsman, Viscount Inchcape, a director of a shipping company and a member of the Geddes Committee. Two other Scots, Sir Thomas Catto and Sir Alexander Murray were also selected, giving rise to a series of political cartoons showing three "canny Scotsmen" curbing the extravagences of the Raj. The Indian members of the Committee were Mr. Dadiba Dalal, Sir R.N.Mookerjee and Mr. Purushottamdas Thakurdas.

The appointment of the Chairman was generally well received. The Capital of Calcutta congratulated the administration on their choice:

> The best possible proof of the sincerity and courage of Lord Reading to rule India by a generous interpretation of her new constitution.[12]

Inchcape was himself pleased to have the opportunity of working with both Reading and Lord Rawlinson, both of whom he said he had always admired. In a letter written to Sir Harcourt Butler in 1921, he said of Reading:

> He is, of course, a man of outstanding ability and great experience, far and away from any Viceroy India has yet had, a man who will hold his own and I am confident he will do well.[13]

By 1922, through Reading's management of the political situation, this prophecy had been partly fulfilled and it seemed likely that Inchcape and the Viceroy would work well together.

The Committee was not given a figure to aim for but was asked to achieve the greatest possible retrenchment. Inchcape's plan was to approach each department and ask them to make economies where they could, without singling out any one department as particular offenders.

Consequently, Reading informed all departments in May to be ready to co-operate.[14]

The final report was presented in 1923, with recommendations that would bring in a saving of £8,000,000 and a balanced budget. The Times described the report as "remarkable evidence" of Lord Inchcape's tact and driving power.[15] The bulk of this saving came from the Army budget, decreased by Rs 8,95,30,000. Non-military reductions totalled Rs 8½ crores. Revenue was increased by raising the salt tax from Rs 1½ to Rs 2½ per maund (a measure of weight by which salt was sold). The army was itself reduced from 1,003 battalions to 882, with a total reduction in men of 18,000. As Inchcape's final report said:

> As long as peace conditions obtain, the first essential is for India to balance her budget and this can only be secured by a very substantial reduction in the military estimates.[16]

In fact the Committee recommended that the administration should not be satisfied with a military budget of Rs 57 crores and that the Army Department should aim for a gradual reduction in successive years. To make the programme of economies more palatable Lord Rawlinson persuaded the India Office to consider a more rapid rate of Indianization.[17]

Inchcape, in his speech of presentation, also criticised those agitators who stirred up political unrest, thus keeping the defence budget high. He described them as being, "blindly desirous of upsetting civilisation".[18]

There were congratulations for Inchcape from many quarters. Lord Rawlinson spoke of the great skill with which Inchcape had carried through the enquiry, and acknowledged the great debt India owed to him.[19]

Such an attitude from the Commander-in-Chief who had been determined to oppose all army cuts, but who had been persuaded by the Chairman to accept a considerable reduction of 18,000 men, shows the skill of Inchcape. Sir Thomas Catto, his fellow member of the Committee, wrote in his notes of the meetings:

> There is no doubt that Inchcape was a great man and a great Chairman. Above all he was a great Britisher to whom the glory and strength of the Empire were something sacred.[20]

Congratulations also came from the Secretary of State who wrote that he found it difficult to find words to express his admiration.[21]

Nevertheless, Inchcape's proposals did leave Reading with a serious problem. It was necessary to raise the unpopular salt tax from Rs 1¼ per maund to Rs 2½ per maund. In 1922, the Assembly had agreed that the salt tax was necessary, but, by 1923, the situation had changed. The Swarajists, having entered the Assembly in the 1923 elections, were determined to prove that the reformed constitution was unworkable, by forcing the Viceroy to rule by certification. Yet certification on such a politically critical issue could be dangerous, and Reading was afraid that violent outbreaks might follow. However, regardless of his reluctance, he felt he must give effect to the budget proposals, in the interests of India. He telegraphed to the Secretary of State on 16th March:

> I am not under delusions as to the effect of my action which will subject me to very serious attack and criticism and will be used as powerful arguments against reality of reforms.[22]

He did not, however, act without consulting his Provincial Governors. In a circular letter, dated 23rd March, he asked them to submit their views on the effect certification might have in their Province.[23] Several Governors, in areas such as the Punjab and Burma, agreed there would be no violent disturbances if certification were used to increase the salt

tax. In other Provinces, such as Bengal, Bombay and the Central Provinces, where the Swaraj Party was stronger, it was acknowledged that certification would increase support for the Swarajists. The Governor of Bombay telegraphed to the Viceroy on 25th March:

> In the first place, such action will give real force in public minds to the cry that the reforms are a sham; this cry had lost its strength completely; but it would now be revitalised, at a moment when the party who used it are for the first time going to contest elections against the moderate party, whose plank is the efficacy of the reforms.[24]

Reading realised that opposition to the salt tax could become an article of faith in India, and he agreed with the Governor of Bombay that the use of certification would be seen as a failure of the reforms. However, he felt that the political situation in India had improved sufficiently since 1921, and that a campaign against payment of the salt tax would not be organised at this stage.[25] There was some justification for his conviction. As we have seen, Congress was in a state of flux in 1923, divided between the "no-changers" and the "pro-changers", and lacking the mass support it would develop in later years. Ultimately, the campaign against the salt tax would be the issue that united the nation, a unity previously provided by the Khilafat movement, but, in 1923, the risk taken by Reading was minimal.

Reading not only believed that the salt tax was essential to secure a balanced budget, he also felt it was essential for the maintenance of the prestige of the Government of India. He wrote to Willingdon on 8th May:

> As you can imagine I most strongly dislike having recourse to these special powers, but I fear it is inevitable under our present constitution, when we have all the responsibility of an Executive

Government without a majority in the Assembly to carry our recommendations. Once a Government has committed itself - as we did for the second time - to proposing the salt tax and had, in addition, made all the retrenchments recommended by Inchcape...it became to me practically impossible, if the Government was to retain influence and authority, not to recommend the bill, and, equally, when recommended, and for the same reasons, not to certify.[26]

During the following months the assessment of the situation by Reading and his Provincial Governors proved accurate. There were no manifestations of popular protest, although various opposition groups did meet and pass resolutions condemning the tax. Reading informed the Secretary of State that there was "no indication of popular indignation".[27] The timing of the certification was convenient in any case. The harvest of 1923 was a good one and Indians were occupied on the land. Also, Hindu-Muslim divisions had become acute in some Provinces, communal tension distracted attention from the actions of the Government.

In spite of doubts expressed by both the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors; that it would cause increased activity among members of the nationalist movement, looking back in 1925, Reading recognised that the damage had been minimal. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 12th February 1925:

> Highly undesirable as it obviously is on general grounds for the Finance Bill to be certified, I do not believe that certification last year did harm, on the contrary it demonstrated the necessity for these emergency powers and showed the disastrous situation that would have been caused if I had not certified.[28]

However, Reading gives no indication about the feelings of the Swarajists and it seems unlikely that they agreed that "it demonstrated the necessity for these emergency powers".

Reading's decisive action in certifying the salt tax did ensure a

budget surplus in the following years, a justification, in the eyes of the British administration, for the firm line taken.. Although the Assembly protested the following year when the salt tax was retained, successive budgets showed a surplus. By 1925 the surplus was Rs 24,13,000. Reading's handling of India's economic problems shows his ability to set aside his own political beliefs in the interests of India, or rather, in the interests of the Raj.

The balancing of the budget was not the only economic consideration facing Reading in the period 1921 to 1926. He also had to consider the future of India's industry, which had stagnated during the war. The volume of British trade with India ranged between one-fifth and one-seventeenth of all Britain's overseas trade and made up the largest share of India's overseas trade. Discriminatory tariffs existed, and, for the most part, operated against Indian industry. Naturally, some Indian politicians, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, believed that this was a deliberate policy aimed at limiting India's economic development. Nehru made the point that during the war, when India did not have to compete with British exports, there was a two hundred percent increase in the production of both jute and cotton. This, he argued, proved India could become a great industrial nation:

> India's ability to develop modern industry can be seen by her success in it whenever she has had a chance to build it up. Indeed, such success has been achieved in spite of all the strenuous opposition of the British Government in India and of vested interests in Britain.[29]

Naturally, not everyone agreed with Nehru's condemnation of the Government of India's performance as regards the encouragement of industrial development. Lord Chelmsford, in his new role as Chairman of the University College (London) Committee, wrote to Peel, the

Secretary of State for India in 1922, pointing out that India was considered, in October 1922, one of the eight chief industrial nations. Peel was pleased about this report as he felt it would help remove many misconceptions held by the British. He wrote to the Viceroy on 2nd November:

> People over here are apt to regard India as an agricultural country and I think it is just as well that they should realise how important her position is in the Industrial world.[30]

Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether Chelmsford's statement convinced Indian politicians, and no criteria for the judgement were given.

It was obvious that improvements could be made in India's industrial performance, with an increased degree of protection. Although the Viceroy was a free-trader by inclination, he was forced by circumstances in India to recognise that protection was essential to the successful development of Indian industry. A fiscal committee was set up in 1922 and reported, in October of that year, on its findings. Steps were taken cautiously to formalise the existing tariff system which was somewhat haphazard. The committee called on the Government of India to present a Bill for Protection, asserting its belief that the Indian administration should be given the authority to deal with her own tariff problems. The Viceroy notified the Secretary of State of the committee's findings on 15th October:

> While agreeing that protection should be applied with discrimination, they consider that the conditions laid down...are too stringent; that immediate steps be taken to adopt an intense policy of industrialisation, and that any discrimination necessary to the interests of the consumers must be decided on by the Government of India and the Indian Legislature.[31]

However, the report was well received by the Assembly and protective measures were introduced. The situation in India was further improved by the abolition of the Cotton Excise Duty in Britain in 1925.

A further problem hampering the full development of Indian industry was the limited railway network. Much of the blame for the failure to expand the network must lie with the British Government, which failed to invest money in this area, although, in other parts of the Empire, such as South Africa and Canada, the railway network was well developed. A committee, under Ackworth, had been set up by Montagu and had reported that India's industry was "crippled by the appalling inadequacy of her railways".[32] The total length of Indian railways in use in April 1921 was approximately 37,000 miles. Capital investment in the railways was rising slowly from £2.9 million in 1916 to £24 million in 1921, according to the Government report on the moral and material progress of India for that year. Tonnage and earnings had also increased slightly in that period, but much of the improvement was lost due to the high rate of inflation in the same period.[33]

Not all Indians wanted to see the increase of the railway network in any case, identifying it with British control over India. Jawaharlal Nehru expressed this view:

> The introduction of the steam train and the railway was a big step towards the change in the medieval structure, but it was intended to consolidate their rule and facilitate the exploitation, for their own benefit, of the interior of the country.[34]

It cannot be denied that the expansion of the railway network was of benefit to the Raj, who then encouraged rural communities to turn to the production of cash crops such as cotton, sugar-cane and tobacco. In years of good harvests it also benefitted the farmers. However, in order to make space for these crops the farmer had to cut down on the production of cereals, and in years of poor harvests he was forced to sell his cereal

reserves and seek credit from money-lenders. This led to tension in many areas, and probably contributed to the causes of the Moplah rebellion, as we have seen.

The Prime Minister, Lloyd George, was also concerned by the lack of development in Indian railways. He wrote to Reading expressing his concern about the lack of private enterprise in this area.[35] As a result a scheme, originally introduced in 1860, was re-introduced. Investors were guaranteed five percent interest on all capital invested. Nevertheless, the railway network continued to grow. By 1924, 37,618 miles were completed, this had risen to 39,048 by 1927, and 41,724 by 1930. In sixty years 36,500 miles of railway had been constructed, often under difficult conditions.

Adequate finance for, and development of, the railways only began after the Railway Board was given a separate budget. In years of an unbalanced budget it was obvious that the expansion of the railways would be limited. The separation of the two budgets can be regarded as something of a success for economic planning. The change was made in 1925, after months of debate. Initially, the proposals met with considerable opposition from some members of the Assembly who were concerned about the potential loss of their financial control over the railways, and also about the possibility of extra taxation which they may have had to legislate for. Certainly, following the change, railway business was no longer dependent on the proceeds of general taxation. The result of this was to stabilise the position of the railways.

It was also the declared intention of the Central Legislature to make state control of the railways the general rule in India. This would enable economies to be made in administrative costs, and release

money for further expansion. Nevertheless, the benefits of the change were not really felt during Reading's Viceroyalty.

Reading's firm handling of economic problems ultimately benefitted India. The budget surplus of 1924 was Rs 2,38,99,758. This rose to a surplus of Rs 5,68,25,698 in 1925.[36] Immediately there was a surplus, members of the Legislative Assembly demanded the removal of the salt tax. However, Reading was opposed to the total removal of the tax, he wished to see the surplus used in areas where development had been hindered by the lack of finance. This particularly affected the Transferred Subjects, and could be achieved by a reduction in the Provincial contributions to the Central Government. Consequently, the 1924-5 budget proposed to reduce salt tax from Rs 2½ per maund to Rs 2 per maund, and to cut Provincial contributions by Rs 1·5 crores. This was rejected by the Assembly, necessitating yet another certified budget. However, in order to make that more acceptable, Reading did reduce the salt tax to Rs 1·4.

It is also important to assess the effects of financial stringency on the Provinces. In the Provinces, under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, Indian ministers were responsible for health, agriculture and education, among other things. At the time of devolution, each Province was given a donation by the Central Government towards the first year's budget. However, Provincial Governments were then required to make annual donations to the Central Government in an attempt to balance the budget. Eight of the nine Provinces contributed an aggregate total of Rs 933 lakhs. This left only limited finance for the transferred subjects.

The devolution scheme was designed to give Indians' experience in governmental administration. It was one of Montagu's great ambitions to give the Provinces the right to manage their own affairs. Montagu

explained his idea to Reading on 15th June 1921:

> I always hoped that the one thing I should have achieved of an uncontroversial character by the reforms scheme was leaving to a province the management of its own dungheap.[37]

Montagu obviously recognised that continued involvement in Provincial affairs was bound to lead to trouble for the Raj. Nevertheless, the scheme, as we have seen, was not a complete success. Part of the problem was that even Montagu was unprepared to let total control slip away, retaining, for the Secretary of State, the controlling authority. He realised later that this was a mistake, but before he could act he was forced to resign. The less liberal Secretaries of State such as Olivier and Birkenhead, who followed, would not allow the removal of their control, claiming that the threat of violence in India made this impossible.

The following table shows the amount of money available to each of the transferred subjects:

Education	Rs 10,53 lakhs net
Medical/Public Health	Rs 4,90 lakhs net
Agriculture	Rs 1,78 lakhs net
Industries	Rs 1,28 lakhs net [38]

Nevertheless, progress in vital areas was limited. Finance was not the only reason for this, agitation against Westernization also hindered progress. However, expenditure in many of these areas was further cut by the Inchcape proposals. This worsened India's health problems, decreasing the efficiency of the workforce when it was essential for India to increase efficiency and output per head to improve her industrial performance.

The major concern was the possible lack of finance for education. Poor levels of literacy in India did present problems for the Government. In 1921, the Census report recorded as literate 22.6 million people. Among men over twenty literacy was 139 per 1,000, among women only 21 per

1,000 were literate. The level of literacy was higher in coastal areas than inland agricultural areas.[39]

The level of literacy continued to rise. Between 1921 and 1931 the actual number of literates increased by 5,515,205 persons, an increase of 24·4% against a population increase of 10·6%. By 1941, there had been an increase to 70% over 1931 for the whole population.[40] However, although local assemblies technically gained control of education, many posts were held by members of the I.C.S., and there were a number of conditions of service which could not be altered without breach of contract. For example, the Secretary of State made all the appointments, any vacant post had to be first offered to a member of the Indian Education Service before it could be given to a Provincial candidate. This situation continued until the Lee Commission report on the Indianization of the Services in 1924. The fact that there was not a rapid change in personnel meant that a certain continuity was ensured. The system also allowed time for the training of Indians.

Although the Central Government apparently lost interest in education once they had no direct involvement, the educational system continued to expand. Between 1921 and 1931 the number of pupils attending educational institutions rose from 8,316,865 to 12,689,086, a percentage increase of 53.[41]

Yet the Central Government was concerned by what it saw as only limited advance, as successive Government reports show. In 1924, the Government White Paper on the moral and material progress of India said of literacy:

> Until this defect, [poor education] can be remedied, it seems unlikely that India will develop the energy necessary for the attainment of economic and political well-being.[42]

Nevertheless, between 1921 and 1924 there seems to have been a certain

complacency among the Central authorities regarding the state of Indian education. Reports stated that it was only the lower classes who were illiterate, statistics were used to show that Indian higher education was not far behind European countries in terms of students as a percentage of the population. For example the Government report on the progress of India in 1920 stated:

> The lower classes are largely illiterate while the middle-classes, who constitute the bulk of the intelligentsia, in point of numbers at least, are educated to a point equal to that of countries whose social and economic conditions are far more developed.[43]

The same report also pointed out that 0.5% of the population were attending secondary schools, compared to 1.6% in Britain; 0.027% were enrolled in universities as compared to 0.054% in Britain. However, it is difficult to regard such manipulation of statistics as a realistic measure of the success of Indian education.

Two further problems were identified by the 1920 report as limiting the development of education. Firstly, there was the lack of properly qualified teachers. Of the 204,000 vernacular teachers only 70,000 were trained, and, similarly, only 35,000 of the 110,000 Anglo-vernacular teachers held any qualifications. There was little incentive for men to enter teaching, and the female teacher was essential to the system. Yet, illiteracy among women was a serious problem. In 1921, only 1,200 women were undergoing university or teacher training and only 1.38 million women were receiving any education. However, the situation was improving. The 1921 Census Report states:

> Though the number of literate women throughout India is still small, and their proportion very low among the more backward people of the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, Rajputna, Kashmir and Hyderabad, the fact remains that there has been a steady advance in the education of girls in the last twenty years.[44]

There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the practice of child marriages had been stopped, there had been an extension in the right to vote, Gandhi was emphasising the equality of men and women and, finally, both men and women were involved in nationalistic agitation. An increase of literate women was essential to the future of Indian education as the Government report states:

> Without the woman teacher it would be impossible to carry through a mass programme of popular education, not only because the supply of men teachers would be inadequate to the task, but also because the expense of paying them would be prohibitive in India...the assistance of women is not usually available in primary schools; and, indeed, owing to the shortage of qualified women, male teachers are sometimes engaged for the instruction of girls.[45]

Consequently, the education of girls was encouraged, and although progress was slow, the Report on the Transferred Areas, published in 1925 shows an increase of 118,036 in the number of girls attending school.

The second problem limiting the full development of education in the eyes of the Government was the attitude of the non-co-operation movement. As part of their campaign they encouraged parents to withdraw their children from Government run schools and send them instead to "National Schools" run by the non-co-operators. This campaign against the educational system began in 1920 and persisted until 1922. However, the effect was limited. There was a decrease in the rate of expansion of state schools from 3·7% in 1920 to 2% in 1922.[46] The number of "National Schools" opening was small, and after 1922 the state schools were again well attended. The Government report on the progress of India in 1921 claims that the non-co-operation schools attracted some parents because the pupils learned English a year earlier. The campaign affected mainly secondary schools, there was little change in the primary sector. There were also some political resignations among teachers, according to

the Report, which were "relatively so small as to be insignificant".

By 1923 it was obvious that the "National Schools" would not materialise. There was such great interest in India in education that the people began to return their children to the State schools. Nevertheless, the total school population was still less than 4% in 1923, and the number of literates was still only 22·6 million.[47] The Government report on the progress of India for that year identified two causes for this failure to increase literacy. Firstly, although there had been a growth in mass education, quality had been sacrificed to quantity. Secondly, there was a tendency to lapse into illiteracy after the period of elementary schooling ended. This was due to the irrelevance of that education to everyday life in India. These problems were substantiated by the Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India 1922-27, which was published following the investigations of the Hartog Committee. That Committee identified a number of problems, ranging from the isolation of certain areas of India, and the attitude of poverty-stricken illiterate peasants, to the irregularity of attendance due to frequent illness and Caste barriers and communal and religious problems.[48]

Hartog's Committee also identified the problem of wastage and stagnation caused by premature withdrawal from school and the retention of children by their parents in the lower classes. The quality of elementary education was poor due to a number of factors. For example, the provision of such schools was inadequate, many had only a single teacher dealing with three classes, the curriculum was unsuitable (particularly in rural areas), ineffective teaching(as we have seen, few teachers were properly trained) and the inadequacies of the inspection staff.[49]

Several recommendations were made by the Report: the introduction of

a minimum duration for schooling of four years, a more liberal curriculum, better training facilities and refresher courses for teachers, and an increased involvement in education by the Central Government.

In general, both the Quinquennial Review and the Government White Papers agreed that the time chosen for transfer of education to the local authorities had been inappropriate. The Government White Paper for 1924 claimed that the time for transfer was unfavourable for two reasons. Firstly, limited finance in the poorer Provinces such as the Punjab caused concern, and, secondly, the 'National Schools' contributed to the lack of finance.[50] The Hartog Report implied that the policy of expansion adopted by Indian Ministers was ill-advised. However, this criticism seems debatable as educational advance did continue in the Provinces regardless of any "problem".

There were pleasing aspects evident in the development of education. Successive Government reports show that there was an expansion in secondary education caused by the awakening of people's interest in education, and more urban and semi-urban schools opened. Figures were quoted which showed that the number of pupils in secondary schools had been about 1·1 million in 1924, 0·6% of the population. This rose to 2·2 million in 1936, while the population rose by about 11% in the same period.[51]

The second major advance was in the area of Muslim education. There was a wide gap in the education levels between Hindu and Muslim, due to the speed with which the Hindus recognised the value of education. However, the pattern was changing, as the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State on 28th July 1924:

> Mahomedans are awakening now, but they will have great difficulty in catching up.[52]

According to the Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Committee in 1929, the number of Muslims in education had risen from 1,593,528 in 1917, to 2,589,868 in 1927.[53] The Quinquennial Report

recognised this advance, acknowledging the eagerness with which the Muslims accepted the principle of education. P.Hardy claims that by the mid 1920s the number of Muslims with modern educational qualifications was rising rapidly.[54] In certain areas, for example the United Provinces, the number of Muslims literate in English had exceeded that of the Hindus and Sikhs, according to the 1921 Census.[55]

Nevertheless, progress was still slow in many parts of India. The increase of schools in the primary sector was limited, although Government expenditure increased, as the following table shows:

Results of Expansion		
	1921-22	1926-27
Number of Primary schools	155,017	184,829
Number of pupils in Primary schools	6,109,752	8,017,923
Expenditure on Primary schools (direct)	4,9469,086 lakhs	6,75,14,802 lakhs

[56]

Some Provinces, notably Madras, where a complete survey of education was undertaken, were doing better than others, such as the Punjab, where the number of pupils had increased by 19% in 1922, but where the number of educational institutions had only increased by 8%.

In general, therefore, it is obvious that the limited finance did not severely limit the spread of education. Other factors were equally important, and the limits imposed by financial stringency were balanced by the eagerness of many Indians to receive education. Indeed, in none of the Transferred Subjects does financial stringency seem to have been a problem in spite of the Government of India's concerns. In all the vital areas there was an increase in expenditure, although, again, inflation rates were high and the increases were not as spectacular as they look on paper:

Expenditure in Lakhs	1920-21	1924-25
Agriculture	93	102
Irrigation	485·16	819·99
Veterinary Services	31·5	40·5
Medical	250	315

[57]

Advances were also being made in the provision of facitilites, and in the introduction of new ideas. For example, in the field of crop improvement, two new types of wheat were being tried out, increasing profits by Rs 15 per acre. Yields in other crops were still low, cotton yielded only 82lbs per acre, one-third of the average for the United States.[58]

Progress in the transferred subjects continued throughout the period of Reading's Viceroyalty. As the newly elected members of the Legislative Assembly, given charge of a ministry, gained experience, a number of useful advances were made, such as the launching of a campaign against leprosy. However, Reading was obviously concerned about the limited finance available, as we have seen, and it was for this reason that he continued to certify budgets that the Assembly blocked because of the salt tax.

Nevertheless, India's financial situation was more stable by 1926 than it had been in 1921. The successes Reading achieved show that he was willing to set aside his personal politics in order to gain the best solution. Where he could see benefit he was prepared to act firmly and ignore criticism. The fact that unpalatable changes were made without outbreaks of rioting also show Reading's ability to assess feelings and emotions and act accordingly. However, it must be remembered that these benefits were for the Raj and not necessarily for the Indian peasant.

Chapter Nine; Reading and the Indianization of the Services, 1921-26.

The aim of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms was to prepare India for self-government, by providing a form of "training" for Indian politicians and civil servants. Indians were already involved in the government of their country as part of the Indian Civil Service, the I.C.S. David Potter gives figures that suggest that in 1919 European members of the Civil Service made up only 0·001% of all those employed in government service.[1] Indians became minor civil servants, but the senior posts were reserved for Europeans, largely recruited in Britian. Betwwen 1904 and 1913, for example, of the 538 men recruited to the I.C.S., 95% were European.[2] These senior posts were distributed throughout India. Under normal circumstances recruits were selected by open examinations held in London. However, if not enough candidates were forthcoming by this method the British Government had the right to select, or nominate, its own candidates both from Europe and from minority races in India who were under-represented due to their lack of success in the open examination. Thus, according to D.Potter, 68% of the Muslims who joined the I.C.S. between 1922 and 1946 were nominated.[3]

This selection procedure had to change for two reasons. Firstly, in the 1917 Declaration on the future of India, three promises were made which would change the composition of the I.C.S. and the Indian Army; there would be an increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, there would be a gradual development of self-governing institutions, and there would be a progressive move towards self-government within the Empire.

Shortly after his arrival in India, Reading was reminded of the importance placed on the Indianization programme by Montagu. The

Secretary of State wrote on 21st June 1921:

> We have got to recognise that self-government does not merely mean political reform, but the substitution of an indigenous administration.[4]

He went on to explain that he envisaged vacancies caused by the resignation of European members being filled by Indians. Thus Indianization would be gradual. Nevertheless, even Montagu admitted that, without basic training, it was difficult to find Indians suitable for the senior posts in departments such as Income Tax, Imperial Customs and the Central Board of Revenue.[5]

The second, and major, reason why Indianization had to, and was, taking place, was the lack of European recruitment during the war and immediately afterwards. In 1914, just before the war started, there were 47 successful candidates in the London examination. By the time the results were announced, eleven were already in military service and three more quickly joined up. Eventually, thirty-nine recruits entered on probation.[6] During the war itself, seventeen candidates passed the London examination, and a further nineteen recruits were nominated in India. In 1919 and 1920, there were no candidates for the London examination, therefore nomination took place from among those who had survived the war. One hundred and six Europeans were nominated in those two years. From 1921, London examinations were again organised, but few candidates came forward; only nineteen people were appointed in this way between 1921 and 1924. By 1924, 80% of the Europeans in the I.C.S. had been nominated. The Government at home were concerned about this trend.

There were a number of reasons why candidates failed to come forward after 1921. Ann Ewing argues that the end of the war found the I.C.S. "depleted, disillusioned and fearful".[7] Its members increasingly questioned

the value of their role and they found themselves under attack from Indian politicians who saw the I.C.S. as reminders of Imperial control. In any case the war had shaken the credibility of the Empire. The 1917 Declaration caused a great deal of consternation among the Services, and some felt that attempts at Indianization were too hasty.

Oxford and Cambridge Universities reported that fewer students were interested in taking the examination. According to these Universities, India was no longer seen as a suitable career for energetic and ambitious young men, some of whom feared they would not be fairly treated by Indian superiors, and some of whom feared the Raj would not last much longer. This was reported by the Universities to the India Office in 1920 and 1921. Equally, pay was not comparative to that available in Indian businesses. An Assistant Magistrate started on Rs 450 per month, whereas a young man joining a company started on Rs 500 per month, plus passage.[8] In addition, the cost of living was rising, and, in particular, the cost of passage. A first class single from Bombay to London cost Rs 750 in January 1900. This had risen to Rs 1422 by April 1922.

The proportion of European members in the I.C.S. was also lowered due to the number of serving European civil servants who decided to leave the Service. In the early years of the reforms scheme the number of men who retired prematurely was relatively greater than in the previous period. By the end of 1923 the number was up to one in six. The I.C.S. was, therefore, weakened by the lack of trained and experienced officers. Some of those retiring were worried about their future in the Services, feeling that their freedom of action would be curtailed and that their promotion prospects might be prejudiced. Ann Ewing argues that members of the I.C.S. felt betrayed by the Government of India who gave them no clear lead and did nothing to prevent bitter and vitriolic attacks on the officers.[9] The Governor of the United Provinces informed the

Simon Commission in 1930 that orders from Delhi "were often ... indecisive ... and District Officers found difficulty in interpreting them. The result was that the District Officers did not know where they stood ... and lost faith in the Government".[10] Sir Harcourt Butler concluded that the non-co-operation movement had weakened the Government and had depressed members of the I.C.S.[11]

Some months previously, Reading had suggested that there should be a comprehensive survey of the Services, investigating such possibilities as an early reduction in the number of posts filled from the Imperial Services, an increase in the percentage of Indians in the lower grades, the possibility of retaining the jobs of lower grade Europeans, and an increased training facility for Indians. This investigation would, he felt, help to calm the fears of Europeans in the Services by making the future clear. However, Montagu would not agree to this.[12]

Consequently, on 1st January 1921, the sanctioned strength of the I.C.S. (all branches) was 4,279. In fact there were only 3,975 employees.[13] As David Potter points out, the British were so thin on the ground that they could only remain in control by making what amounted to political bargains with local collaborators, who could rule for them.[14] Anil Seal expands this point by suggesting that the I.C.S. could depend on revenue being collected and law and order being maintained as long as they did not question the methods too closely or attempt to interfere.[15]

The problems of the I.C.S. were viewed quite differently in London than they were in India. Sir William Vincent, the Home Member of the Government of India, tried to persuade his colleagues not to accept responsibility for recruitment of young Europeans who might soon be unemployed.[16] He did not think it would take even ten years for the situation to change dramatically. Reading also did little to encourage

recruitment or to calm the fears of the Europeans. Montagu urged him to reassure the I.C.S. that "their work was a matter of ... concern to the superiors".[18] However, as Reading later emphasised, the Viceroy believed that the Europeans were exaggerating their claims of poverty and distress.

Nevertheless, some people in India were concerned. In July 1922, Sir George Lloyd wrote to Montagu about the increasing disquiet among the British in India:

> The unrest in the British Services is, I regret to say, becoming increasingly acute, and is really a grave menace.[19]

Finally, between 1921 and 1922, the Cabinet in London issued direct orders to the Government of India to improve European recruitment and morale. This was to be achieved in several ways. Firstly, the British Government set up the MacDonnell Committee to investigate the situation and advice the Government as to what was hindering European recruitment. The Committee reported in 1922 that it was not so much the constitutional reforms which were affecting recruitment, but also concern over amenities, job security, ordered promotion and financial security.[20] They also reported that although recruitment of Indians could not be limited without breach of faith, it was this recruitment programme which was the major impediment to European recruitment.[21]

Secondly, Reading enquired of his Governors what they thought were the major causes of concern among the members of the I.C.S. On 1st January 1922, he wrote to the Secretary of State identifying three reasons for the large number of resignations; the increase in the cost of passages to and from India, the hostility shown by Indians towards Europeans and apprehension about the level of support Government officials would receive from the British Government.[22] Ronaldshay, the Governor of Bengal, had

identified diminishing prospects and uncongenial work.[23] Willingdon, in Madras, claimed that the I.C.S. felt that their treatment under the reforms was unfair,[24] and Lytton, in Bombay, pointed out that officers were concerned about their position in view of the hostility shown to the I.C.S.[25]

Thirdly, Lloyd George made what has become known as his "Steel Frame" speech in the House of Commons, in which he assured the I.C.S. that he could see no time in the future when India would be able to dispense of their services. He went on to say:

> Whatever we may do in the way of strengthening the Government of India, one institution we will not interfere with, will not deprive of its functions and privileges, and that is the British Civil Service in India.[26]

In the same speech the Prime Minister referred several times to the reforms as an experiment. This speech caused great consternation in India, where the reforms were regarded rather more seriously than as an experiment. The Secretary of State had to try to pacify an extremely angry Viceroy by pointing out that it was important to maintain the European element of the I.C.S. He wrote on 10th August:

> In talking about the nucleus he [the P.M.] intended to suggest that, for some time to come, as most reasonable Indians will agree, a complete Indianization would not be possible, and that the retention of a British element would be necessary.[27]

However, as David Potter points out, the speech delighted the die-hards,[28] and, in the view of Samuel Hoare "undoubtedly encouraged recruitment".[29] In this view he was rather optimistic, recruitment did not immediately begin to improve, as Ann Ewing shows. The Cambridge Universities Appointments Board was told in 1923 that "wild horses" would not "drag [the students] into the I.C.S."[30] In a House of Lords debate on 25th October 1923, Lord Sydenham said:

> Members of the Indian Civil Service have felt it their duty to warn young men against coming to India. It was realised that their position might be difficult and measures were proposed for giving their release.[31]

Therefore, the serious problem of European recruitment remained, and, for a while it seemed that the Indianization programme would have to be speeded up simply because insufficient Europeans were recruited. By the end of 1923 it was obvious that the Services had to be made more attractive to Europeans if they were not to be completely Indianized. Therefore, as we shall see later, the Government of Britain appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the Senior Services, under Lord Lee of Farnham.

Although the British Government feared that the lack of European recruitment might increase the rate of Indianization, this did not happen. Between 1919 and 1922, 142 Europeans had joined the Services, mostly by nomination, as against 96 Indians. On 6th January 1922, Reading sent the Secretary of State some figures relating to the Indianization of the Services.[32] Only 13% of posts were held by Indians, 33% of all new recruits were Indian, and this was expected to rise to 48% by 1932. However, even if Indian recruitment were 50% it would take fifteen years for one-third of the Civil Service to be Indianized. As far as Reading was concerned these figures were unsatisfactory. He wrote:

> We are of opinion [sic] that these figures show that the proportions at present fixed for recruitments will far from satisfy Indian aspirations, especially in view of the fact that the history of the political agitation in India during the last 35 years appears to indicate that the demand for Indianization of the Services is older and has been more insistent than the demand for self-governing institutions.[33]

The situation was similar in the Army. The Esher Committee, set up in 1921 to investigate the Indianization of the Army, proposed that "25% of the officers recruited annually for the Indian Army should be

Indians". The Indian Military Requirements Committee further recommended that this should be increased annually by 2½%. Both these proposals were accepted by the Government of India, but rejected by the British Government.[34]

The situation was of considerable concern to Reading, as he believed that the Indianization of the Services was essential if India was ever to be ready for self-government. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 16th February 1922:

> I have never myself been able to understand how India could ever get full Dominion status without being fully equipped for her own defence, and I doubt very much whether you would ever get British officers to stay under a Dominion Government of India.[35]

Reading, unlike the British Government, placed political conciliation of the Indians above the goodwill of the I.C.S. He must, therefore, have felt that the British Government, as well as some of the officials in India, were failing to give him full support. The Government in Britain ignored all attempts by Reading to improve the rate of Indianization. The Viceroy was concerned that it would seem as though the Government of India and the British Government were taking different views. Nevertheless, he was determined that Indians would be admitted to the I.C.S. not just because there were fewer Europeans, but because he thought it was a necessary step. In 1922 the annual competitive examinations were held in Allahabad. With the nomination of unsuccessful candidates from minority races, Indian recruitment equalled 44% that year.[36]

Reading believed that such steps were vital as the Indianization of the Services would show India that Britain was sincere in her promises. He wanted the British Government to make a specific promise on the future of Indianization. To do so would, he believed, pacify the

moderates and would be acceptable to the members of the Services, as most recognised the need for a re-examination of recruitment.[37]

In the Army, the situation was further complicated by two factors. The first major problem hindering Indianization was the attitude of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Rawlinson. He believed that the programme should proceed extremely slowly if it was not to be a complete failure. He envisaged a rate of increase over five years of between 120 and 220 officers. Two thousand new Indian officers were needed to complete Indianization.[38] In a speech to the Legislative Assembly on 8th March 1921, Rawlinson explained that the difficult and disturbed political conditions in India meant that it was impossible to see how changes and cuts in experienced personnel could be made in the Army. This was interpreted by the Indian ministers as meaning that the Indianization of the Army was to be deferred. Rawlinson claimed he had not really meant this, and he tried to explain, in some notes, his real meaning:

> I did mean that I do not believe that India will wish, for several generations at least, if indeed ever, to deprive herself entirely of the services of British officers.[39]

However, there can be no doubt that Rawlinson was basically opposed to the Indianization programme. He believed that India could not be called an independent country as she could not defend herself and would not be able to do so for some years to come. He also felt that Indians joined the Army for the wrong reasons, not out of patriotism, but for prestige, unlike the British, who joined out of a sense of duty. If the Army lost its status, Rawlinson argued, soldiers looking for prestige would quickly resign

Secondly, although the Legislature was informed in January 1922 that the Army would be Indianized in progressive stages, it was suggested by

the British Government, in February 1922, that, as an experiment, four battalions would be Indianized. This suggestion was designed to put a brake on the programme. Rawlinson believed that the programme could safely go further, that the limit of four battalions could not be justified and that the proper limit on Indianization was the number of Indian officers of the right calibre, by which he meant "capable of entry into Sandhurst".[41] Obviously, he hoped that this figure would be less than the four battalions.

Reading was outraged. He believed that any limitation was inconsistent with his Government's policy in India. He also resented the fact that the limitation had not been made clear at the outset. On 18th February he informed the Secretary of State that he was not prepared to make any announcement to the Legislative Assembly about limitations, as he personally regarded the programme as vitally important. He went on to explain:

> To Indians, the Indianization of the Army is the crucial test of our sincerity of [sic] the policy of fitting India to advance towards the goal of self-government.[42]

The Indianization of the Army was also important because Indians believed that the running of the Army would be less expensive without European salaries to pay.

In an attempt to solve both the problem of European recruitment to the Services and that of the correct rate of Indianization, the British Government decided to send an investigative committee to India, under the chairmanship of Viscount Lee of Farnham. Lee was a Fabian and an authority on Colonial affairs. The terms of reference of the committee were to enquire into the organisation and the general conditions, both financial and otherwise, of the I.C.S., the possibility of transferring

immediately or gradually any present duties and functions to services constituted on a Provincial basis, the recruitment of Indians and Europeans respectively and the best methods of ensuring and maintaining recruitment.

The Commission was seen as of vital importance. Ruth Lee recorded in her diary for 1923:

> (It appears that the condition of the Services has become very serious and its morale undermined, not only by the political upheavals in India and the fear of British Civil Servants being subjected to Indian political control, but also by the deterioration of the economic conditions, and the fact that no corresponding adjustment has been made (as in the case of the Home Service) in their salaries and allowances).[43]

Ruth Lee also records in her diary that her husband was "staggered" by a comment from Lady Lloyd, who said, "I suppose you realise you and your commission are the only people who can save India".[44]

As with the Inchcape Commission, the balance on the Lee Commission between Indians and Europeans was important; too many Europeans would cause a bad impression in India as some would regard it as unduly loading the Commission for the purpose of benefitting the Europeans. Reading was opposed to the Commission from the beginning, as we have seen, but giving that it had to go ahead he proposed a Chairman, three Europeans and three Indians. He explained his reason to the Secretary of State on 30th March 1922:

> If it starts badly it will not affect the objects you have in view. It will not succeed in removing discontent with prospects among the British element and may fail to secure favourable reception of any scheme of provincialization or Indianization which may be recommended.[45]

However, Lord Lee did not find his work easy. He came up against antagonistic attitudes from both Europeans and Indians. Reading was himself not happy about certain aspects of the survey, which was carried out initially by the circulation of questionnaires. One thousand, four

hundred replies were received, and from them four hundred and eleven candidates were selected to appear before the Commission. Reading believed that this oral questioning should be carried out in public, and he was supported by the Indian members of the Committee. Lee felt that the truth would not be told if the investigation was public and he was supported by the European members. Lord Lee said of the attitude he found:

> The truth is that while the Indian Government badly needs the help of the Commission, they are a little suspicious and jealous of its powers and want to know exactly what it is doing at each stage.[46]

Lee made it plain, however, that the Commission had been appointed by the King and was, therefore, answerable only to him.

The Report of the Royal Commission on the Superior Services in India was published on 27th March 1924. The recommendations made did mark a break with the past by proposing that the I.C.S. should be half Indian within fifteen years, except in the two branches concerned with security, the Army department and the police. The Report stated:

> In our view it is desirable, in order not only to carry out the spirit of the Declaration of August 1917, but to promote an increased feeling of camaraderie and an equal sense of responsibility between British and Indian members of the Service, that a proportion of 50-50 in the cadre of the Indian Civil Service should be attained without undue delay and that the present rate of Indian recruitment should be accelerated accordingly.[47]

However, in keeping with Lloyd George's "Steel Frame"speech, the Lee Commission found that Europeans were an essential part of the I.C.S.:

> We are convinced that India still needs the services of capable and broadminded Englishmen, and will continue to need them; and we hope that Englishmen will not be slower in the future to meet the need than in the past.[48]

Consequently, the Service had to be made more attractive to Europeans.

Again a number of recommendations were made, including guaranteeing candidates reasonable security with improvements in pension arrangements, a propaganda campaign in British universities, a full and candid explanation to all potential recruits of conditions in India, and an emphasis on the fact that the British Government recruited on the basis of a permanent career. On the question of pay and conditions, certain measures were proposed to ease the financial problems. There was an increase in the overseas allowance, relief was given to cover passages for all officers, their wives and children, as well as for housing and medical costs, the latter being one of the major concerns of those interviewed. In addition, European doctors were to be made more available to I.C.S. officers. The total cost of these changes was calculated at Rs 125 million per annum.[49] However, European recruitment gradually increased from three Europeans in 1924 to twenty in 1925, twenty-nine in 1926 and thirty-seven in 1927.

In order to make all this more acceptable to Indians, the Commission took the important step of recommending the extension and expansion of the Provincial Services, and suggested that the Secretary of State should not make any recruitments to those Services, nor exercise control over them. This was an important concession as appointments were left to the Government of India and the Provincial Governors, and their appointees would be largely Indian. Thus the European element would entirely disappear in the Transferred Subjects. It was also recommended that direct recruitment on the results of annual competitive examinations should be 40% Indian and 40% European, with 20% of Indians being appointed by nomination. This was known as the 50:50 ratio.

In retrospect, the Lee Commission and the Indianization of the Services have been judged the more successful elements of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Sir Percival Griffiths describes the programme as "striking proof of Britain's honesty of purpose".[50] K.Mitchell says that Indianization was one of the most effective methods by which Britain had

enlisted Indian support for British rule. W.R.Smith says the steps "went far towards meeting the demand for an increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration".[52] However, as we have seen, the credit for this lies not with the British Government but with the Viceroy, who remained committed to Indianization, although criticised and pressurised by the Government in Britain.

Yet in 1924 the Lee Commission Report was not well received by Indians or by Europeans, as it fully satisfied neither. In a letter to the Secretary of State on 10th July, Reading wrote of the likely Indian reaction:

> He will argue that the Lee Report rivets the shackles of Britain on India and is intended for that purpose.[53]

The immediate effect of the Report, rather than being beneficial, was inclined in the opposite direction. On the part of the Europeans, a number of problems remained. Firstly, the Viceroy was concerned about the recommendation of a proportionate pension to begin after five years at around £250 per annum. Under this scheme, men would be encouraged to retire, as, within twenty years they would earn £5,000. Secondly, there was the problem of the twenty percent promotion of Indians. J.Crerar, the Home Secretary, said on 27th February 1925 that this would lead to ill feeling and the creation of a disunified Service, allowing back-door entry.[54]

Due to these problems it was not possible for Reading to simply adopt the Report. It was, in any case, left for debate by the September session of the Legislative Assembly, but this led to further bad feeling between Lee and Reading. The Viceroy wrote to Inchcape on 7th August 1924:

> From reports that reach me (not from the Secretary of State) Lee seems quite inclined to take it as a personal matter and to have some kind of grievance that I have not immediately opened my mouth and swallowed the Report which he presented without attempting to taste it or even digest it.[55]

Nevertheless, the basic substance of the Report was adopted by October 1924, with only a few points outstanding for discussion.

With regard to the Army, it was decided that the number of Indianized battalions should be increased from four to eight, mainly infantry but with a proportion of cavalry. The move was generally well received by the Assembly, but some members felt that such a move should be accompanied by a definite promise of further Indianization. Lord Rawlinson also agreed to the institution of Indian equivalents of Sandhurst and Woolwich although he was dubious of their value as he believed there would be few suitable candidates. Under the Indianization programme the junior ranks would immediately be filled by Indians with a King's Commission. Nevertheless, the general feeling was that this method would be too slow, and Congress demanded that the appointment of all British officers should immediately cease. This resolution was defeated by the Government, to Rawlinson's relief.[56]

Although in 1922 both Reading and Rawlinson had believed that the experimentation with four battalions was too limiting, they had become convinced by 1925 that it was necessary to slow the pace of Indianization in the Army. On 9th October 1924 there was a meeting between the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief in which Rawlinson's changed attitude to the

Indianization of the Army became evident. Rawlinson admitted that he was doubtful whether India would ever produce enough officers to meet the requirements of the Army. His opinion was that it would take two generations to completely Indianize the Army. In a speech to the Legislative Assembly on 3rd March 1925 he made his attitude clear:

> One of the first difficulties with which we are confronted is that it is no simple matter to create a national army in India because India is not a nation.[57]

Reading's opinion was similar, as he made clear in a letter to the Secretary of State on 13th March:

> My own view is that you will not be able to do without a large percentage of British officers and still be in a position to defend India successfully for many years to come.[58]

It is difficult to explain this changed attitude with regard to the Army, especially as the Viceroy remained committed to the Indianization of the I.C.S. However, there are probably a number of reasons why the Indianization of the Army was a less practical proposition. In 1922, Reading did believe that the Indianization of the Army was an important step. He wrote to the Secretary of State:

> One of the principal reasons underlying our present proposals is that it is imperative that an immediate start in some shape or form should be made with the Indianization of the Army.[59]

However, by 1925, Reading must have felt that the disturbed political position of India made a British element in the Army essential. Also there were border problems in Waziristan which required the presence of an efficient Army. Maybe he was also concerned that Indians needed longer to gain administrative skills.

It also became clear that demands for the further Indianization of the Army were not being made so loudly by Indians in 1925. This was

probably due to the increase in communal tension, the Army was seen by both communities as essential in preventing communalism erupting into violence.

Following the Lee Commission recommendations, the I.C.S. and the Army were asked to report in 1925 on the progress of Indianization. The I.C.S. report showed that the percentage of Indians in the Service on 1st April 1924 was still small, only 18·2%. In the 1924 competitive examinations in London, only three Europeans had been recruited as opposed to eight Indians. Added to this were five Indians recruited by examination in India, plus two nominated candidates, giving a total of fifteen Indians. On 4th February 1925 the Viceroy notified the Secretary of State that the native composition of the I.C.S. was forty-one Hindus, one Burman, forty-five Indian Christians and one Singhalese, reflecting the still poor standard of literacy among Muslims. Of the eight nominated members, three were Muslims, two Hindus, two Burmans and one Anglo-Indian.[60]

In the Army report, Rawlinson made it clear that the number of British officers and men had been cut by 16,000 to 58,000, but he felt that no further reduction could be made if India wished to retain an efficient Army. However, it was obvious that while something had been achieved in the laying of foundations by the Indianization programme, India still did not have even the structure of a national army.[61]

The progressive Indianization of the Services could have been one of the greatest contributions made by the British under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. For once, Reading seems to have adopted a positive attitude, ignoring instructions from Britain to encourage European members of the Services, and being prepared to "play down" the complaints of European I.C.S. officers, who had little cause for complaint, in his opinion. He emphasised his belief in the importance of Indianization,

with some success, notably in the acceptance of the 50:50 ratio. Yet the theory was not put fully into practice. The increasing conservatism of the British Government meant that, from the start, the programme had opposition. The pressure brought to bear on the Government by members of the I.C.S., who wished to see their status protected, also affected the commitment of the British Government to the programme. Although Reading showed considerable strength in his support of the programme in his early years in India, that commitment, as in so many things, seems to have wavered in the face of the British Government's antagonism.

Although it may seem that Reading adopted the British Government's view, particularly with regard to the Indianization of the Army, it must be remembered that the Indian officer was always handicapped by his religion. Nevertheless, there seems to have been little attempt by the Government of India to find a solution to this problem, and, again, it seems that Reading did not really fulfil his role. As the man chosen to bring about the first steps to self-government in India, some attempt should have been made by him to overcome this problem.

However, the changes implemented in the I.C.S. during Reading's Viceroyalty, in regards to location and activities, remained in place until the early 1980s, as identified by David Potter.[61] In view of the antagonism shown by the Indian National Congress towards the I.C.S. and their assertion that they wanted to abolish the Service, this was a remarkable achievement and proves that the I.C.S. was the "Steel Frame". Nevertheless, both Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, while they led India, regretted that this was so, believing that the existence of the I.A.S., as the continuation of the I.C.S., was a contributory factor in India's problems after independence.

Chapter Ten; Reading's Foreign and Imperial Policy 1921-1926

The Foreign Department of Reading's administration in India dealt with three major problems during the years 1921 to 1926, as well as a number of minor issues. The most serious of these problems concerned the treatment of Indians elsewhere in the British Empire. One and a half million Indians fell in this category.[1] In most parts of the Empire there was no problem. For example, Indians lived in Ceylon and the West Indies on equal terms with the rest of the population. However, in certain areas, notably Kenya and South Africa, there were attempts to severely limit immigration and the political rights of Indians. The Imperial Conference of 1921 recognised that there was an incongruity between the acknowledged position of India as an equal member of the Empire, alongside the self-governing dominions, and the existence of discrimination against Indians living elsewhere in the Empire.[2] At the 1923 Imperial Conference, Sapru spoke about Indias's role within the Empire:

> India's prestige would be greater if she could deal with the rest of the Empire on terms of equality. Until she achieves self-government the position of her nationals overseas must always be more or less unsatisfactory.[3]

However, Sapru also commented that he believed that machinery had been provided which would 'go far in the future to secure the proper investigation and remedy of India's grievances'.

This 'machinery' was partly introduced by Reading, who felt strongly that discrimination against Indians should not exist. Again, his Jewish heritage stood him in good stead. He soon realised the dangers of persecution, but was also optimistic that a calmer and healthier political attitude could be achieved if there was a mutual respect and

equality between the races.

The problem of racial discrimination had developed in Kenya following the importation of coolies at the end of the nineteenth century to assist in the building of the Kenya-Uganda railway. Immigration had continued after the completion of the railway. Newly arrived Indians concentrated in the towns and were unwilling to engage in agricultural work, although they supplied 30% of the total capital invested in agriculture.[4] Attempts were made to segregate the towns, supposedly for sanitary reasons. Obviously this was totally unacceptable to the Indians, and, on the direction of the British Government, the policy was abandoned However, in 1918, Sir Theodore Morison wrote an article entitled, "A Colony for India", which was published in the journal, The Nineteenth Century.[5] He urged that German East Africa should be given to India as compensation for India being shut out of the self-governing dominions. At that stage, the idea received no support from any leader in India, where ancient tradition was against emigration.

Trouble again flared in 1919, when a new representative of the British Government, Sir Edward Northey, was sent to Kenya. On his arrival, the Convention of Associations decided to take a further stand against Indian immigration. At a speech at a banquet of honour in January 1919, the President of the Association said that Kenyans should regard themselves as "guardians of the back door",[6] and that they owed it to the South Africans to keep Indians out. Northey replied saying that he believed that the Asian demand for equal representation was "untenable".

In March 1919, the Kenyan Economic Commission's report voiced the Europeans' feelings about the Indians in the plainest of terms. The report abused Indians, talking about their moral depravity, calling

them carriers of diseases and incitors of crime and violence.[7] Although this report was condemned by Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, as outside the Commission's terms of reference, the Commission maintained that Africans must be defended economically against Indians.[8] This led to a resolution in the Indian Congress that German East Africa must be reserved for colonization by Indians. Problems continued between 1920 and 1921 when attempts were made to change the composition of the Kenyan Legislative Assembly. Previously it had been entirely nominated but it was to be enlarged by the inclusion of eleven elected Europeans, as against two seats specifically reserved for Indians. This caused demands among Indians, who then numbered 22,822, for equal rights, which the Kenyan Government was unwilling to allow.[9] Kenyan Indians appealed to the Government of India for help, and Reading became involved. He wrote to the Secretary of State for India pointing out that Kenyan Indians deserved equal rights and suggesting a Royal Commission to investigate the Indians demands. As a result, the enlarging of the Assembly was abandoned.[10] However, the franchise still excluded 90% of Indians as it was based on an ability to pass a written and oral test in English, and on the value of an individual's property.[11]

In January 1922, Reading suggested that the limited franchise should be abolished and replaced by a wider educational and wealth franchise, and that there should be no reservation of seats.[12] In this he was supported by Winston Churchill, the Colonial Secretary, who, at a dinner party given for East African ambassadors, said that he wished to apply broadly Rhodes' principle of equal rights for all civilised men based on education and property. Natives and Indians who conformed to well-marked European standards should not be denied full political rights. However, Churchill also argued that Europeans should define these standards and that the democratic principles of Europe were not suited to the

development of African and Asiatic people.[13]

The principle of the extension of the franchise proposed by Reading was accepted by the Kenyan Government. Indians in Kenya and in the Legislative Assembly in India were grateful to Reading and to the Government of India for the trouble they had taken. The Viceroy telegraphed to the Secretary of State for India on 11th February:

> It was apparent from the debate that the efforts made by us, and by you on our behalf were keenly and greatly appreciated, but it was also evident that the Indian public regard a satisfactory solution of the Kenya question as a vital test of British Government's sincerity and of their willingness to give effect in Crown Colonies to the resolution passed in respect of rights of citizenship at Imperial Conference last year.[14]

In an attempt to finally settle the Indian problem, a report was issued in London on 6th September 1922, known as the Wood-Winterton Report, after the two under-secretaries involved in its production.[15] It attacked the idea of the "irreducible minimum", a scheme which had been introduced by the Convention in June 1921 to limit immigration and to encourage repatriation. The Report also rejected immigration restrictions, segregation and Indian representation by nomination. Wood and Winterton proposed a property and educational franchise with 10% of the electorate being Indians, with four reserved seats. The Report was accepted by the Indians, a step which was regarded by the Kenyan Government as suspicious, as they believed it meant that the Indians would later increase their demands. The Europeans saw the Report as the beginning of their elimination from the Legislative Council.[16] Plans were made to resist violently, but the appointment of a new Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Devonshire, led to a truce. A meeting of all parties was arranged in London.

Reading once more became involved as Europeans in Kenya again

demanded restrictions on Asian-Indian immigration. Some members of the European community even began to attack their Indian neighbours. Reading urged the Secretary of State for India to try to secure a settlement favourable and acceptable to the Indians.[17] The Viceroy objected to the proposals of the Kenyan Government, which he believed were the first steps to the complete prohibition of immigration, and he saw a number of injustices in white Kenyans' demands. Firstly, he felt such a move was unnecessary as the number of immigrants was not large, only 25,000 since annexation. The type of Indians who were emigrating were the artisan classes who had no outlet elsewhere, due to the pressure on land in India. Kenya was under the direct control of the Colonial Office and if that Office were seen to give in to violence, it would give Indians elsewhere, particularly in India, the idea that violence worked:

> The withdrawal or [sic] right of free entry will rouse strong and intelligible feelings of antagonism to the Empire among important classes in India, which may lead to unfortunate acts of retaliation at the expense of British commercial and other interests.[18]

The controvesy placed Reading in a difficult position as it jeopardized all his efforts to emphasise the racial equality within India, and had the potential to cause friction between his Council and the British Government:

> If Indian immigration to Kenya is restricted they will take it as evidence of impotence of [sic] Government of India and unwillingness of [sic] British Government to support a just and vital Indian right.[19]

Reading's pressure on the Secretary of State continued all the time the negotiations in London were underway. He used the same approach as he had in his dealings with the Government over the Treaty of Sevres: that is, a constant barrage of letters, emphasising again and again the rights of Indians to be recognised as equal members of the

British Empire. In his opinion there was no abstact reason why Indians should be treated differently.[20] He hoped that whatever decision was reached in London, it would not prevent Indians from attaining equal status in Kenya at some time. The failure to recognise that Indians deserved equal rights would, he believed, make his position untenable, as Indians might conclude that the British Empire would never treat them as it treated its whites, and thus they would never be equal partners:

> It will be asked here, what use is it to invite India to take her place within the Empire and to work for swaraj [sic] within the Empire if she is always to be kept outside the magic circle?[21]

The pleas of all concerned were in vain as, following the negotiations, a Government White Paper was published in July 1923.[22] Its proposals satisfied no party. It denied the Indians a common role, allowing them only five separately elected representatives. The Europeans were dissatisfied because they were told there could be no immigration restrictions, no racial segregation in the towns, and, because the European monopoly on the Franchise was ended, they were to be denied responsible government for the forseeable future.

The Indians reacted angrily by declaring a non-co-operation campaign and by refusing to take up their seats. The Europeans consoled themselves with the fact that the Indians were still denied equality and that the European communal electorate had gained further recognition.

However, the White Paper was more important in ending the dispute between Indians and Europeans by introducing a new element in the fight for equal rights, the vast majority of Kenya's population, the natives. In 1923, the population of Kenya consisted of 10,000 Europeans, 23,000 Indians and 2,500,000 Africans.[22] The White Paper

argued that Whitehall's responsibility was to these Africans. As neither Indians nor Europeans could deny this, having both talked of native interests previously, one dispute was ended between the Indians and the Europeans, and the Colonial Office was able to escape from the long quarrel.

Not that Reading was satisfied. In fact, in a letter to the Secretary of State for India on 26th July, he expressed his deep disappointment, particularly over those clauses which dealt with immigration. He wrote, "I cannot resist the impression that there is to be discrimination against the immigration of Indians".[23] As he had predicted, it caused problems in his Legislative Assembly:

> Most unfortunately they begin to say that the British Government is only amenable to threats of violence, and that what they themselves consider fair and equitable has been thrown aside because of such threats.[24]

In September 1923, Sastri attacked the Government of India for not achieving a better solution to the Indian question. He argued that this was due to the lack of a genuinely national government in India, and he advised that action should be taken immediately, whatever its effect, to restore India's self-respect elsewhere in the Empire.[25] Indeed, a Bill was introduced, limiting the rights of others to live in India, but it came to nothing.

The situation in South Africa was even more complicated, although the origins of the problem were similar. Between 1863 and 1864 scarcity of labour was a serious problem in the country, particularly in Natal and in Cape Colony. A decision was made in the respective Legislative Assemblies to import labour. Although European labourers would have been preferred, their importation was not possible, so the two provinces relied heavily on Indian indentured labour. The first importation scheme ended in 1866 and by 1872 all Indians had completed their indentures. They

then totalled 5,700.[26] In 1874 importation was revived. Those Indians who were then living in South Africa were unwilling to return; unusually no clause had been written into the indenture requiring repatriation. The Government of India had refused to allow this. Thus, by 1886 the number of Indians had risen to 29,589.[27]

Many Indians who had completed their indentures then went into business, so that, by 1883, white South Africans felt threatened by Indian businessmen. A number of measures were passed to try to control Indians, such as the use of passes and discriminatory taxes. This led to the passive resistance of 1910, orchestrated by Gandhi.[28]

Gandhi left South Africa when British control was withdrawn in 1910 and Africans began to demand equal rights. In 1911 the number of Asian and coloureds in South Africa equalled 11.3% of the population, with whites making up 21.4%. As the election speeches of 1910 show, all major parties in South Africa were determined to keep Indian immigration down.

The South African Government, under Jan Smuts, refused to accept the resolution of the 1921 Imperial Conference, which called for Indians to be regarded as equal members of the Empire wherever they were. He declared that South Africa would not admit Indians to the right of citizenship, thus arousing the criticism of the Government of India. Even during the war, as India began to take her place in the Imperial War Cabinet, Indian politicians had shown a tendency to champion the cause of Indians in South Africa. Reading now began to press for the right of Indians to be admitted to citizenship. By 1921 there were 160,000 Indians in South Africa, but the major areas for concern were the Transvaal, where Indians had no political power, and Natal where their political standing was under attack. Trouble came to a head in the Transvaal in 1919 when there were a number of anti-Indian disturbances

leading to the formation of a commission to investigate Indian land holdings. The commission recommended that limits should be set on Indians to prevent them owning land in certain areas of the Transvaal. It also recommended the introduction of voluntary repatriation, as well the enforcement of strict immigration laws and segregation.

The Government of India protested. A question was asked in the Indian Legislative Assembly by Mr.G.A.Natesan on 4th June 1924:

> Are the Government aware that very recently attempts have been made in the Natal Provincial Council to refuse to Indians any further Licences or purchases of land.[33]

He went on to ask for an investigation, and for steps to be taken to safeguard Indians' rights. It seemed to the Assembly that moves were being made in South Africa, with the Durban and Natal Land Alienation Ordinances, to limit the right of free movement, as well as the right to own property in the Transvaal. In a speech reported in the Natal Witness on 24th July 1923, the Prime Minister of South Africa said:

> All I can say is that with regard to the franchise we see no reason to make a distinction between Indians in this country and natives in this country.[34]

At the Imperial Conference, Sapru rejected Smuts' position, pointing out that the whites in South Africa were just as much foreigners as the Indians.[35]

However, Indians had been quick at finding ways of avoiding restrictions in the past by forming limited farming companies. The number of these in the Transvaal had risen from three in 1913 to three hundred and seventy in 1919.[36] Anti-Indian feeling meant that the South African Government believed that it had to act to close the loopholes in the law while respecting rights already gained. As a result of the protests, the Ordinances were withdrawn in 1923 and 1924

As a result of the failure to retain the Ordinances, the Government

of South Africa introduced the "Class Areas Bill" in 1923. This Bill was also delayed by protests from India. Reading spoke of the problem to the Indian Legislature at the Delhi session, making the position of the Government of India clear:

> My Government, however...cannot rest satisfied with this position; and we shall continue our effort to persuade the Union Government to our view.[37]

Gandhi was responsible for further arousing Indian opinion when he claimed that the "Class Areas Bill" was a breach of the Smuts-Gandhi compromise of 1914. Reading felt that Gandhi's view would be generally supported in India, and that in order not to further exacerbate Indian feeling the Bill should be dropped.[39] The Bill lapsed when elections were called and Parliament dissolved in April 1924.

Labour trouble in the mines of Transvaal led to a further spread of white unrest. Workers went on strike when their wages were cut by five shillings a day, and eight hundred strikers were sacked. The whites demanded an element of job security through job reservation of one white to every 3.5 blacks. The Government was only prepared to offer one white to every 10.5 blacks.[41] On 27th February 1923 fighting broke out. Martial law was declared on 15th March and the strike leaders committed suicide. The strike ended, leaving 230 dead, including 50 policemen.

As a result of the trouble the South African Government introduced, during 1924, the Mines and Works Amendment Bill which was aimed at preventing natives or Asiatics from gaining a certificate of competency. The first Reading knew of the implications of the new Bill was the report he read in The Times on 24th January 1925. He immediately wrote to the Secretary of State for India protesting about the effect on India:

> If Asiatics are being classed...with natives and placed on a lower level than other non-Europeans...there is sure to be an outcry in India, where, as you are aware, opinion is already deeply agitated over the Natal Ordinances.[40]

He asked the Secretary of State for India if he could make a representation to the Government of South Africa on behalf of the Indians and he also asked whether the British Government would intervene to protect Indians' rights.[41] Although the Secretary of State was prepared to allow the representation he felt it was "unlikely" that his Government would intervene. Nonetheless, as a result of the representation, the wording of the Bill was altered so that Asiatics were not specifically excluded from the mines. In practice, the literacy test in English did lead to their exclusion.

By far the most serious for the South African Indians of the measures proposed by the South African Government were two Bills introduced during 1925, the Areas Reservation Bill and the Natal Franchise Ordinances. The Areas Reservation Bill was a re-introduction of the Class Areas Bill, prepared by Smuts and introduced by his successor, Hartzog, who was even more determined to secure white supremacy. The purpose of the Bill was to segregate Indians for trading and residential purposes. The Natal Franchise Ordinances were designed to limit further the electoral rights of Indians. Both these proposals were greeted with outrage in India.[42]

The Areas Reservation Bill caused the most serious concern for the Indian immigrants. Initially, Reading asked the Secretary of State to approach the Colonial Secretary, asking him to formally approach the Governor-General:

> We feel bound, however, to represent that, in the interests of Imperial solidarity, it is essential

> the problem of Indians domiciled in South Africa should be more sympathetically handled, and are confident that any appeal that may emanate from His Majesty's Government in this connection cannot be open to misinterpretation.[43]

The Conservative Colonial Secretary, L.S.Amery, refused to co-operate and Reading was given permission by Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, to approach the South African Government directly. This he did on 8th April 1925:

> We are also anxious not to aggravate a delicate situation by indulging in generalisations about aims and motives. The problems of South Africa, we believe, are probably racial only on surface [sic].[44]

He realised that the situation was a difficult one for South Africa, but he believed the problem could be solved if the leaders of the various interested groups acted with tolerance, although he was anxious not to antagonise the South African Government and worsen the situation for the Indian residents. He suggested that the South African Government call a conference, organised through the League of Nations. The idea was not original, it had previously been suggested by W.H.Thomas, the former Labour Colonial Secretary.

The South African Government were unwilling to agree to the Viceroy's suggestion. Dr. D.F.Malan, Minister of the Interior, addressing the House of Assembly on 17th February 1926, summarised the events of the previous year:

> The attitude which was adopted by us from the beginning in regard of this proposal...was this, that this particular problem was a South African one, that it had to be solved by South Africa alone, and that it had to be solved with a view solely to the interests of South Africa.[45]

Their solution to the problem was to urge Reading to be more helpful

in arranging repatriation. In turn, Reading could not understand how this would help South Africa's problems as 63% of Indians were South African born, as he pointed out to Birkenhead.[46]

The Viceroy's Council was also very concerned about the problem, and discussed the issue on 9th September. The outcome of that discussion was that no action would be taken in India to express their feelings, unless that action would be of practical help to Indians in South Africa.[47] Reading must have been relieved by this decision.

Meanwhile, Reading kept up his pressure on the Governor-General, sending argument after argument about the injustices of the Areas Reservation Bill. On 23rd September he wrote:

> ...the Bill assumes that the Indian is an alien element in the population of the Union, and is designed to reduce that element considerably. We question whether the Indian population, of which more than 60 per cent is South African by birth, can justly be regarded as an alien element.[48]

Finally, on 10th November 1925, as a result of Reading's pressure, the Government of South Africa felt bound to allow a deputation to be sent from India to investigate the condition of Indians living in the Union.

The deputation, headed by G.F.Patterson, the Commissioner for Labour, sent an interim report to Reading in January 1926, in which they stated that they had been unable to find any evidence that the involvement of Indians in trade was in any way impinging on Europeans.[49] On 17th April, the deputation met the Governor-General and persuaded him to agree to a conference. As a result of that conference two principles were agreed, which undermined Reading's position. It was agreed that the South African Government could use any legitimate means to maintain Western standards, and that Indians who were prepared to conform to Western standards should be enabled to do so.[50] Therefore,

in January 1927, the Areas Reservation Bill was dropped.

The compromise reached by the conference can only be regarded as a partial success for Reading. It was still left to the South African Government to set "Western standards" and to decide who conformed to them. However, the dropping of the Areas Reservation Bill did mean that there was no formal legislation against South African Indians. Reading had been able to use his legal skills to justify the rights of Indians in both Kenya and South Africa and thus bring about a rejection or abandonment of segregationalist measures. In neither Kenya nor South Africa was the problem finally resolved, but the Governments of both countries had come to understand that Indians abroad had the support of the Government of India. As Sapru pointed out at the 1923 Imperial Conference, machinery had been provided which could prevent the rights of Indians being ignored elsewhere in the Empire

Nearer to home, Reading's foreign policy was concerned mainly with Afghanistan and the province of Waziristan on the Indian-Afghan border. The possibility of a Russian invasion of India through Afghanistan had been a cause of concern to the British for a hundred years. The problem was compounded by the existence of a number of tribal areas, such as Waziristan, between India and Afghanistan. Fears of Russian expansion had caused clashes between the British and the tribesmen previously, in 1893 and 1895, which had been dealt with by military expeditions from India.

Lord Curzon had attempted to solve the problem in 1901 by taking the whole area under direct British control, forming a new frontier province, known as the North-West Frontier Province. Policing it was based on the tribes, each supervising their own areas. The tribes were also to be involved in road and railway building, and Britsh garrisons were

situated in the hills. This provided an outlet for the tribesmen's energy and also improved British access to the area. However, British involvement in the area inevitably took away the tribesmen's independence, and further trouble broke out in 1919. The tribesmen became dissatisfied and consequently gave their support to the Amir, Amanullah of Afghanistan, who had succeeded in February 1919, in the Third Afghan War. This support contributed to the Amir's success, but, following the signing of the Treaty of Kabul, the Government of India decided to punish the tribes. This policy was opposed by the tribesmen, and led to an increase in tribal attacks on British Indian bases.[51]

The Treaty of Kabul was signed on 8th August 1919, and it gave Afghanistan independence. The Amir immediately began to test the agreement. All previous treaties had been cancelled, and, technically, there was not even a friendly relationship between India and Afghanistan. Although the Government of India were anxious to remake a treaty of friendship, the Amir made it obvious that he was not interested. A mission from Bolshevik Russia visited Afghanistan, and the country became a conduit for anti-British propaganda.

However, the Government of India expected the situation to change when the Russians were instumental in the overthrow of the Amir of Bokhara. This was not to be. Although Lord Chelmsford asked the British Government to provide military support for the Amir they were unwilling to do so without a firm commitment from the Amir for a treaty of friendship. In any case, the Amir did not ask for help, although he did invite a mission to Kabul to discuss a friendship agreement. Sir Henry Dobbs, the political officer, believed that this new willingness to co-operate with the British was due to the comparative weakness of the non-co-operation movement in India, the acceptance by the tribes of British occupation, and the serious situation inside Afghanistan,

caused by unrest among Afghan troops. However, Dobbs accepted that tribal problems along the borders would continue, and he recommended that the mission be sent.

Following long discussions, the Government of India and the British Government decided to send a mission in January 1921. However, by then, the political situation in India had changed. The Russo-Afghan treaty was nearing completion and the Amir felt in a position to make territorial demands, which the Government of India was not prepared to allow. Negotiations lasted eleven months before a new Treaty of Kabul was signed on 22nd November 1921. Each partner agreed to respect the others independence and to recognise existing boundaries. British India also agreed to allow the free import of defence material purchased by Afghanistan abroad, waiving customs duty.

When Reading arrived in India there had been about two years of border raids and fighting, and the British policy was to keep the tribes under some control by a large and expensive military presence. The aim of this policy was to dominate the two tribes of Waziristan, the Mahsuds and the Wazirs, from two posts on the border linked by a road. However, with unbalanced budgets, it became essential to find a more permanent and cheaper solution. In any case, a new frontier policy was needed, as Sir Harcourt Butler pointed out to Inchcape on 2nd December 1922:

> It has always struck me that we have not revised our policy since the collapse of Russia. Whether a Russian invasion was ever posible is a matter of opinion, but a Bolshevik invasion seems to be quite impossible.

In an attempt to deal with the border raids, Reading set up a Frontier Inquiry Committee in 1922 and sent it to the North-West Frontier

Province. It reported in 1923 and led to an assessment of British Foreign policy by Denys Bray, Minister of State at the Foreign Office. It was suggested that the Mahsud's warlike attitude was due to their isolation therefore British policy would be to end that isolation through the development of better communications.[55] This policy was violently opposed by the tribesmen and there was more border trouble. In December 1922, British troops moved against the Mahsud, bombing villages. The Afghan Government protested that this was a breach of Article 11 of the Treaty of Kabul. The Government of India did agree to pay compensation, but trouble continued into 1923 as the border raids became more serious.[56]

In one incident a Miss Ellis was kidnapped by raiders in the early hours of 14th April, and a Mrs. Watts, wife of Captain Watts, was killed. Miss Ellis was carried off by the Ajab, a tribe based in the Kohat Valley, where she eventually ended up. The gang held her to ransom, demanding a complete pardon for themselves, Rs 50,000 and the release of four men. Miss Ellis was finally released when the Mullah, Mahoud Akhundzada, under pressure from the British, the Afridis of Khyber, and Khan Bahudur Kuli Khan, was persuaded to coerce the gang. Miss Ellis was rescued on 21st August and placed under the protection of the Mullah.[57]

As a result of the kidnapping and murder, Reading tried to ensure that the Afghan Government made some attempt to solve the problems of border raids. He asked for the arrest and trial of the murderers; action to prevent border raids; an end to anti-British intrigues in Waziristan, and compensation for the border areas affected. In order to persuade the Afghans to agree, Reading also threatened to withdraw the British Legation in Kabul. The Afghan Government did take some action, instigating an enquiry and the situation was temporarily resolved.[58]

However, there was further border trouble in 1924, when a British official, Finnis, was murdered by Kohat tribesmen. The murderers escaped, Reading believed, with the help of the Afghan Government. Reading thought that the whole incident had been instigated by the Amir, who had initially employed the tribesmen. The British Resident, Sir Francis Humphreys, argued that this was not a practicable view.[59] The Afghans were willing, in his opinion, to track down the murderers, but were hampered by snow, although this may only have been an excuse by the Afghan Government.

A joint force was agreed on, with the understanding that this would operate in the border areas. The British provided aerial reconnaissance to track the murderers. Nevertheless, to ensure the Afghans' continued co-operation, arms imports were held in Bombay following the telegraphing of the King's speech to Afghanistan showing how seriously the Frontier murders were regarded.[60] The Government of India issued a Note, No, 307 laying down their demands; the removal of Daudo Shah, the Amir's cousin, the deportation to Turkestan of Sultan Mir and Gul Akbar, brothers of the Mullah, and the permanent dismissal of Wazir and Mahsud Khassadars.[61] The arms were to be held until the Afghan Government made some attempt to fulfil the terms of Note 307. The disruptive elements of the Amir's family were removed, and the arms were released, although Finnis' murder had not been solved.

It seems likely that this was due to fear of chaos in Afghanistan. Leon B.Poullada argues that "fear of Russian expansion convinced them that nothing was so dangerous as a vacuum of power in Central Asia".[62] Ludwig Adamec writes, "Britain seemed to fear chaos in Afghanistan more than the unfriendliness of an Afghan ruler, for she preferred to deal with a strong Afghan ruler..."[63] A strong ruler could be induced, by offers

of help and support, to follow a pro-British policy.

As regards Waziristan, the Viceroy claimed he had been giving the area some thought. In January 1923, he had written to the Secretary of State:

> This problem is the most perplexing of all problems in India, but I cannot contemplate, with equanimity, proposals for indefinite continuation by regular troops.[64]

The existence of such a force in the area was not only costly, but also prevented the development of political parties in the area. Even if British troops were withdrawn, in the opinion of Sir John Maffey, the the system left behind could only have 'a brief life'.[65] No real attempt was made to completely overhaul the area in agricultural terms. Only patchwork reforms of the agricultural administration were carried out. General Rawlinson was unwilling to reduce the size of the army in Waziristan,[66] but there was an increasing number of demands for the British withdrawal from the area. On 4th February Reading wrote to the Secretary of State:

> The occupation was for civilising purposes but unfortunately has led to no result, not withstanding expenditure involved. The public and the Legislature feel so keenly on the subject that the proposals over further expenditure necessitated by future military occupation cannot fail to produce opposition which may lead to crisis.[67]

One of Rawlinson's reasons for wishing to remain in the area was the possible loss of prestige by the British army if they were forced to withdraw, and that the Amir would become 'swollen-headed'. Butler discounted this possibility. The Amir was too weak to do anything without a strong power behind him.[68] The fact that the British had already been fighting the tiny Wazir tribe for four years had already destroyed the prestige of the army, in Butler's opinion.

Reading came up with a solution that would not necessitate abandoning the area completely. The 'Razmak Policy' provided for the building of northern and southern roads to Razmak, thus making the area more accessible, and improving communications to the Afghan border. When these were completed the military would be withdrawn and the area handed over to the civilian administration. In the months that followed its introduction, the 'Razmak Policy', although criticised did seem to be working.[69]

In March 1924 civil war broke out in Afghanistan. Reading tried to help the Government by preventing incursions from India. As a result of these friendly actions, relations between India and Afghanistan became increasingly cordial in the last two years of Reading's Viceroyalty.[70] Nevertheless, this did not prevent the Amir seeking the help of Russia for his airforce. While not serious, the Russification was regarded by Reading as "unfriendly and provocative".[71] He believed some action had to be taken as there was a serious threat of a Russian base at Jalalabad. The possibility of restricting arms importation was again discussed at the Legislative Assembly, and Reading made it clear to the Amir that the Government of India was prepared to act. However, such steps were not needed, as the Amir agreed to keep the terms of the 1921 Treaty of Kabul which prevented the establishment of Russian consulates along the agreed borders.

Coatman was able to conclude that Reading's Frontier policy had largely been successful:

> The number of tribal raids into British territory has fallen immensely and, in fact, Lord Reading leaves the frontier provinces in a happier condition than it has known for over a decade.[72]

Reading's handling of Foreign and Imperial affairs can be said to have been successful in solving the immediate problems. However, little attempt was made to reach long-term solutions. As we have seen this was the case in much of Reading's handling of India's problems. Certainly, the Viceroy should have emphasised more forcefully the rights of Indians to be treated equally elsewhere in the Empire. Although he dealt satisfactorily with the various crises in South Africa and Kenya, little was done to ensure the situation did not arise again. Many of the problems dealt with by Reading were only 'shelved' during Reading's Viceroyalty; racism in South Africa was certainly destined to cause problems in the future.

Chapter Eleven: Reading and the Indian Judicial System 1921-1926

Although Reading dealt successfully with major problems in domestic, economic and foreign affairs, he regarded his greatest contribution to India to be in the field of working toward equality, particularly in the courts.

Racial equality was an issue of great importance to Reading. His unique position as a Jewish Viceroy made him an excellent ambassador for equal rights. Indians in the Legislature quickly noted this advantage and made reference to the special circumstances welcoming Reading at the start of his Viceroyalty. Reading replied in a speech in Bombay:

> I note especially your sympathetic reference to the ancient race to which I belong, and I observe with pleasure that you state your pride in welcoming me is enhanced by this circumstance.[1]

He went on to hope that his membership of "the ancient race" would enable him to understand something of the Indian mind.

Reading had not been long in India when he made his position on racial equality clear in a speech he made at the Chelmsford Club in Simla. The Club had recently opened its doors to Indians on equal terms:

> I say we do not for a moment indulge in any notions of racial superiority or predominance... I say that there cannot be and must never be humiliation under the British rule of any Indian because he is an Indian.[2]

He stated that he believed that there was a true bond of sympathy between the British and the Indians, and that no member of the British community ought to allow racial prejudice to exist.

The speech was well received according to an Indian News Agency Telegram No. 2 (s) sent on June 1st.[3] However, the sentiments expressed proved somewhat over hopeful.

Six weeks later, Reading found himself dealing first hand with two examples of apparent racial bias in the courts.

The first case was being heard in Bengal, and concerned a European who had injured by shooting an Indian coolie, after he had made advances to the Indian's daughter. The European claimed that the shooting was an accident, he was after deer. The composition of the court was weighted heavily in favour of the European from the start, the judge and eight of the jury of nine were Europeans. Predictably, the European was acquitted by a majority of eight to one.

The second case concerned a British soldier who had attacked an Indian woman, apparently with the intent of raping her. He was charged only with assault and was fined Rs. 50 because of 'extenuating circumstances'. Reading was obviously very concerned about both incidents, he wrote to the Secretary of State on 7th July 1921:

> I must confess that I am very seriously perturbed by the result of both these cases, and more particularly by the indignation caused among Indians.[4]

He argued that such verdicts created the impression that there was one law for the European and one for the Indian and he was determined to do something about the problem. Nevertheless, Reading did not claim that the verdicts were wrong. He believed that examples of racial injustice were becoming less frequent and he suggested that Indians were occasionally over-sensitive to imagined slights, but he was worried and wanted to investigate further.

Although 22.6 million Indians were recorded as literate in the 1921 census, not all of them were registered as eligible for jury services.[5] Consequently, juries in India always consisted of a majority of Europeans. Therefore, the re-organization of the judicial system was a difficult one for the Viceroy.

Ideally, Reading would have preferred to see trial by judge only, as "English judges would act with justice". Although this view of the English judiciary is simplistic and idealistic, Reading did believe that the issue was an important one:

> I am convinced that we shall never persuade the Indian of the justice of our rule until we have overcome racial difficulties of the character mentioned above.[7]

The Secretary of State's reply was encouraging; Montagu recognised that the opportunity to remove inequality would have a special appeal for Reading.[8]

The Legislative Assembly was also concerned about the racial discrimination in the courts. In September 1921, Mr. N.M.Samarth demanded that a committee be set up to investigate the situation. This was done on 27th December, under the chairmanship of Dr. Sapru, the Law Member. The Committee also included Hon. Mr. Justice Shah of the High Court. The Committee found that the legal problems of 1921 stemmed from the Ilbert Bill. Before 1883 British subjects had been exempted from trial by Indian magistrates. In that year Lord Ripon proposed that British subjects be amenable to session courts, over which Indians were now senior enough to preside. There was a storm of protest which led to a compromise; a British subject could claim a jury half of which would be European.

The Committee reported, in July 1922, that they had found a number of existing discriminations in the Code of Criminal Procedure. For example, European British subjects (defined as anyone of European descent, born, naturalised, or domiciled in Britain or the Colonies, or their children or grandchildren) could only be tried by First Class magistrates. Additional or assistant session judges had to be British, have three years experience, and be approved by the British Government

Sentences were less severe for many offences for European British subjects, and were limited to a maximum of one year in prison for many offences. European British subjects also had better access to Habeas Corpus, and better rights of appeal to the High Court.[9]

The amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure proposed by the committee were designed to remove some of the discriminatory practices. The members suggested that the definition of European British subject should be narrowed to include only first generation Europeans, born, naturalized or domiciled in Britain or the Colonies. The committee also recommended that the High Court should be redefined to allow equal access. They suggested that the same laws of jury and appeal should apply to all, and, recognising that there was a limited number of Indians on the list of qualifiers for jury service, they proposed that the list should be amended to include all those qualified.

Mr. Justice Shah was pleased with the proposals. In his conclusion to the committee's report he emphasised his belief that it was a matter of great importance to have uniformity in criminal trials:

> It will be a great help to the administration of justice to have community of interest instead of separations, as at present, as regards the rules of procedure, in criminal trials.[9]

However, not all members of the Committee were so happy with the outcome. Dr. H.S. Gour believed that the maintenance of the distinction of European British subjects meant that further racial discrimination was inevitable:

> I cannot help observing that the compromise embodied in the report will not ensure racial equality, but tend rather to perpetuate racial inequality.[10]

In his opinion, anyone choosing to live in India should accept the country's laws.

In an attempt to implement some of the Committee's recommendations, Reading introduced the Racial Distinctions Bill in 1922. Its purpose was to remove the distinction between the Indian and the European members of the Indian Civil Service, in regard to criminal jurisdiction. Reading was eager that this should go ahead, as he wrote to the Secretary of State on 14th December 1922:

> I feel sure that you are as eager as I am to end this long controversy which has had a definite tendency to aggravate racial feeling."

The proposed change on the law met with opposition from European members of the Indian Civil Service, who wanted no change in their legal privilege, from the British Government and from Indians themselves.

The Legislative Assembly was concerned about the definition of "European British Subjects". Indians in the Assembly resented the distinction as it included members of the Dominions, in whose countries Indians were not always treated as equals, as Reading explained to the Secretary of State on 21st September 1922:

> ...and of course, from their point of view it is not so unreasonable that they should ask why special privileges were to be given for the subjects of Dominions who would not recognise the rights of Indians to be treated on an equality as British subjects.[12]

Discussion took place in the Assembly regarding a modification of the Bill to exclude Domimion subjects. Reading admitted that the Assembly did not, realistically, expect this to be accepted, but it seemed the only way to have their objections heard. Elsewhere in the Empire, notably South Africa and Kenya, Indians were still not recognised fully as British citizens with equal rights of citizenship.[13]

The Assembly was also concerned about the differential treatment in the courts of the soldier and the civilian.

In Reading's opinion this presented an "even graver obstacle".[14] The Secretary of State, Peel, informed Reading of the views of the Secretary of State for War on the subect of the trial of soldiers:

> He said to me dramatically - "I cannot allow any British soldiers to be tried by a native Judge" - I replied - "Well, you are submitting to the indignation already, while this proposal merely adds to the number of competent courts". He was obliged to descend from his Napoleonic attitude.[15]

The Committee had recommended a three way distinction of European British subjects. The Secretary of State was not happy with this although Reading emphasised how important he felt the distinction was. Nevertheless, the views of Reading and his Legislative Assembly were ignored. The Government refused to allow a three way distinction, thus giving British subjects born in the Colonies equal rights to those born in Britain. Reading again protested:

> Our proposals have been rejected by His Majesty's Government because they could not accept any discrimination between the various colonies; and this is the very principle upon which India takes its stand, namely discrimination against her subjects in certain colonies.[16]

The Viceroy referred to those cases he had investigated in 1921, where it appeared there had been a miscarriage of justice because of the composition of the courts. Although he had investigated and found there were certain conditions which had led to those verdicts, he acknowledged they had caused widespread discontent in India, and the Racial Distinctions Bill, as it stood, would not prevent such accusations of discrimination occuring in the future.[17]

The Assembly was justified in its believe that its wishes would be ignored. The Secretary of State had already made the position of the British Government clear in a letter to the Viceroy on 27th July 1922:

> Parliament is certain to take a great interest in the question of diminution [sic] of protection for Europeans in India, and I feel sure therefore that the Cabinet will desire to review the question carefully.[18]

Reading and his Council persuaded the Assembly to accept the wording of the clause relating to European British Subjects, but problems still remained regarding the right of the Military Authorities to transfer cases to the High Court. Nevertheless, the Bill went through the Assembly without substantial modification.

The Racial Distinctions Act was finally passed on 22nd February 1923. Coatman claimed that the passing of the Act was an important measure in the "advance which India had made in the direction of autonomy".[19] Reading was also pleased and satisfied that the Act had finally been passed. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 15th March:

> The very fact of the agreement marked a great advance by both. I hope it will be a long time now before the results of our labours will be disturbed.[20]

The speed with which the courts administered justice also concerned Reading, and he was determined to improve this situation. In the administration of civil justice, in particular, there were long delays. In June 1923 Reading sought the advice of his Governors and the High Court Judges as to how the situation could be improved.[21] On 24th January 1924 a committee was appointed to investigate. In January 1925 it was reported that 22.19% of all civil cases were unheard within a year.[22] This situation was particularly serious in Assam, Bengal, Bombay, Madras and Sind.

As part of the Government's attempt to improve the administration of civil justice in India, certain changes were made in the law. These included changes in the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Code of Civil Procedure, all designed to 'speed up' the administration of justice.

Perhaps the major legal problem Reading faced during his Viceroyalty concerned the Munitions Fraud Case. The case was a legacy from Lord Chelmsford, as the initial prosecution of those involved was begun in August 1920. Its roots, however, went back to August 1918, when four men; C.S. Waite, deputy controller of the Munitions Board, Rai Bahadur Sukhal Karnani, president of the Karnani Bank, J.C. Bannerjee, the contractor, and H. Stringer, a subordinate on the Board, were charged in Bengal with conspiracy to defraud the Government in regard to the supply of a quantity of wire rope to the Munitions Board. When the Munitions Board ceased to exist, the case was not within the scope of the government agency which replaced it, the Industry Department. However, Sir Thomas Holland, Secretary of the Industry Department, decided to proceed with the case and it was revealed that the Karnani Bank was in financial difficulties due to the incident, and was prepared to drop certain civil claims against the Government if its position was supported. Holland consulted two members of the Viceroy's Council, rumoured to be Mr. Justice Shah, the High Court Judge, and Sarma, and the case was withdrawn in July 1921.

Two reasons were given for the withdrawal: that the Government wasn't interested in the case, and that the collapse of the Karnani Bank would have severe economic consequences for one hundred and twenty one industrial firms, depending on the bank's financial backing, and for the Indians they employed. The case caused both Reading and Montagu deep concern. Montagu was forced to answer questions in Parliament. Reading was outraged that this administration should be questioned. He wrote to Montagu on 14th August:

> I unhesitatingly say I would never have permitted the withdrawal of the prosecution for the reasons stated had the matter come before me... I would rather have resigned my office than agreed to what I regretfully feel compelled to look upon as a reflection on British justice.[22]

Reading believed that the incident was regarded as more serious than it might have been by the British Parliament because of his former position as Lord Chief Justice. Sir Thomas Holland was summoned to give an explanation of his reason for withdrawing the case without consulting the Viceroy. Holland explained that he believed the incident to be of minor importance and not worthy of the Viceroy's attention. Reading found this hard to accept, he saw all members of his Council once a week, Holland could have mentioned the case on such an occasion. He asked for his disapproval to be expressed in Parliament:

> ... although I have no desire that as strong language as in this private telegram should be used, and I want to make it as little unpleasant for Holland as is possible consistent with public duty.[23]

The Viceroy's Council decided to proceed with the case against the British involved but to drop the case against Karnani. The original problem having been redirected into the correct channels, Reading decided to investigate the new problem, a breach in judicial procedure, further. From his point of view there was now a more serious problem:

> It is very unfortunate that this should have happened... it is lamentable that it should have happened under my Government when I had made justice the pivot of our policy.[24]

He felt such a breach of procedure could not be allowed, "as the adverse effect on the prestige of justice in India can hardly be overestimated".[25] Holland and the Advocate-General of Bengal were both asked to explain how such a decision could have been taken. The whole situation seemed very confused. Holland claimed he had consulted Dr. Sapru, the Law Member, and Sir William Vincent, the Home Member, rather than the Viceroy, who had advised him to withdraw the case. Their names were not, however, revealed to the public. Holland then

consulted the Attorney-General, and the Attorney-General's junior, Mr. Ross Alston. Alston had suggested that it be announced that the case had been withdrawn to avoid rioting and that the accused should refund the money. The Attorney-General opposed this. Holland said in mitigation that he believed the case should go ahead but had been advised otherwise by two Council members.

The Attorney-General claimed that he was only acting on instructions he had received in a detailed letter from Simla, which was read out in court. It detailed the Government's arguments. He said he had never been consulted about the withdrawal; had he been, he would have pointed out that the reasons given were inadequate.[26]

Several groups, such as the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the European Association, the Indian Association of Calcutta, and the British Indian Association of Calcutta, sent representations to the Viceroy expressing strong condemnation of the apparent miscarriage of justice, arguing that the case had been dropped due to the involvement of British officials. Reading had evidence that the Press had also criticized the Member-in-Charge, the system of government, and the department concerned. The Viceroy was left to deal with the problem by Montagu:

> We confidently look to you to maintain the reputation of the Government of India, not only for justice, but also for other virtues...[27]

Reading believed that the only satisfactory solution was to remove Holland from his post, but before any action could be taken Holland offered to resign. This was accepted by Reading, who felt strongly that Holland had gravely prejudiced the Government and embarrassed the Viceroy as head of it.[28] His attitude to Holland had hardened as the full implications of the case became obvious. Consequently, on 29th August he wrote to Montagu accepting Holland's resignation.

In many ways, Reading was justified in his attitude to Holland. Holland's action had made the Viceroy's position as a representative of the British legal system intolerable. Maybe, too, accusations of prejudice touched a raw nerve. Reading's involvement in the Marconi Scandal and his subsequent appointment as Lord Chief Justice had caused criticism in 1913, and had inspired a vitriolic poem from Rudyard Kipling.[29] This case was probably far too similar for comfort, although Reading was proved to have no involvement in the abandoning of the Munitions Fraud Case.

Reading was also aware that the Government would be greatly criticised over the incident. He did not, himself, believe that the system of government was at fault. In his opinion, the fault lay with individuals who failed to follow the correct procedure. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 18th August:

> Inasmuch as I am head of it [the Government] and have placed so much reliance on justice, I have felt bound to make my own position absolutely clear. But, even so, the position is serious, for the whole atmosphere surrounding Government is affected in the public mind by the course of events and we shall still hear much attack and criticism both in the press and in the Legislative Assembly even though it is acknowledged that I had nothing to do with it.[30]

It is, perhaps, regrettable that Reading, who was committed to the rule of law, and who was determined to introduce a fair and unbiased legal system, should have to agree to the abandonment of that legal system in Bengal. The political situation had been unsettled since 1919. Revolutionary gangs, such as the Yuguntar, had been revived, and minor government officials and members of the police force were being threatened, and indeed assassinated. Particularly at risk was the Chief of Police, Sir Charles Tegart.

The government of Bengal asked for emergency powers under the Defence of India Act in 1922, but the Viceroy refused to allow the introduction of martial law. In his opinion the situation was not critical.

However, the situation deteriorated, and in 1923 Reading allowed the introduction of Clause 1 of the Defence of India Act. Under Clause 1, those named by informers as members of revolutionary gangs could be detained without trial. This became known as Regulation 111. Reading was obviously very concerned about its implications, since the right to a fair trial was the basic principle of British law. From the start he made it clear that he disliked the Regulation. On 1st May 1924 he wrote to the Secretary of State:

> I dislike the use of the Regulation and have the greatest reluctance in applying it. I would not agree to have recourse to it except where I am certain that its use is essentially necessary in the public interest and for the protection of the public.[31]

However, evidence of plots against Government officials had been revealed and Reading felt he would have been failing in his duty if the perpetrators had not been caught and the public protected.[31] It had become virtually impossible to find witnesses to testify in open court due to threats and intimidation.

Nevertheless, Reading was determined that every attempt should be made to keep the system as fair as possible. Two judicial officers were appointed to investigate the facts in any submission for detention. They made a recommendation to the Viceroy who then examined the facts for himself and released the person concerned if he had any reason to doubt the correctness of the application. The procedure was slow and cumbersome and must have annoyed Lord Lytton, the Provincial Governor, who was in favour of swift action.

The Government at Home were also concerned about the implications of Regulation 111. On 30th April 1924, Reading wrote to Lytton expressing the Government's concern:

> I have been informed privately by the Secretary of State that he is perturbed particularly by the use of Regulation [sic] after acquittal and that there will be difficulty in defending the action in Parliament.[32]

Reading sent the Government full details of the situation in Bengal. He again emphasised that he was also troubled by the use of the Regulation, but went on to justify its implementation:

> ... as you know, the Government of Bengal has got an extremely difficult task to handle and I agree with them in thinking that we must take some risks in the protection of an officer like Tegart and other police officers.[33]

He did emphasise, however, that he believed the powers should be used sparingly and with caution. Parliament agreed that the situation was critical and allowed Regulation 111 to stand on August 3rd.

However, the situation in Bengal did not improve. By October 1924, Lytton was able to present new evidence to the Viceroy. He claimed that preparations for criminal outrages had reached danger level. The full powers of the Defence of India Act were necessary, in his opinion, so that immediate action could be taken. Although Reading was unwilling to allow the imposition of martial law, he agreed that the situation had now become intolerable. In a statement issued by the Home Department on 25th October he said:

> Evidence has been placed before me, which shows to my satisfaction that the movement is deep-seated and dangerous.[34]

The new powers, known as the Bengal Ordinances, gave Lytton the right to imprison suspected members of revolutionary movements, the right to establish special tribunals for trials without the disclosure of informants, and the right to search without warrants.

The Ordinances were defeated in the Bengal Local Assembly by a margin of 57 for to 66 against, so Lytton certified the Act and the terms were implemented in November 1924. Naturally there was much criticism of the Ordinances, but Lytton ignored them:

> Words have little meaning in this country and everything that Government does is criticised on principle, the criticism bearing no relation whatever either to facts or intentions.[35]

However, concern about the use of Regulation III did not end for Reading. The Ordinances provided for trial in secret to protect informers, and the Viceroy had hoped that this would mean that there would now be a trial for those held under the Regulation:

> I cannot think it right, now that the full powers have been given to the Bengal Government... that men should be indefinitely imprisoned without any charge being formulated against them for trial by the Special Tribunal.[36]

This was not to be. Lytton had no intention of conducting trials; he argued that Section 12 of the Ordinances substituted Regulation III.[37] Reading was shocked, not only by the decision, but by Lytton's handling of the Mirzapur Bombing Case.

The case had been dragging on since August 1923. Two Indians, named by an informer, Sishir Ghose, were brought to trial. One confessed while in prison, was released and then murdered. The other was acquitted and then attempted to murder the informer by throwing a bomb. The bomb killed Ghose's brother, and Ghose himself captured the bomber. A retrial was ordered but never carried out because investigation revealed some disturbing facts which had not been evident at the original trial. Sishir Ghose was himself associated with revolutionaries, and could easily be discredited by the accused. Also the trial was impossible because the Bengal Government had promised to protect informers.

As Lytton pointed out to the Secretary of State on 11th February 1924, the Government of Bengal depended on informers:

> The main ground for our action is the belief that the whole system of our intelligence is at stake and even in the interests of justice we are not prepared to run so great a risk.[33]

Reading was shocked by the decision and initially the Government of India refused to consent to the abandoning of the trial. However, Lytton pointed out that the situation was critical. Not only was Ghose at risk, but also Tegart, the police witness. Consequently, Reading gave his consent, but he made it clear that no reasons would be given for the abandonment, in case others took advantage. The situation seemed acceptable, and is another example of Reading's ability to compromise.

When interviewed at the end of his Viceroyalty by Durga Das , the editor of a newspaper and later author of a book about his connections with Indian political figures, Reading was asked what he felt his greatest cotribution to India had been. Reading replied "Justice between man and man".[34] Although the advances in the area of legal equality had not been spectacular, Reading was satisfied that some progress had been made towards a fairer system.

For all Reading regarded the implementation of a fairer legal system as his primary achievement, it must have seemed to Indian politicians that there was still a long way to go. The fact that the British Government and the Raj still had the right to suspend the constitution was an obvious cause for concern. It appears that, yet again, Reading underestimated, or failed to understand the true nature of unrest in India.

Conclusion

In March 1926, Reading returned to Britian and was replaced by Lord Irwin. In assessing the success or failure of Reading's Viceroyalty it is necessary to consider a number of factors. Primarily it is important to consider how well Reading fulfilled Montagu's criteria for the new type of Viceroy. As we have seen, Montagu felt that, previously, the Viceroys had approached the problem of India from the wrong side, by insisting on the maintenance of precedence.[1] However, Reading was also a formal type of Viceroy. The Maharaja of Gwalior commented unfavourably on this. However, his views were anti-Reading, and it seems the Viceroy dealt meticulously with all paper work and replied promptly to correspondence. Nevertheless, Reading also placed a great deal of importance on precedence, so much so that it became a joke in Viceregal circles, as Rawlinson recalls in his diary:

> The Readings are too silly about their personal dignity and are making themselves the laughing stock of the place [2]

Equally, the Second Earl of Birkenhead, in his biography of Lord Halifax, wrote that Lady Reading openly admitted her delight at being queen.[3]

However, unlike Lord Chelmsford, who had refused to meet Gandhi, whom he regarded as a rebel, Reading did meet Indian political leaders such as Gandhi, Das and Jinnah, Reading did not regard them as equals, but he was prepared to listen to their point of view, and even show sympathy with that view, as in the case of the Khilafat movement. The Viceroy could also be flexible, as his handling of the Ali brothers in 1921 shows.

Yet the conflict between Reading's desire to be flexible, and to govern fairly and justly in the tradition of British Liberalism, and the conservative and reactionary attitude of the British Government after

1921 led to claims and accusations from politicians such as Lord Sydenham that the Viceroy was failing in his duty. Reading desired to be as fair as possible under the circumstances, examining every issue thoroughly and refusing to allow any discrimination between the races. In his biography of Lord Halifax, S.Gopal uses the phrase "politics in suspense"[4] to describe the first eighteen months of Irwin's Viceroyalty. However, the phrase could equally be used of most of Reading's Viceroyalty. Ann Ewing describes the policy as "wait and see".[5] The policy was not simply Reading's, it had been carried on through the latter years of Chelmsford's administration, and was partly the idea of Sir William Vincent, the Home Member.

As B.R.Tomlinson has pointed out, such a policy was, in any case, necessary as the British had constantly to adjust and rethink their methods of control if they wished to rule India successfully.[6] They needed to control the vital areas of the government while attempting to retain the co-operation of the bulk of their Indian subjects. As we have seen, Reading did have some success in this regard, retaining the support of some of the moderates such as Malaviya and Sastri, and winning the backing of some Muslims. Indeed, Alan Campbell, in his biography of Lord Halifax, expresses the view that Reading had little choice but to mark time, as the fact that a ten year review of the reforms was planned convinced Indians of the impermeability of the situation.[7]

However, in many cases, Reading's ability to be flexible caused problems for other members of the Government of India and for the I.C.S. The I.C.S. saw their role as the administration of British law and order. The Additional District Magistrate of Godavari District in Madras said "much of the work [of the I.C.S.] was in the nature of showing the flag

-taking every opportunity to demonstrate that the Government intended to govern".[8] This was made difficult because Reading's attitude meant that the Provincial Governors were unable to give a clear lead to the I.C.S. The Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government called it "a policy of drifting into anarchy", while in Bengal the Chief Secretary described the situation faced by his District Officers as "powerless inability".[9] In any case, Reading's ability to carry out a policy of "wait and see" depended on the ability of his District Officers to assess the mood of the Indians and to take appropriate action..

To some historians, Reading's flexibility is seen as strength. The Second Earl of Birkenhead expresses the opinion that Irwin could have expected no better legacy than that his predecessor left.[10] He argues that Reading handed over an administration in full working order, although the Viceroy had been forced to resort to emergency powers and ordinances in order to achieve this. He describes Reading as ruling with a "firm hand", although "the load on this exceptionally gifted and determined Viceroy was almost intolerable".[11] Coatman, in his report on the Viceroyalty, wrote:

> Since the beginning of 1921 there has been considerable overhauling and revision of the law in India with a view to bringing it abreast of present day conditions and making it a more exact instrument of Government.[12]

Other contemporary commentators on the period have been more critical of Reading's flexibility, which appeared to them as indecisiveness. Rawlinson wrote in his diary that it often seemed to him that Reading was slow to act, and his evenhandedness did not suit those who refused to accept that the Indians were equal to the British:

> He is sometimes too patient, I think - there is now question about his ability - his want of Indian conference [sic] is somewhat of a handicap, for he does not realise that the Blackman is fundamentally different in his mentality to the White.[13]

Rawlinson actually wrote in his diary "there is now question about his ability", but it is debatable whether this is an error and should read "no question" or whether it is deliberate. Certainly, towards the end of Reading's Viceroyalty, some of Rawlinson's entries are more critical of Reading. For example, he also wrote that he found Reading slow and not very methodical when it came to paper work.[14] This criticism seems unjustified, as study of Reading's papers shows that he replied promptly to letters, and appeared methodical in his administration. As a successful barrister, it is unlikely that he was unmethodical in his work. In 1924, however, when Rawlinson returned to Britain, he had supper with the King at Beaulieu. In his diary he recorded the after dinner conversation:

> After supper I had a long talk with the King, who was rather down on Reading, saying he was the worst Viceroy we had had for years, and could not make up his mind, in addition to being a man of weak character - I ... had to admit his difficulty in making decisions.[15]

Therefore, it seems likely that the original diary entry is correct, and that Rawlinson was finding it increasingly difficult to work with Reading. This, in itself, is not a criticism of Reading's Viceroyalty, as the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief represented different political positions, and conflict between them was inevitable. Rawlinson was very much of the opinion that the British were in India to rule over them, not to co-operate with them. Reading, as we have seen, believed his role was to introduce liberal and democratic traditions to the Indian people.

The fact that Reading considered every issue carefully and appeared slow to act, must also have contributed to the image of vacillation that the Viceroy gave. However, despite the accusations of various parties, there is no evidence that Reading was slow: all letters appear to have

been dealt with promptly. Reading did need to act cautiously to avoid alienating those elements in India who did support the Raj, such as some members of the moderates. The British Parliament placed less importance on retaining moderate support. They wanted to see trouble-makers imprisoned and peace forced on India. Reading hoped to persuade India to be peaceful by diplomacy.

It is important, however, to distinguish between what Reading could have hoped to achieve and what the British Government would allow. Although Reading had gone to India with such high hopes, the troubled state of India forced him to use what he regarded as unconstitutional and repressive measures. Steps such as the certification of the Bengal Ordinances went against everything the Viceroy believed in. However, he was committed to the rule of law and to balanced budgets and these steps were necessary in order to achieve success in these fields. Rawlinson recalls in his diary that Reading had admitted that he had come to India full of "conciliatory feelings and desire for compromise", but because of the conditions he encountered he was "reluctantly forced to change his mind".[16] Coupled with problems inside India he also had to face Conservative opposition after that party's victory in the 1922 elections. Opposition also came from some of the Provincial Governors, notably Lloyd and Lytton, who did not believe in or support Reading's policies.

In addition, as Coatman pointed out, the reforms of 1919, instead of functioning steadily and broadening the political experience of Indians, developed into something of a battlefield with the Government on one side and Congress on the other. Reading himself acknowledged this difficulty when he wrote to his son:

> ...my task has been, among other difficulties, to govern with a Parliament in which there is always a large majority against the Government.[17]

Without some form of popular support the Central Government could never successfully take the initiative. Yet Reading enjoyed the challenge. Inchcape recalled that he had never seen two people happier in their jobs than the Readings.[18] The Viceroy himself wrote to the Secretary of State on 18th December 1924:

> I have found the work of extreme interest, although I have passed through periods of great anxiety, particularly in my first year, which was far and away the worst I have experienced.[19]

Nevertheless, it does seem that on many occasions Reading underestimated or misunderstood the real nature of Indian unrest. He was prepared to dismiss the outbreaks of communalism in the later years of his term of office as unimportant. Yet this was obviously not the case in view of future events in India.

By the end of his Viceroyalty, when memories of that first difficult year had faded and a period of comparative peace had been enjoyed, there were those prepared to admit that Reading had been a success. Sir Harcourt Butler wrote to his mother on 4th January 1926:

> He will go out in high repute anyhow. He leaves India better than he found it .... He has exercised the patience of his race and his training.[20]

Sir Victor Sassoon wrote to Yvonne Fitzroy on 23rd January 1926:

> I think H.E. will stand out as the biggest Gov. Gen. [sic] India has ever had, not only for what he has done in an Executive capacity while he has been out, but for the policy he has laid down and apparently got accepted.[21]

Miss Stevenson, Lloyd George's secretary and mistress supported the original decision to appoint Reading when she wrote in her diary on 2nd April 1926:

> Everyone now acknowledges that Reading's appointment has been an unqualified success - though many were against him at the time, on account of his being a Jew.[22]

However, not every one became convinced that Reading was the right choice. The Maharaja of Alwar said, in a speech of welcome to Lord Irwin, "Now we have a real gentleman as Viceroy".[23] Reading did not satisfy the reactionary conservatism of British politicians such as Curzon and Birkenhead. He was criticised by, for example, the Morning Post and by Lytton, because he was Jewish. Yet he worked steadily, in his own way, to achieve the results he needed. His results were not spectacular. He had no recipe for instant success, but rather provided a base from which progress could be made. The end result was a more peaceful India, and there were signs of recovery and advance in economics, education, and agriculture. The reform programme was being implemented, the budgets balanced, Indianization had begun, education had been improved, and steps had been taken towards a greater measure of equality for Indians, both in India and elsewhere in the Empire.

In spite of these achievements, Reading's reforms are less easily remembered. He did not give his name to some great measures like Montagu and Chelmsford did, yet many of his reforms were important steps in Indian development, like the Racial Distinctions Act, the effects of which were felt long after Reading had left India. Equally, he was successful in implementing the schemes of others, as we have seen. As his son pointed out in his biography of his father, "he had neither the burning vision nor the creative ardour of a great reformer".[24]

Nevertheless, certain of the measures he introduced were successful on a small scale. For example, the plan to build the road through the North West Frontier Province remained effective for many years. The road was regarded as sacred by the tribesmen, and limited the number of tribal attacks because of the fear of being cut off.

Those, such as Lloyd and Lytton, who had criticised Reading's

handling of political problems in the past were unable to point to one major mistake, as Chelmsford's critics had been able to do. Instead, they had to resort to attacks of a more personal nature, criticising his indecisiveness, as we have seen. Yet this cautious approach to decision making could equally be seen as one of Reading's strengths. All aspects of any problem had to be carefully considered before any action was taken.

The policies of the British Government between 1921 and 1926, with its increasingly anti-nationalist trends meant that any changes to the Indian constitution proposed by Reading would be opposed by some members. For example, Lord Birkenhead was still able to say, in a speech to the House of Lords on 7th July 1925:

> There has never been such a nation.... If we withdraw from India tomorrow the immediate consequence would be a struggle a le outrance between the Muslim and the Hindu population.[25]

These words were to prove prophetic in view of the events of 1947.

Only complete independence would have successfully satisfied India's nationalist demands. This was not yet possible as far as the British Government was concerned. Reading was not permitted to go beyond the limits of the 1919 Act, regardless of the views he held about the extension of the reform scheme in 1921. Consequently, he was forced by circumstances to introduce and to implement short term measures which, in some cases, were aimed at simply covering deeper issues and offering a temporary solution which might satisfy certain sections of the Indian people. Others would be left to solve the deeper issues, with varying degrees of success, as the Indian nationalist movement again began to gather strength.

Thus the Viceroyalty of Lord Irwin co-incided with a climacteric in Indian affairs. Reading predicted that the first eighteen months

of Irwin's Viceroyalty would be relatively peaceful. In November 1927 virtually the only form of all-India political activity was spinning. Nevertheless, there were forty communal riots in the first twelve months. As we have seen, Reading can be held partly responsible for the spread of communalism, as he did little to encourage racial harmony and may actively have attempted to "divide and rule". However, there were many other causes of communalism over which Reading had no control, not least the reforms of 1909 and the introduction of separate electorates. In the early months of his Viceroyalty, Irwin attempted to solve the problem by making a direct appeal to Indian religious leaders for tolerance. His own deep religious beliefs convinced many Indians of his sincerity and there was a temporary lull in communal violence. Later, as we have seen, Irwin took an idea of Reading's, for senior religious leaders to meet and discuss problems, and developed it more fully.

However, tension began to grow again after 1927 as the fortunes of Congress began to revive. Two unsolved problems were the cause of this revival. Firstly, in an attempt to solve India's economic problems, Sir Basil Blackett introduced the Rupee Stabilization Bill, based on gold and setting a value for the rupee of 1s 6d. This was misinterpreted by Congress, who claimed it would spell doom for the peasants. Secondly, there was growing concern over the status of Indians overseas.

Irwin did not share Reading's ability or desire to be flexible, and his attitude or that of the British Conservative Government and the Secretary of State, Lord Birkenhead, was responsible for causing a serious clash between Congress and the Raj in 1927. Lord Birkenhead had decided to call the Reforms Review Committee early for the simple reason that he wanted his own choice of members and he was concerned about the result of the forthcoming election. Unlike Reading, who had always been prepared to

insist on an adequate racial balance on committees, Irwin proposed an all white membership to prevent arguments over representation. The resulting Simon Commission was accused of deliberately and insultingly ignoring the nationalist demands. This caused hostility in India and led to a union between the liberals under Sapru and the moderates.

The Commission was boycotted and Civil Disobedience was instigated. There was serious unrest in India. Irwin tried to solve the problem he had created by calling a round-table conference. Even under these circumstances Irwin was devious. He told Europeans in India that Dominion status for India was impracticable, yet he told Gandhi that he intended to implement the full sense of the 1917 Declaration. Consequently the policy failed, Congress did not attend the Simon Commission hearings, violence continued, and eventually it was necessary for Irwin to make a pact with Gandhi. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was much more widely publicised than the agreement between Reading and Gandhi in 1921, yet the long term effects of the agreement Reading made were much more significant for the Raj. Reading's agreement with Gandhi, although partly responsible for the increased incidence of communal violence, did lead to a period of comparative calm for India. Irwin's pact collapsed, due to a lack of straight talking, leading to widespread violence.

How well, then, did Reading fulfil Montagu's criteria for a new type of Viceroy. As we have seen, evidence does suggest that he was too insistent on precedence, and it is possible he was too cautious in administration. On the question of religion, Montagu had been of the opinion that Reading would benefit from his "oriental mind", which would help him to understand the Indian point of view. However, Reading was not an Orthodox Jew, and was just as likely to attend a Christian service.

It was difficult, therefore, for both Hindus and Muslims, who took their faith seriously, to appreciate the value of Reading's Jewish traditions or his Christian beliefs. To them it seemed that the practice of religion had become a social occasion. In many ways they had greater respect for Irwin's deep Christian convictions, which had prevented him from landing on Sunday in Bombay, at the start of his Viceroyalty. One must conclude, therefore, that Reading only partially fulfilled the criteria laid down by Montagu, and that the traditional mould for a Viceroy had not been completely broken.

It is important, finally, to consider the constitutional and political progress India made during the Viceroyalty of Lord Reading. At first glance this may appear negligible, but some advances had been made which were important. In the matter of the Indianization of the I.C.S., for example, Reading had shown the strength of his commitment to the progress of India by standing firmly in support of the reforms. In foreign and Imperial affairs, and in law and order, important, if not spectacular, advances had been made towards equality between races. Much of the blame for the fact that India had not advanced further lies not with Reading, but with the British Government. This is reflected in their choice of successor for Reading; the more conventional and conservative Lord Halifax. Reading's policies, and his cautious approach to political problems had proved an irritation to many members of the Cabinet, and Halifax was more in keeping socially and morally with the traditions the British Government wished to impose on India. Above all, the British Government wished the Raj to remain in charge of India, and for a while between 1921 and 1926 that had seemed to be in doubt.

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Chapter One

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Chapter Four

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Chapter Six

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Chapter Seven

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Chapter Nine

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34. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 24:7:23, BiP, IOL, Eur D 703/33/10.
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Chapter Eleven

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2. As above, p.354.
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4. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 7:7:21, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/3/14.
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17. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 15:3:23, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/6/10.
18. Secretary of State to Viceroy, 27:7:22, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/5/16
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20. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 15:3:23, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/6/10.
21. Viceroy to all High Court Judges, 2:7:23, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/25/180.
22. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 14:8:21, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/10/669.
23. As above.
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25. Secretary of State to Viceroy, 16:8:21, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/10/65.
26. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21:8:21, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/10/716.
27. Secretary of State to Viceroy, 25:8:21, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/63a/203.
28. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 26:8:21, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/10/748.
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31. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 1:5:24, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/18/138.
32. Viceroy to Lytton, 30:4:24, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/26/168.
33. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 8:5:24, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/7/18.
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36. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 13:11:24, RP, IOL, Eur E 238/7/48.
37. Lytton to Secretary of State, 11:12:24, BiP, IOL, Eur D 703/18/28.
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Conclusion

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