

Bhangi Colony, New Delhi,
27th September 1946.

Dear Mr. Greenfield,

Whilst I thank you for your letter I shall await your promised counter-proposal if any. Our agreed idea, I thought, was that the Finance Minister should not be troubled until you and I had either come to an agreement or had unfortunately agreed to differ. This was in order to save him unnecessary labour.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. Greenfield, Esq., I. C. S.
Secretary, Finance Department,
Government of India, New Delhi.

Valmiki Mandi,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
12th October 1946.

Dear Mr. Greenfield,

I have been shown a note on salt circulated to the Members of the Cabinet.¹ You were to have sent me an amendment which you had admitted was necessary. But instead I see the long and argued note without any amendment. It contains also a proposal to retain a portion of the tax and therefore the monopoly also I suppose.

I confess that I have glanced through the note most hurriedly. Rajaji has asked me to send him my amendment which I am now doing. A copy will be sent to you when I am ready.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. Greenfield, Esq., C. S. I., C. I. E.,
Member, Central Board of Revenue,
Secretariat, New Delhi.

1. See Appendix XIV.

Central Board of Revenue,
New Delhi,
12th October 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Your letter of today's date has just been delivered to me and I hasten to assure you that my undertaking to send you the draft provisions relating to the use of structures and to the enclosure of land for salt manufacture has not been forgotten. The drafts are not quite ready but I hope to be able to send them to you tomorrow. They would have been sent earlier but that we have all been exceptionally busy this last week.

Yours sincerely,
H. Greenfield

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi.

Central Board of Revenue,
New Delhi,
12th October 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Here are the three maps I promised you, exhibiting
 (a) the production
 (b) the consumption
 and (c) the distribution
 of salt in India at the present time. If you wish I will send you larger maps (four times as big), but the smaller size is easier to handle.

2. I also enclose a photograph illustrating the different grades of salt which can be manufactured by the plant which I propose to set up at the principal consuming centres.

Yours sincerely,
H. Greenfield

M. K. Gandhi, Esquire,
Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi.

Central Board of Revenue,
New Delhi,
14th October 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I enclose a draft of the rules¹ which it is proposed to substitute for the present rules governing the manufacture, excavation, collection and removal of salt and salt-earth and shall be grateful if you will kindly scrutinise them and let me know whether you see any material flaw in them from your point of view. As I explained to you, our object is not to hedge in the small producer by rigid limitations but to prevent merchants from exploiting the concession to their financial advantage.

2. As you desired that small producers should be allowed to enclose some area for the purpose, I have included a special provision to this effect and have sought to draw a dividing line between such places and licensed factories by providing that only the latter may have boundaries of a permanent character.

3. The draft is still in a rough-cast stage and the lawyers will probably wish to chisel it a little more before it is published.

Yours sincerely,
H. Greenfield

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Bhangi Colony, Reading Road,
New Delhi,
15th October 1946.

Dear Mr. Greenfield,

I have to thank you for your letters. The maps^{*} will be useful. As to the amendments I have spoken to Rajaji. I have, therefore, no copy to send you. You will know all from him. Nevertheless, if there is any difficulty, I trust you will

1. See Appendix XV.

see me again or write. In any case I would like to see the final form before it is published.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. Greenfield, Esq., C. S. I., C. I. E.,
Member, Central Board of Revenue,
New Delhi.

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Government of India,
Finance Department (Revenue Division),
New Delhi,
17th April 1947.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

You will remember that during our discussions last year I told you that I was preparing a small treatise on the subject of salt in India, in order to provide a clear bird's eye view of our present production, distribution and consumption of salt, and to assist the Cabinet in deciding what form our future salt administration should take. I recall with great pleasure your keen interest in the whole subject and I send you a copy of the treatise in case you would like to read it. I need hardly tell you that any comments which you may care to make either on the treatise itself or on the general subject will be very welcome.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
H. Greenfield

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
C/o Dr. Syed Mahmud.

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Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
6th May 1947.

Dear Mr. Greenfield,

I received your letter of the 17th ultimo on the 25th when I was preparing to come to Delhi. I thank you for it.

Have you sent it to me for suggestions which you could incorporate in the treatise? If that is the case will you

please give me the date before which I should send them?
In any case the typescript I shall carry about with me to
read when I feel I have a little leisure.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

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Government of India,
Finance Department (Revenue Division),
New Delhi,
7th May 1947.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am answering your letter of the 6th May to Mr. Greenfield as he has temporarily gone on leave and I am officiating as Member, Central Board of Revenue, in his place.

Any suggestions you care to make will be welcomed, but please take your own time. No particular date has been fixed for revision of the treatise.

Yours sincerely,
F. M. Innes

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi.

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Bhangi Colony,
New Delhi,
22nd June 1947.

Dear Mr. Greenfield,

I have just finished reading your very interesting monograph on salt. If it has not been sent for printing and if it still admits of improvement, I would suggest that the tenth chapter on future development should be expanded so as to place at the disposal of the public cheap and effective methods of producing salt in small quantities.

You have suggested a Salt Board. The idea seems to be attractive but I do not at all like the suggestion about controlling production and distribution through selective licences. I am studying the present movement of salt

and so far as I know it is very unsatisfactory. Special contractors are said to produce salt and control its prices also. My information may be inaccurate, even faulty. If it is neither inaccurate nor faulty the manner is a great handicap. I abide by the suggestion made to you at one of our pleasant talks that salt should be manufactured by Government or under its supervision but without monopoly. Whoever wishes may compete with the Government at his own risk. By so doing the best quality of salt would be produced at the cheapest rate. If this is done with care, attention and faithfulness, India will be able to produce all the salt required for the consumption of men and animals and for purposes of curing and industry.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

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Central Board of Revenue,
Camp: Simla,
28th June 1947.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am writing to thank you for your letter of the 22nd June, addressed to Mr. Greenfield. Mr. Greenfield is absent on leave in England, and I am officiating as Member of the Central Board of Revenue in his place.

I am arranging, in accordance with your suggestion, for an account of cheap and effective methods of producing salt in small quantities to be drafted. I think, however, it would be better to add this as an Appendix to the monograph rather than include in Chapter X, which deals with an outline of future development of the salt industry.

With regard to your comments regarding the proposed Salt Board and the proposed control over production and distribution through licences, it is difficult to say anything definite at present. The future of salt legislation is uncertain as we cannot be sure whether either or both of the successor Governments will proceed with the proposal to set up a Salt Board; and at present we are bound by the standstill agreement under which neither Government can be committed to any particular policy. Provisionally, however, I am

offering the following remarks, for what they are worth.

Control over production and distribution through a licensing system would seem to be desirable in the interests both of the industry and of the consumer. The main objects of licensing manufacture would be as follows :

- (1) to ensure adequacy of supervision over the quality and quantity of salt produced;
- (2) to ensure maximum production from the factories;
- (3) to prevent harmful and wasteful competition;
- (4) to control distribution and prices of salt;
- (5) to obtain statistical material.

Without such control the danger is that numerous uneconomical units would be set up with the object of making quick profits without regard to the interests of the consumer in the matter of quality of salt and its price. Moreover, the industry, if allowed to grow in a haphazard manner without expert guidance, would tend to concentrate production in a few favoured localities only and thus its growth would be lopsided and unhealthy. As the Salt Adviser to the Central Board of Revenue aptly remarks, "As judicious pruning is necessary for the healthy growth of a shoot, so intelligent control over production would help and foster the Indian industry."

I hasten to assure you, however, that it is not the present intention to establish a Government monopoly. Private enterprise is not to be entirely displaced, either in the field of production or in distribution, and it is recognised that a measure of competition between the State and private enterprise will stimulate efficiency. New enterprises are to be encouraged, subject to due conformity with prescribed standards of the quality and price. Similarly in regard to distribution the Salt Board would control the main arteries of supply, but would as far as possible make the fullest use of the present body of wholesale and retail traders.

It is undoubtedly true that the present movement of salt, particularly in the Bombay Presidency, is very unsatisfactory, and it is extremely disappointing that the removal of the duty has not yet benefited the consumer. This is chiefly due to unfavourable climatic conditions during the production season, coupled with labour unrest. We are

making strenuous efforts to arrange for imports of salt into Bombay with a view to bringing down prices and relieving the present shortage. It is possible that the position would have been far more satisfactory if the Salt Bill had passed into Law during the last session of the Legislature and the Salt Board had been brought into operation.

These remarks, as I have mentioned above, are of a provisional nature and I cannot make any commitment about future policy. Your letter will, of course, be placed on record and I need hardly say that it will be given the most careful consideration when the time comes.

Yours sincerely,
F. M. Innes

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Bhangi Colony,
Reading Road, New Delhi.

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C/o Lloyds Bank,
6 Pall Mall,
London, S. W. 1
4th August 1947.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Your letter has been forwarded to me in England,¹ where, as I expect you have been told, I am at present on leave.

I am very glad you found my small contribution on salt interesting. No, it has not yet been printed. As we were able to make sufficient copies for the members of the Cabinet and for the Select Committee and for others immediately concerned, we decided to defer printing until after my return from leave. It will therefore be possible to make any changes which may be necessary.

Any properly constituted Salt Board would, I am quite sure, readily supply clear and simple instructions on the manufacture of good, cheap salt to those who wish to make it for their own purposes. The important thing is to see that the Board is composed of competent and enlightened persons, who will realise that the health of those who make

¹ See letter No. 258.

salt privately must be safeguarded just as much as that of purchasers of salt from licensed works.

I agree that there is much in the present distribution system that is unsatisfactory and a measure of guidance at some points and control at others is essential if the public interests are to be fully safeguarded. As for the question of monopoly it will be for the Governments of the future to decide how much of the proposed powers will be assumed and they will doubtless take only those that are strictly necessary; but there should be made available to them sufficient powers to deal promptly with any emergency, if any such should arise.

Goodbye for the moment. I expect to return to India in September.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
H. Greenfield

VIII
CORRESPONDENCE WITH MEMBERS OF
THE CABINET MISSION : 1945-46

(A) BEFORE THE NEGOTIATIONS

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Sevagram,
4th August 1945.

Dear Friend,

May I send you my congratulations on your appointment? If the India Office is to receive a decent burial and a nobler monument is to rise from its ashes, who can be the fitter person than you for the work?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

The Rt. Hon'ble Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

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India Office,
Whitehall,
14th August 1945.

Dear Friend,

It is a very real pleasure to me to receive your most cordial personal congratulations and good wishes for a successful issue out of the problems which confront us.

I greatly hope that our personal friendship which has existed for so many years may bear fruit in harmonious co-operation in achieving the lasting good of India and her peoples.

My wife desires me to associate her with my good wishes to yourself.

I remain,
Sincerely yours,
F. W. Pethick-Lawrence

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

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PERSONAL

11, Old Square,
Lincoln's Inn, W. C. 2,
4th October 1945.

My dear Gandhiji,

I have only just learnt that your birthday coincides with my wedding day! I hasten to send, rather belatedly, the best wishes of my wife and myself and the hope that in this troubled world we may all contribute to a happier future.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

Poona,
12th November 1945.

Dear Lord Lawrence,

How nice that your wedding day should coincide with my birthday? Thanks for your congratulations. May I reciprocate them? Is not wedding a new birth?

Did I not know you first through Lady Lawrence during those suffragette days? I was then a novice in the art of civil resistance and had friendly differences with the late Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughter but not with your wife and the late Mrs. Despard.

With kind regards to both of you,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

The Rt. Hon'ble Lord Pethick-Lawrence,
11, Old Square,
Lincoln's Inn, London W. C. 2.

Board of Trade,
Millbank, London S. W. 1,
19th December 1945.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

With the approach of Christmas, our festival of love and peace, I feel impelled to send you my most sincere and humble wishes for your personal welfare and for all those causes that you have at heart.

I most profoundly hope that in these coming months we shall be able by mutual understanding, respect and trust to work out between us a happier and brighter future for India.

I know how you have laboured for this throughout your life and I pray that it may be given to you to see the climax of your hopes in the realisation of your desires.

I shall, as always, try and play my part towards that happy solution of the great problems which confront our two countries.

My warmest greetings and good wishes to you this Christmas tide and for the coming year.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

(As at Sevagram),
Via Wardha, (India),
Camp : Gauhati,
12th January 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

I was delighted to receive your letter of 19th December '45. As I am touring in Bengal and Assam, your kind greetings were received only yesterday. The Rajkumari had described her talks with you and told me how affectionate you were towards me. I am hoping that this time there is determination to do the right thing in terms of Indian thought. I well remember what King Edward had said about right dealing. I was then in South Africa. The question was of

interpreting the treaty between the British and the Boers and the King had gently insisted on the Boer interpretation being accepted in preference to the British. How I wish that the admirable canon be repeated this time.

I hope with you that this New Year will bring to the thirsting earth the much needed shower of peace and goodwill for which the "Prince of Peace" lived and died.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir R. Stafford Cripps,
Board of Trade,
Millbank,
London, S. W. 1

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EXPRESS

Poona,
18th March 1946.

H. E. Viceroy,
Viceroy's Camp.

Please accept my sympathy in your loss which may God enable you and Lady Wavell and your daughter bear with fortitude.

Gandhi

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The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd March 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

My wife, daughter and I send you our grateful thanks for your kind message of sympathy in the sad loss which we have sustained.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Poona.

(B) DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS

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The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
18th March 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

His Excellency the Viceroy desires me on his own behalf and on behalf of the Cabinet Delegation to invite you to be present for an interview at the Viceroy's House at 4 p.m. on Wednesday the 3rd April.

Would you be good enough to let me know whether you will be able to attend, and if so (a) your date of arrival in Delhi, and (b) your address in Delhi ?

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

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Uruli (G. I. P.),
23rd March 1946.

Dear Mr. Abell,

I had formal invitation to be present for an interview with H. E. the Viceroy and the Cabinet Delegation on the 3rd proximo at 4 p.m. I hope to be present for the interview.

The date of my arrival will be 3rd proximo. What my address in New Delhi will be I do not know at present, but any inquiry at Birla House will be answered. I shall hope to let you know later when my New Delhi address is fixed up or if there is any change in my programme. Please note that I am just now living in a village, Uruli, 18 miles from Poona on the Sholapur line.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

G. E. B. Abell, Esq.,
Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
28th March 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am most distressed to hear of the muddle that has occurred about your invitation to meet us next week.¹ As you well know I am looking forward immensely to seeing you again and to having the benefit of your wise advice in these difficult times.

I have promised Agatha Harrison to attend her special time of quiet thought and prayer on Sunday next and I had hoped very much indeed that you might be there too so that we might together join in a short time of spiritual harmony. I do hope very much that it will be possible for you to be present there and that would also give me an opportunity of calling upon you for an informal talk before we meet you in a more official atmosphere.

I hope in any event to have more than one occasion of talking with you as I feel the very heavy burden of our present efforts and the necessity for all the help that we can have and no help can be more welcome and wise than that which you can give.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

1. The Cabinet Mission had hoped that it would be possible for them to meet Gandhi informally before the official proceedings opened. But the letter of invitation that was sent from the Viceroy's office to Gandhiji asked him to be present in Delhi only on the 3rd April for a formal interview. When the Cabinet Mission on its arrival in Delhi came to know of it, they felt distressed and sent a special messenger to Gandhiji with this and the following letter.

2, Willingdon Crescent,
28th March 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

I am greatly looking forward to seeing you again to renew the acquaintance and friendship which began some 40 years ago when you came to lunch with us in Clements Inn.

As the meeting fixed for Wednesday afternoon will be devoted to matters of high policy it would add greatly to my pleasure if you could spare time and come to see me less formally at the above little house for a chat beforehand.

I understand 7 p.m. is a very good hour for you and I should be happy to see you then either Sunday or Monday next. As a matter of fact I am free all day Sunday if any other hour would suit you better.

Before I left home my wife told me if I saw you to give you her very best wishes.

Ever sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
4th April 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

I hear that there is a chance of your extending your stay here and I do very earnestly ask you to do so.

We have still a number of interviews with separate interests and sections to carry out before we can come to the closer negotiations with the principal parties interested. This is therefore a time of formulation of possibilities and I know how valuable your influence will be upon persons of all kinds who seek your advice. As soon as the closer negotiations start I am sure we too shall want to seek that advice and we should indeed most sadly miss your help if you were to leave.

It is not I but India that needs you in New Delhi. Please stay.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

Office of Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
4th April 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

When you and I met at my bungalow on Monday last and again at the office on Wednesday you were good enough to say that if we thought it would be helpful you would be prepared to have a personal talk with Mr. Jinnah.

I still feel that the time may come when it will be of great value that you and he should meet and I know that Mr. Jinnah would be equally pleased to see you. But my colleagues and I have come to the conclusion that the position has not yet sufficiently clarified itself to make it likely that a meeting between you now would result in any substantial agreement.

I feel that I should communicate this view to you without delay as it may affect your plans and I could not ask you to stay in Delhi indefinitely.

May I add my personal pleasure at seeing you again and my thanks for the friendly help you have already given to us.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

Camp: New Delhi,
5th April 1946.

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

I have your kind and considerate letter. I note what you say. As it has turned out I am here till 16th instant at least. Maulana Saheb wants me till then.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

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Harijan Mandir,
5th April 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

Many thanks for your affectionate letter. Sudhir has given me your message too. I am here at least till 16th instant at Maulana Saheb's behest.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps.

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am so very glad to hear that you are staying on. The long list of your callers shows how much you are appreciated by us all !

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
10th April 1946.

PERSONAL &
CONFIDENTIAL

My dear Rajkumari,

You and your master might like to know how we envisage matters progressing and this is a private line to let you both know what we have in mind.

We hope next week to start more intensive talks to try and bring the Congress and Muslim League to a common mind and to leave them to think it over while we are away for 4 days in Kashmir. We expect to return on April 24th

and we imagine that within a few days from then some decisive action will have to be taken and that arrangement on some basis or another will have to go forward for forming the interim Government. We hope this will not take many days.

You will appreciate therefore that the period when we may seek advice as to crucial difficulties will be between April 24th and the final settlement a week or two later. That is when we should like to feel we have quick and easy access to the Mahatma. I hope he will feel able to respond to our call for help if we get into difficulties.

Our very best wishes to you.

R. Stafford Cripps

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New Delhi,
12th April 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

What I wanted to say and forgot last night was about the States of India. Pandit Nehru is the President of the States' Peoples Conference and Sheikh Abdullah of Kashmir its Vice-President. I met the committee of the Conference last Wednesday. Their complaint was that they were ignored by the Cabinet Delegation whereas the Princes were receiving more than their due attention. Of course this may be good policy. It may also be bad policy and morally indefensible. The ultimate result may be quite good as it must be if the whole of India becomes independent. It will then be bad to irritate the people of the States by ignoring them. After all the people are everything and the Princes apart from them nothing. They owe their artificial status to the Government of India but their existence to the people residing in the respective States. This may be shared with your colleagues or not as you wish. It is wholly unofficial as our talk last night was.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Stafford Cripps,
New Delhi.

Office of Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
Sunday, 14th April 1946.

My dear Rajkumari,

I was sorry not to see you at the Quaker meeting this morning as I had looked forward to a chat with you after it.

Thank you very much for your letter and the enclosure.¹ I read the report in the Press and was most grateful for it.

I fully appreciate Mr. Gandhi's anxiety about the matters he has mentioned and we are doing our best about them, but we can only do them through the administration and that is not always quick and easy. I am hoping to see Narayan² tomorrow. I tried to arrange it for today but he could not manage the time as he had another meeting fixed already.

I will get on to Sudhir as soon as George Blaker is back and to know my commitments.

Again many thanks for meeting and I do hope we may meet soon again to compare notes.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

Office of Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
27th April 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

As the weather grows hotter and I am favoured myself with many cooling devices, I feel I must express to you the grateful thanks of myself and the Mission for your continued presence here. It is a very great help to us and in a few days' time may be essential to a successful issue to our common endeavours. Critical days lie ahead but I venture to hope

1. Not to be found among Gandhiji's office records.

2. Jayaprakash Narayan, the Socialist leader.

and believe that it will not be so very long now before the matter will be concluded and you and we will be able to leave Delhi with a sense of our labours satisfactorily ended.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

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New Delhi,
28th April 1946.

Dear Friend,

Your kind note of yesterday is characteristic of you.

I reciprocate the hope expressed in the last sentence of your note.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

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New Delhi,
29th April 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

You do not understand how uneasy I feel. Something is wrong.¹ But I shall come to Simla. I cannot take my

1. The reference is to the postponement of negotiations at Delhi and the decision to hold a meeting instead with the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League at Simla. In the letter of invitation to the conference to be held at Simla, the Congress and the Muslim League were asked to send representatives to enter into negotiations about a scheme based upon certain "fundamental principles". Acceptance of the invitation thus implied acceptance of the proposed basis. This basis Gandhiji felt, contained in it "the seeds of Pakistan". When he expressed his apprehension about this, the members of the Cabinet Mission explained to him that by accepting the invitation the invitees committed themselves to nothing, but the Mission had to word the letter of invitation as they had done to bring in Jinnah. To Gandhiji this smacked of "double talk". He immediately alerted his Congress colleagues and insisted upon their obtaining a clarification in writing from the Cabinet Mission before they accepted the invitation. This was done by an exchange of letters between the Maulana Saheb and Lord Pethick-Lawrence on the 28th and 29th April, 1946.

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necessarily big family to Rajkumari's house. I have to fall back upon the Government for quarters for about 15 people. Hardly any service will be wanted. But utensils and food-stuffs will be necessary. Goat's milk and train accommodation and the lift from Kalka. All this is strange for me but it has become true.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps.

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Viceregal Lodge,
Simla,
4th May 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

It was extremely kind of you to write to me yesterday about my health.¹

I had a little upset after breakfast which led to my keeping quiet yesterday though I had four meetings of one sort and another during the day and did some work from London! So you will see that I am not ill.

It is indeed kind of Rajkumari to suggest sending me curds and fruit and I most gladly accept her offer, as it is not easy to get either here.

It is also most thoughtful of Dr. Mehta to offer to see me and I gladly accept that offer as I think he can perhaps help me in a way that the ordinary doctors cannot.²

I will get Mr. Blaker ring up and arrange a meeting.

Thank you once again for your most kind thought for me.

Yours sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

1. Not to be found among Gandhiji's office records.

2. Sir Stafford, like Gandhiji, was a fervent believer in nature cure. In the end he died a martyr to his faith.

Viceregal Lodge,
Simla,
5th May 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

Your *most* charming Doctor¹ came to see me last night and completely captured my heart! I felt great confidence in him and I am sure he will soon put me right again.

For the moment I am not walking before breakfast. So I cannot visit you but I hope in the next day or two to resume my walks and I shall take the earliest opportunity of having another chat with you. The momentous meetings start this morning and I pray God that they may bring forth the sweet fruit of happiness for the Indian people.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

Viceroy's Camp, India,
(Simla),
6th May 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

His Excellency wonders whether it will be convenient for you to come up and have a short talk with him at 7 p.m. this evening. Perhaps you would be good enough to ask Sudhir Ghosh to give me a ring (601) and let me know whether this is convenient.

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

P.S. We will send a car if you would like one.

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

1. Dr. Dinshah Mehta, the naturopath.

Chadwick,
Simla West,
8th May 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

The four Congress delegates had a warm debate over the Cabinet Mission's suggestions.¹ The foremost was that if the delegates accepted it, it was binding on them and its terms were binding on them and therefore the Congress unless the latter repudiated them. The same would be the case with the League. On the strength of what you told me last night I said they were binding on no one. The Constituent Assembly would be free to throw out any of the items and the members of the two delegations were equally free to add to or amend the suggestions before the Constituent Assembly. I added that they were meant only, as a scaffold by means of which the two institutions could be brought to the Constituent Assembly adumbrated in the draft. If you are able to confirm the above and are free to make a public declaration to that effect, the main difficulty would be over.

As to merits the difficulty about parity between six Hindu majority Provinces and the five Muslim majority Provinces is insurmountable. The Muslim majority Provinces represent over nine crores of the population as against over 19 crores of the Hindu majority Provinces. This is really worse than Pakistan. What is suggested in place is that the Central Legislature should be framed on the population basis and so too the executive. If this is considered unfair, an impartial non-British tribunal should award on this as many other matters of differences otherwise incapable of adjustment. If these two points are cleared my way would be clear.

Instead of running down to you, I thought I should send this note, leaving you to decide whether we should meet before the conference or whether an exchange of letters should suffice. I am in your hands.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps.

1. See Appendix XVI

Viceregal Lodge,
Simla,
9th May 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

Sudhir brought me your letter last night just as I had got into bed after excellent treatment by Dr. Mehta, so I sent you back an answer verbally by him.

This is merely a note to confirm what he will have told you.

As to your first point the position as I see it is this : If the Congress and Muslim League delegates agree to a certain basis for the new constitution they will be bound as honourable men to do their utmost to see that the form agreed upon is that adopted by the Constituent Assembly. To do less than that would be to go back upon their word.

As to the second point — equality at the Centre, I appreciate your difficulty though not that “it would be worse than Pakistan”. If this can be overcome by some form of international arbitration by agreement with the League ~~there~~ is of course nothing whatever to prevent such an agreement.

I am very grateful for this further helpful advice and look forward to seeing you again this evening after the conference has met again.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

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Office of Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
15th May 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am very sorry that I seem to have misled you as to going through the Statement¹ with you.

Some time ago at Simla before the breakdown I said I hoped to be able to go through the document with you *before* it was finalised.

1. Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16, 1946. See Appendix XVII

When I saw you after the breakdown I meant to explain to you that as the timing had come out this had become impossible.

We could not ourselves finalise the document till after the breakdown as obviously the documents exchanged at the conference were most material. That meant that we could not send it back to the Cabinet for their approval till we left Simla. We came to the conclusion on everyone's advice that we must make the gap between Simla and publication the absolute minimum. This meant that it was impossible to consult between our own finalisation and Cabinet approval as we had to leave a day or two for telegraphy and consideration in London.

As you know it is to be published tomorrow and we are not yet in a position to show it to anybody. This we can do tomorrow and I hope to meet you at 4 p.m. and go through it carefully with you. It will be published at 8 p.m. as an announcement is being made in the House of Commons at that time. I hope this makes the matter clear and I am very sorry if through lack of clarity I misled you. I am extremely sorry not to have the opportunity I wanted.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
18th May 1946.

Dear Gandhiji,

Sir Stafford Cripps and I are looking forward to seeing you again tomorrow morning. In the meanwhile I think you may like to have a transcript from the questions and answers which I gave at the Press Conference yesterday morning, which deals specifically with this point.

Yours sincerely,
Pethick-Lawrence

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

[ENCLOSURE TO THE ABOVE]

The third question was whether, as we had laid down certain provisions, the constitution making body or Constituent Assembly could be regarded in any sense as sovereign. Well, we only laid these conditions down because Indians did not come to an agreement among themselves. If it had been possible for the two Indian parties to come together to make a constitution, we should have made no stipulations of any kind. But when we got here, we found, what we suspected in advance, that a Constituent Assembly representing all parties could not be acceptable except on certain decisions taken in advance. We then asked the Indian parties whether they themselves by agreement would lay down certain decisions which would enable the Constituent Assembly to meet together and to function, and we tried our very best to get that agreed to, and we went a considerable distance towards getting agreement on that point, but we did not get all the way, and therefore only because of that we suggested this basis and we made these recommendations, because it is only on those that we felt that we could get representatives of all parties to sit together and try and draw up a constitution. But even so, I would point to you that even that basis can be altered but it can only be altered by a separate majority of each party who desire to do so and the reason is this that these representatives of different parties have never agreed to meet together on that basis. That is what we believe is the basis on which they will come together. If they do come together on that basis, it will mean that they will have accepted that basis, but they can still change it if by a majority of each party they desire to do so.

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Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
19th May 1946.

Dear Lord,

In order to enable me the better to advise such of those who seek my advice, I venture to put before you my difficulty as follows :

You say in your answer to a question : "If they do come

together on that basis, it will mean that they will have accepted that basis, but they can still change it if by a majority of each party they desire to do so." You can omit the last portion of the sentence as being superfluous for my purpose.

Even the basis in para 15 of the State Paper is a recommendation. Do you regard a recommendation as obligatory on any member of the contemplated Constituent Assembly? There is such a ring about the quotation. Can those who enthusiastically welcome the Paper but are discerning enough to repudiate, for instance, grouping, honourably seek to educate the country and the Constituent Assembly against the grouping clause? If your answer is 'yes', does it not follow that the Frontier and Assam province delegates would be free to abstain from joining the sections to which they are arbitrarily assigned?

I know the legal position. My question has reference to the honourableness of opposition to grouping.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

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Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
19th May 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

I promised to send you a copy of the summary of my speech to the prayer gathering last evening. This I do now herewith.¹ I enclose herewith a translation of the hymn of the previous evening.² Of course you will share it with Lord Pethick-Lawrence or whomsoever you like.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Stafford Cripps.

1. See Appendix XVIII (a)

2. See Appendix XVIII (b)

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
20th May 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you very much for your note of the 19th enclosing the two documents which I was delighted to have.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

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New Delhi,
21st May 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

Enclosed you will find an advance copy of the article which I wrote for the *Harijan* today.¹ If my analysis is wrong in any way you will oblige me by sending your correction. Please don't trouble to read it if you are tired or too busy. Of course you can share it with Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps.

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
21st May 1946.

Dear Gandhiji,

I know that you will have been very sorry to hear that Sir Stafford Cripps is at present laid up and unable to deal with affairs; and you will understand why, in the circumstances, he has not been able to send you a personal reply to your letter enclosing an advance copy of the article that you have written for *Harijan*.

1. See Appendix XIX

In accordance, however, with the suggestion contained in the last sentence of your letter, his Secretary has shown the article to me. I am indebted to you for your friendly remarks about my colleagues and myself and our Statement. But you will, of course, appreciate that there are other parts of it with regard to which my views are quite different from your own.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

Mahatma Gandhi.

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Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
20th May 1946.

Dear Lord,

As the matters we discussed yesterday morning and the day before were very important and affected and still affect my attitude and corresponding action, I think it worth while to reduce a summary to writing. You can correct me if there is a misunderstanding. This may even help you where ever necessary.

I may add that I have conveyed to the Working Committee of the Congress the purport, to the best of my ability, of our talks.

With this preface I proceed to give the summary.

1. You were good enough to assure me that you will see to it that European members of provincial assemblies, neither voted at the elections of delegates to the Constituent Assembly nor expected to be elected by the electors of non-Muslim delegates.

2. Election of the possible 93 delegates on behalf of the States would be determined by the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In the absence of an agreed solution, there should be no election of delegates on behalf of the States, the function of looking after the interests of the Princes and their people devolving upon the Advisory Committee referred to in clause 20 of the State Paper.

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3. In view of the fact that there is no machinery in British Baluchistan analogous to the provincial assemblies, it should be treated as the special concern of the Constituent Assembly and should be included in the function of the Advisory Committee. Meanwhile it should be the duty of the Interim National Government to set up machinery to bring Baluchistan on a par with the other provinces.

4. I ventured to suggest that Paramountcy should cease even while independence is at work in fact, though not in law, till the Constituent Assembly has finished its labours and devised a constitution. Sir Stafford saw danger in acting upon my suggestion. I hold the opposite view. Acceptance of my proposal would vivify the people of the States as if by a stroke of the pen. And the Interim Government would be a boon to the Princes who, though the creation of the Paramount Power and dependent on it for the continuance of their existence, still chafed under its heavy hand. The immediate end of Paramountcy would test the sincerity of the Princes and the Paramount Power. •

But if this Indian feeling did not find an echo in your hearts, I personally would be satisfied with Sir Stafford's view that Paramountcy which had been admittedly used to protect the Princes against their people in the shape of suppressing their liberty and progress, should for the time continue for the protection and progress of the people. If the people of the States are backward, it is not because they are different in kind from the people of the direct British parts of India but because they have been groaning under a double yoke. I endorsed also the suggestion that Paramountcy should be exercised in consultation with the National Government.

5. I have written to you on my difficulty on grouping. I need say nothing more on the subject, pending reply to it.

6. Whilst I appreciate your and Sir Stafford's frankness, I would put on record my conviction that Independence would in fact be a farce, if the British troops are in India even for peace and order within, or danger from without. The condition of India after the labours of the Constituent Assembly are over will in this respect be no better than now. If the position about the troops persists, "Independence next month" is either insincere or a thoughtless cry.

Acceptance of "Quit India" by the British is unconditional, whether the Constituent Assembly succeeds or fails in bringing out a constitution. A drastic revision of the attitude is a necessity in every case.

Finally it can in no way be contended that in the face of the troops, there would be natural behaviour in the Constituent Assembly.

7. As to the Interim Government, the more I think and observe, the more certain is my feeling that a proper National Government responsible in fact, if not in law, to the elected members of the Central Legislative Assembly, should precede the summons for the election of members of the Constituent Assembly. Only then, and not before, can a true picture of coming events be presented. The food crisis demands immediate formation of a strong, capable and homogeneous National Government. Without it, deep and universal corruption cannot end, without it the psychological effect will not be produced in spite of the landing on Indian shores of expected grain from outside. Every day's delay in forming such a Government is agony added to the agony of famished millions of India. There can therefore be no question of parity whether the Government is allowed to be formed by the Congress or the Muslim League. The best and incorruptible men or women from India are wanted for the purpose. I was therefore glad to find that the Viceroy was already moving in the matter as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

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CONFIDENTIAL

Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
21st May 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

Since receiving your two letters of the 19th¹ and 20th, we have had an official communication from the Congress

¹ See letter no. 291.

raising the same points. As we intend shortly to reply to this letter I will not in this answer deal with the various matters you raise.

As some of the paragraphs in your second letter do not accord with my recollection or that of Sir Stafford, I am enclosing a note setting out the matters on which we differ. We confirm as you imply in your paragraphs 6 and 7 that we told you quite definitely that we could not agree with the propositions you there set out. The Delegation wish me in particular to make it plain that independence must follow and not precede the coming into operation of the new constitution.

All good wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

[ENCLOSURE TO THE ABOVE]

1. We gave no such assurance but stated that we were investigating the position on the lines stated.

2. On this matter we said there would have to be consultations as set out in paragraph 14 of the Statement which we read to you and that a part of them would no doubt be between the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and the President of Congress.

3. This was your suggestion. We stated that it was proposed to appoint a person in the best way possible to ensure his representative character.

4. In the second paragraph you are misinterpreting what Sir Stafford said. He stated that he knew the view was held that in the past paramountcy had been used in certain cases to support the Princes against their people but that in the interim period the Crown Representative would want to help forward the movement towards democracy in the States so as to make it easier for them to come into the union. It was also stated by us that Paramountcy would be exercised by the Crown Representative and that it would not be in consultation with the Interim Government, though there might be consultation between the Interim Government and the States on matters of common economic interest.

Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
22nd May 1946.

Dear Friend,

Whilst I thank you for your prompt reply to my letters, you will let me say that it is unfortunate. It has the old official flavour. Has the cry "Independence in fact" no foundation?

I adhere to all that I have said in my letter of 20th. Your letter is in the best imperialistic style which I thought had gone for ever.

This is from an old friend.

I was deeply grieved to learn about Sir Stafford's illness. Let me hope that he will soon be better.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

The Rt. Hon'ble Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

New Delhi,
24th May 1946.

Dear Lord,

The Working Committee passed its resolution this evening. I call it a good resolution. So far as the Congress is concerned, I am free now to leave Delhi. What would you have me to do?

Hoping you are not finding your labours too exacting.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

The Rt. Hon'ble Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
25th May 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

I thank you for your letter of yesterday. It seems to me quite natural that the Congress Working Committee should disperse while we are waiting for the Moslem League whose

decisive meeting is, I understand, timed for June 5. But I hope very much they will be back on that day or as soon as possible after it, or else we shall have a further delay.

With regard to yourself I do not see why you should trouble to remain in Delhi during the interval. But when the parties are here again after that I hope very much you will be able to come and give a helping hand.

I have come out here for the express purpose of launching India on its passage to sovereignty and independence and I greatly need your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

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New Delhi,
27th May 1946.

Dear Lord,

I send you herewith an advance copy of my article for *Harijan*.¹ I hope everything will go well with the Mission.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
27th May 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

It is kind of you to send me an advance copy of your second article for *Harijan*.^{*}

I shall look forward to your return to Delhi and that of the Working Committee of Congress before the end of next week so that we can complete the job for which we came out to India, and then be able to push off home.

All good wishes for your recess in Mussoorie.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

1. See Appendix XX.

New Delhi,
27th May 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

I got your touching letter yesterday when I was busy writing for *Harijan*. Though I read it as soon as the visitors who had dropped in, had gone, I could not before now spare the time to write.

I am returning your letter, as it is marked very confidential. However I see nothing in it which the world may not see, if it is curious.

I entirely agree with you what the State Paper demands and commands to us and yet it like everything coming from the British evokes nothing but distrust. And I am sorry to confess that what has happened since the publication of the document has somewhat shaken my trust which the document by itself commanded and still commands. The interpretations put upon it and the declarations since on independence, paramountcy, troops and the proposed disposal of the Baluchistan election, the uncertainty about the European vote and above all, the waiting policy and the interminable delay about the Interim Government make me wonder whether a satisfactory Interim Government will ever be formed and whether the Constituent Assembly will ever meet. Has even the cry of Independence *in action* vanished into thin air?

But I shall hope against hope and work for the success of the Mission even in spite of itself, though not hiding from them or the public honest doubt. Trust put on is worse than useless. Trust felt is the thing that counts. Any way, why worry about trust. Trustworthy action will dispel all mistrust or distrust as the sun dispels the morning mist.

This is not to disturb your rest. I would have refrained from writing to you, if your letter had not required a fairly full answer.

I am sending an advance copy of my article for the next issue of *Harijan*.¹

1. See Appendix XX.

Do be well quickly. 'Be careful for nothing'.

If you want me to do any thing, do not hesitate to send a messenger to me. I leave for Mussoorie tomorrow morning. I had to finish writing for *Harijan* before leaving. As I do not want to inflict my writing on you, I am asking Rajkumari to copy this for me. Of course you are at liberty to share this with your colleagues or whomsoever you like.

I am sending a copy of my article to Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps.

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Birla House,
Mussoorie,
1st June 1946.

Dear Lord,

I had thought that your kind letter of 27th ultimo did not require any answer. But I now see that I must write.

You "look forward" to my return and that of the Congress Working Committee to Delhi before the end of next week. Maulana Saheb was with me yesterday and he told me that it was very difficult to recall the members of the Working Committee before the 9th instant as many of them had appointments, he knew, which they could not very well cancel. He is, therefore, calling the meeting for the 9th instant. I wonder if I might also leave here on the morning of the 9th so as to reach Delhi about 10 a. m. This would not permit me to keep appointments before 2 p. m. that day. Will this do or will you want me before the 9th? If you do I would leave here on the 8th morning.

I hope that you are keeping well and that Sir Stafford is regaining his lost strength day by day.

The weather here is naturally very cool.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
3rd June 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

Thank you for your letter of June 1 and your most kind offer to return to Delhi in advance of the arrival of the Working Committee of Congress, if I so were to request you.

I have not yet put my mind on to the time table after the Congress returns but it does not seem to be that there is any reason to trouble you to come earlier, and that being so it would be quite wrong to ask you to exchange the cool air of Mussoorie for the warmth of Delhi a day before it is necessary. I hope you have enjoyed the relaxation.

Stafford Cripps you will be glad to know is very much better but is still weak.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

Birla House,
Mussoorie,
5th June 1946.

Dear Friend,

I have your kind letter of the 3rd instant.

In accordance with your advice I am staying in Mussoorie until the afternoon of the 8th, reaching Delhi about 11 p. m. that night. This enables me to have the next morning's treatment without bustle and hurry so as to be ready for the Working Committee meeting the same afternoon.

This will be given to you by our mutual friend, Horace Alexander.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence,
New Delhi.

New Delhi,
Silence Day,
10th June 1946.

Dear Friend,

This is for the ensuing *Harijan*. I thought you and Sir Stafford would like to see a copy.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

[ENCLOSURE TO THE ABOVE]

THE UNKNOWN

Some learned men describe Him as Unknowable, some others as Unknown, yet others as 'Not this.' 'The Unknown' is good for the present purpose.

When yesterday (9th June) I said a few words to the prayer audience, I could say nothing more than that they should pray for and rely upon the strength and the guidance that this big X could give. There were difficulties to be overcome by all parties in the great Indian drama that was being enacted before them. They were all to rely upon the Unknown who had often confounded man's wisdom and in the twinkling of an eye upset his tin-pot plans. The British party claimed to believe in God, the Unknown. The Muslim League did likewise. They delighted in saying Allah-O-Akbar. The Congress naturally had no single equivalent cry. Nevertheless, if it sought to represent the whole of India, it represented the millions of believers, no matter to what compartment in the House of God they belonged.

At the time of writing, in spite of my irrepressible optimism, I am unable to say decisively that at least in political parlance, the thing is safe. All I can say, therefore, is that if, with the best efforts of all the parties, the unsafe happens, I would invite them to join with me in saying that it was as well and that safety lay in unsafety. If we are all children of God, as we are, whether we know it or not, we will take in good part whatever happens and work with zest and confidence for the next step whatever it may be. The only condition for that zest is that each party does its honest best

for the good of the whole of India. For that is the stake and no other.

M. K. Gandhi

New Delhi, 10-6-46

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
10th June 1946.

PERSONAL

My dear Gandhiji,

Thank you for sharing with me and Stafford your prayerful thoughts. I too have a strong feeling, where I am dependent on forces outside myself, that I must be content to accept the will of the Divinity that you call X; and that sometimes in Bjornsen's words a result may be "uber unserer kraft" (beyond our power). But where a decision of my own enters in I have a grave responsibility to all those who will be affected by it, to make it aright.

Did I ever tell you the following story illustrating the profound human belief in the rightness of things lying behind injustice? A parson said to a farmer who was worried about something "Put your trust in Providence, my man". "No", said the farmer, "I have no trust in Providence. He lost me my pig 2 years ago. He let my home be burnt last year. He took away my wife last summer. No, I refuse to trust in Providence. But I will tell you what. There is a power above Him who will pull him up if he goes too far!"

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

Mahatma Gandhi.

Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
12th June 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

It would be such a pleasure to me if you could come to see me to have a talk some time and I am thinking that 7.30 p. m. today at our home 2 Willingdon Crescent might suit you best.

Perhaps Sudhir Ghosh who is kindly carrying this note will ring up my Secretary Mr. Turnbull and confirm.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
12th June 1946.

Dear Friend,

From you, almost straightaway, I went to the Working Committee which, owing to his illness, was held at Maulana Saheb's quarters. I gave them the gist of our conversation, told them that I gladly endorsed your suggestion about the parties meeting to fix up names subject to the proviso that no party should talk of parity, you should invite them simply to submit to you a joint list of the Cabinet of the Provisional Interim Government which you would approve or, if you did not, you would invite them to submit a revised list bearing in mind your amendments, that the list should represent a coalition Government composed of persons of proved ability and incorruptibility. I suggested too that in the place of parity there should be active enforcement of the long-term provision in your joint statement that in all major communal issues there should be communal voting to decide them. I suggested also that in the event of absence of agreement between the parties in spite of all effort, you should examine the merits of the respective lists of the two parties and accept either the one or the other (not amalgam) and announce the names of the Interim Government but that before that

final step was taken you should closet yourselves until a joint list was prepared. I told the Working Committee that you had seemed to endorse my suggestions.

I told them further that, so far as I knew, it was a point of honour with Congressmen that there could be no joint consultation in which Maulana Saheb was not associated with the talks. You said it was a sore point with Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah and I replied that the soreness was wholly unwarranted and that the Congress could not be expected to sacrifice its faithful servant of twenty-five years' standing whose self-sacrifice and devotion to the national cause had never been in question. But I told you that your great experience and ability to handle delicate matters would show you the way out of the difficulty.

Finally, I told the Committee that I drew your attention to the fact that the European vote which was being talked of was unthinkable in connection with the Constituent Assembly and nothing but a public declaration by the European residents of India or one by you on their behalf could make possible the formation of the Constituent Assembly. I gathered from you that the question was already engaging your attention and that it should be satisfactorily solved.

Probably you have already moved in the matter of the joint talk. Nevertheless, I thought that I owed it to you and the Working Committee to put on record what I had reported about our talks. If I have in any way misunderstood you, will you please correct me?

I may say that the Working Committee had its draft letter ready but at my suggestion it postponed consideration of it pending the final result of your effort adumbrated in this letter. The draft letter takes the same view that I placed before you yesterday on parity and the European vote and their election as members of the contemplated Constituent Assembly.

I close with the hope that your effort will bear the fruit to which all are looking forward.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

Bhangi Colony,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
13th June 1946.

Dear Friend,

Lord Lawrence conveyed your thanks to me last night when he invited me to see him.

Please believe me when I say that I have never been guilty consciously of doing anything for thanks. "Duty will be merit when debt becomes donation". You are a very great soldier — a daring soldier. Dare to do the right. You must make your choice of one horse or the other. So far as I can see you will never succeed in riding two at the same time. Choose the names submitted either by the Congress or the League. For God's sake do not make an incompatible mixture and in trying to do so produce a fearful explosion. Anyway, fix your time limit and tell us all to leave when that limit is over.

I hope I have made my meaning clear.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. Lord Wavell.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
13th June 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Many thanks for your two letters of yesterday and today. I am grateful to you for writing and for your helpful suggestions which I will certainly bear in mind.

I had a talk to Sudhir Ghosh this morning and hope to see Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru again this afternoon.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

New Delhi,
13th June 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

Sudhir told me something of the storm that is brewing within you. I met your good wife the day before.

I would ask you not to worry. You are handling the most difficult task of your life. As I see it the Mission is playing with fire. If you have courage you will do what I suggested from the very beginning. Even when the Parliamentary Delegation came before you I said then that you will not be able to have your cake and eat it. You will have to choose between the two—the Muslim League and the Congress, both your creations. Every day you pass here coquetting now with the Congress, now with the League and again with the Congress, wearing yourself away. [This] will not do. Either you swear by what is right or by what the exigencies of British policy may dictate. In either case bravery is required. Only stick to the programme. Stick to your dates even though the heavens may fall. Leave by the 16th whether you allow the Congress to form a coalition or the League. If you think that the accumulated British wisdom must know better than these two creations of yours I have nothing to add. But I have fancied that you are not cast in that mould. If so, keep to your passage for the 16th and take your poor wife with you to England and bury yourselves in private life unless the brave British announcement made is fulfilled to the Indian hope. A word to the wise.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps.

Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
13th June 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter. I am afraid, you like some others of us, are feeling somewhat impatient ! But I always remember you advised me to show "infinite patience" in dealing with these difficult matters. Certainly I shall never put my desire to return home and rest before my determination to leave nothing undone which may help a solution of the difficult problems here.

I can assure you neither I nor my colleagues lack courage to act but we want to temper that courage with prudence.

I still have great hopes that before we leave India, we may have helped towards a settlement of the problem.

In the meanwhile I send you my kindest regards and thanks for all your sympathy and care as to my illness.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

New Delhi,
13th June 1946.

Dear Friend,

I wrote to you a long letter yesterday, partly in fulfilment of my promise to send you a copy of the Rev. Nichols-Roy's address¹ and, if I could trace it, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah's address. I have not been able yet to lay [my] hands on the reference [which] I told you I had heard read to me. But I got the Muslim League Council's resolution which speaks volumes, at any rate, for me. Both these things, without my letter, I handed to Sudhir Ghose to be given to you.

1. Against grouping of Assam with Bengal in Group C under the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946.

The letter I withheld at the instance of Agatha Harrison, Horace Alexander and Sudhir Ghose who thought that it was likely to produce an effect contrary to what I had expected. I did not share their view because we have known each other for so many years. I lay no stress upon the fact that we have known each other for such a long time for we have had no contact for years after our meeting during the stirring days of the Suffragette Movement. The bond that was then created could not, I felt, be easily snapped and so I presumed to write frankly to lay bare my mind to you. That I felt was due to you if I was to be a friendly adviser to the Mission which you are leading. Nevertheless I yielded to the advice of the three friends. I have told them that they are at liberty to describe to you the whole of the conversation between them and me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

[THE FOLLOWING IS THE LETTER WHICH WAS NOT SENT AT
THE INSTANCE OF THE FRIENDS.]

Dear Friend,

I promised to send you a copy of Rev. J. J. M. Nichols - Roy's address. I do so herewith.

I have not yet traced Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah's address referring to the way the Interim Government, if formed, would work. But I have got the Muslim League Council's resolution. I send a cutting of it herewith. It speaks volumes for me.

On top of this comes the interview given by the President of the European Association.¹ I spoke last evening at the prayer meeting without knowing anything of the latter which I hold to be a dangerous statement. It fills me with distrust of the future well-being through the proposed Constituent Assembly.

I suppose the *Statesman's* leading article today represents the general British attitude in India. The article is headed

1. The reference is to a statement in which the President of the European Association had declared that the Europeans would refrain from voting for themselves but would use their vote for electing Indians.

"Slow Motion". "Deliberation, wariness, sobriety in an approach to great decisions are proper : but not swifter and loquacity or delays due to mere tactical manoeuvring." All this is a prelude to what I consider an unwarranted attack on the Congress. If you of the Mission and the Viceroy share the view, you should really have no dealings with the Congress, however powerful or representative it may be. Naturally you should be the sole judges of what the Congress has appeared to you to be like.

For my part, as a detached observer, as I hold myself to be, I think that the Congress has not been procrastinating. It has been extraordinarily prompt in its dealings in connection with the work of the high mission which you are shouldering. But my purpose in writing this letter is to tell you that it will be wrong on my part if I advise the Congress to wait indefinitely until the Viceroy has formed the Interim Government or throws up the sponge in despair. Despair he must, if he expects to bring into being a coalition Government between two incompatibles. The safest, bravest and the straightest course is to invite that party to form a Government which, in the Viceroy's estimation, inspires greater confidence. Then there is a possibility within 24 hours of forming a National Government. If, however, no party inspires confidence such a declaration should be made and the Viceroy should run the Government in the best way he knows. But the Congress Working Committee should not be delayed indefinitely. As for me, I would gladly stay behind if you want me to. But I feel that I shall be a useless adviser. I can only advise out of the fulness of trust. I become paralysed when distrust chokes me.

I am sorry to send you this letter. But I would be an unworthy friend if I disguised my feelings. You should know me as I am. Hence these tears.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

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Office of the Cabinet Delegation,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
15th June 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

I fear you must think it very remiss of me that you had had no acknowledgment of the booklet and cuttings you sent to me on Thursday and the letter I received by Amrit Kaur yesterday. I have been exceptionally busy. Now I have read with interest the printed matter you sent; and appreciate the spirit in which you write. Agatha Harrison and the others did explain to me how deeply you were feeling and you may be quite sure that I too have deep and passionate feelings about the matters which have so closely occupied me during the three months I have been here.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

317

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
16th June 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I send you a copy of the Statement we are releasing at 4 p. m. today.¹ I also send a copy of the letter I have sent to the President of the Congress and the Muslim League.² I hope that we may rely on your support for this proposal.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

1. See Appendix XXI (a)

2. See Appendix XXI (b)

Bhangi Colony,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
24th June 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

My whole heart goes out to you and Lady Cripps. I would far rather not write this note. But I must. In spite of the readiness, as it seems to me, of the Working Committee to go in for the Constituent Assembly I would not be able to advise the leap in the dark. The light that Sudhir enabled me to see through the prevailing darkness seems to have vanished. There is nothing but a vacuum after you throw all the commitments on the scrap heap, if you really do intend to do so.¹ I could not very well press for fuller information at our talk. The instructions to the Governors,² innocuous as they have proved to be, have opened up a dreadful vista. I, therefore, propose to advise the Working Committee not to accept the long term proposition without its being connected with the Interim Government. I must not act against my instinct and shall advise them to be guided solely by their own judgment. I shall simply say that conversation gave me no light to dispel the darkness surrounding me. I shall say I had nothing tangible to prove that there were danger signals.

I am sorry to send you this letter. But I just thought it was my duty to put before you my feeling before sharing it with the Working Committee which meets at Maulana Saheb's house tomorrow at 6.30 a. m.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps.

1. This refers to the postponement of the formation of the Interim Government.

2. Para 2 of the preamble of the document in question required that nomination to the Constituent Assembly should be accompanied by a declaration on the part of the candidate nominated that "he is willing to serve as representative of the Province for the purpose of Paragraph 19 of the Statement." The para 19 of the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16 contained the disputed clauses about Grouping. Later, however, the Government issued an elucidation in the form of a reply to a question by a representative of the Associated Press of India to the effect that the declaration to be signed by the candidates would not include any reference to para 19.

PERSONAL

Board of Trade,
Millbank, S. W. 1,
8th July 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

Now that I am back again at my work I want to send you a letter of greetings and of thanks for your helpfulness to me while I was in India. We had differences of view which we both expressed frankly and I feel that that has added to our friendship as frank discussion should always do between friends.

I am certain that we are both out after the same thing though at times our different background and environment naturally tend to make us take rather different lines.

I was so delighted to read of your most helpful intervention with the A. I. C. C.¹ and I am sure that the decisions there come to will help things along.

We now have to tackle the question of the Interim Government and I know you will do all you can to get a settlement which will make it possible for both the two major parties to work together for the immediate good of India. I am taking the liberty of sending you a copy of a little book of my speeches which was published last autumn and of another one which is coming out this week. As they will go by the ordinary post I am afraid you will not get them for a week or two.

We have had rather a trying time since we returned as we found our daughter² very ill indeed and have spent the last few days with her and with doctors and specialists. My wife took her up to York on Friday to a special Quaker home for treatment and I went up there yesterday to see

1. The reference is to Gandhiji's speech before the AICC advising the members to endorse the decision of the Working Committee to accept the long term plan outlined in the Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946.

2. Peggy Cripps, later married to J. E. Appiah, the Negro leader of Ghana.

her. She is now I hope settled in and we are as happy as we can be about her. There is a wonderful spiritual atmosphere in the place which will we hope have its healing effect with the other treatment she will be able to have.

We both send you our very kindest remembrances and all good wishes.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

320

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Board of Trade,
Millbank, S. W. 1,
20th July 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Norman Cliff has first sent me the most interesting record of your talk with him¹ in the train and it raises a number of points upon which I want to write you a few words — not so satisfactory as a talk but nevertheless the best that distance allows me to do.

This is a purely personal letter from me “as a human being” and not as “a Minister of the Crown” !

You said you had failed to make your position clear and you thought we had given up trying to understand you. That is not true so far as I am concerned nor I believe so far as my colleagues were concerned. We did I believe understand you in just the sense in which you yourself explained to Norman Cliff. We believed that you had a “feeling” that somehow or other the practical suggestions we put forward did not embody the spirit of our desires. You recognised that our desires were sound but you thought that our failure to appreciate the true inwardness of the Indian situation made us faulty in the practical steps which we suggested.

We do not — and I do not — pretend to have a profound understanding of the Indian situation nor do I think any European — however long he may be in India — can look at things through Indian eyes, any more than an Indian can look at British problems through British eyes.

1. See Appendix XXII.

We certainly did our best to appreciate the many different points of view put before us, but they were very different as you know and we had to try and weigh them and find one way through or round the differences.

I believe we appreciated your point of view that the best way was to put the task squarely on the shoulder of Congress and rely upon them to do the right thing by India as a whole. But as you will recognise the state of feeling in Indian political circles was such as to make that — at this moment of history — an almost impracticable solution. We were bound we felt to try for the cooperation of both sides and that cooperation would not have been forthcoming on the basis you suggest. At another time,¹ when the internal frictions were less, it might have been possible and it may well be that — theoretically — it is in fact the best method of proceeding. As in many matters one has to reconcile oneself to the second best because the theoretically best is not practicable.

So that our procedure was not based upon an ideal but on a practical solution of the problem. I am still convinced that the best practical solution for the Interim Government is a coalition and I hope most earnestly you will give all your valuable help to its attainment.

Since we have been back here we have been able to assess British public opinion and there is no doubt that it supports the broad views we took and expressed in India. There is no fear of any going back at all. Everyone is genuinely anxious to go ahead as fast as we can. I am sure the note in your recent *Harijan* article² is right on that score.

1. That time, according to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, was 1919-22 when Hindus and Muslims had joined hands on the issue of the Khilafat. (See Polak, Brailsford, Pethick-Lawrence, *Mahatma Gandhi*, London, 1948, P. 311)

2. "It will be folly to attribute everything evil to British machinations. This senseless theory will perpetuate foreign domination, not necessarily British. The British will go in any case. They want to go in an orderly manner as is evident to me from the State Paper or they will go and leave India to her own fate assuming that India has forsaken the path of non-violence with the certain result of a combined intervention of an assortment of armed powers." — *Harijan*, July 14, 1946, P. 220.

I am sorry to inflict so long a letter on you but I was so interested in the interview that I felt I must write to you.
All my best wishes in which my wife joins.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

321

Sevagram, Via: Wardha (C. P.),
7th August 1946.

Dear Sir Stafford,

I have before me your two kind letters. Of course both will be treated as private and confidential, though you have marked one as personal and the other, received only two days ago, as private and confidential.

I see from Reuter's telegrams that your health has again given way and you have been obliged to take long rest. I am sorry and hope you are listening to your medical advisers and not wearing yourself out. I have come to know you and of you more through your good wife than through anyone else.

I understand all you say about you and your colleague's attitude. I have always justified it from your own standpoint. Therefore, so long as that trust continues, you will find me defending you. The testing time is coming. I shall watch what you will do in view of the latest Muslim League decision.¹

With regards to you both and all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps,
London.

1. Muslim League's resolution of July 29, 1946, withdrawing the previous acceptance by the League of the Cabinet Mission's plan.

322

11, Old Square,
Lincoln's Inn, W. C. 2,
19th September 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

Many happy returns of your birthday on October 2, and all good wishes for the peace, prosperity and happiness of India.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

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PERSONAL & PRIVATE

India Office,
. . . Whitehall,
25th September 1946.

My dear Gandhiji,

I have already sent you a line of good wishes for your birthday but as Sudhir Ghosh tells me he is shortly returning to India I am sending you this further word of good wishes through him.

It has been a pleasure to see him from time to time and it recalls our talks when he used to come with you to see us in Willingdon Crescent. He has found many opportunities of service over here and I am sure he has discharged them with his usual fidelity and judgment.

Sincerely yours,
Pethick-Lawrence

324

New Delhi,
10th October 1946.

Dear Friend,

It was good of you to send me your wishes for my birthday which is synonymous with the rebirth of the spinning-wheel in 1918.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

217

Board of Trade,
Millbank, London, S.W. 1,
30th September 1946.

My dear Friend,

Isobel¹ and I send you our warmest good wishes on the occasion of your "double-success" birthday — to use a clever expression !

You have devoted so many years to the cause of Indian freedom that I hope you may live long (to 125 at least) to see the results of your labours come to a full fruition of happiness for your people.

These are difficult days but nevertheless we are progressing in the right direction. I hope that you and Congress will have the infinite patience which alone will solve nappily the present difficulties. We must go ahead to the new constitution but in such a way as to leave no stone unturned to bring all Indians into it upon a basis of agreement.

I am so delighted to feel that at last Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai and others are where they ought to be, at the head of Indian Government. A few short steps and the final act will have been completed and then we can all rejoice together in the accomplishment of Indian freedom.

My very best wishes to you in which Isobel joins and my most affectionate regards.

Yours very sincerely,
R. Stafford Cripps

326

New Delhi,
10th October 1946.

Dear Friend,

Three letters I am writing after the morning prayer. The other two are to the Lawrences.

Many thanks to you two for your wishes. I am here only for the work you expect me to do. Heaven help us all.

Hope you are really well and strong.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Sir Stafford Cripps.

¹. Lady Cripps.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
22nd September 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I send you my congratulations and very good wishes on your birthday.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Bhangi Colony, New Delhi.

New Delhi,
25th September 1946.

Dear Friend,

You have been good enough to send me your good wishes on my so-called birthday. Thereby hangs a tale. The Indian calendar date is observed only in Gujarat, Bombay, never outside. Everywhere else in India and outside it is the Roman calendar date. And the birthday began to be observed only when it became identified with the revival of the spinning-wheel in its modern form, making it the symbol of freedom of the masses through constructive means. Can you in any way identify yourself with the rebirth of the wheel ?

In any case I repeat my thanks for your good wishes.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

IX
CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. ATTLEE AND
LORD WAVELL ABOUT THE INTERIM
GOVERNMENT : 1946

329

Poona,
3rd July 1946.

Dear Prime Minister,

I wonder if you can remember an Indian being introduced to you by the late Mr. Macdonald. That was the present writer. On the strength of that slight acquaintance, I make bold to introduce to you my young friend Shri Sudhir Ghosh. He makes a reliable and steady bridge between Great Britain and India. He loves both passionately. He has made wide British connections. And he made himself a willing instrument in the hands of your Mission. At their instance he goes to England. I have wished Godspeed to his self-imposed mission. He thinks he will interpret India as he knows it. Incidentally he has to interpret me to the best of his ability. To interpret a person is much more difficult than to interpret organizations. God bless his effort and give his tongue the right word.

I hope the great weight you are carrying sits lightly on you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

The Prime Minister,
London.

330

10, Downing Street,
Whitehall,
14th August 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter introducing Mr. Ghosh. I much enjoyed a talk with him.¹ I trust that a complete settlement between our two countries may be attained.

I think that the last time we met was in the House of

1. For Sudhir Ghosh's report from London, see Appendix XXIII.

Commons with George Lansbury. I trust that you keep well.

Yours sincerely,
C. R. Attlee

331

Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
28th August 1946.

Dear Friend,

I write this as a friend and after deep thought.

Several times last evening you repeated that you were a "plain man and a soldier" and that you did not know the law. We are all plain men though we may not all be soldiers and even though some of us may know the law. It is our purpose, I take it, to devise methods to prevent a repetition of the recent terrible happenings in Calcutta.¹ The question before us is how best to do it.

Your language last evening was minatory. As representative of the King you cannot afford to be a military man only, nor to ignore the law, much less the law of your own making. You should be assisted, if necessary, by a legal mind enjoying your full confidence. You threatened not to convene the Constituent Assembly if the formula you placed before Pandit Nehru and me was not acted upon by the Congress². If such be really the case then you should not have made the announcement you did on 12th August.³ But having made it you should recall the action and form another ministry enjoying your full confidence. If British arms are kept here for internal peace and order, your Interim Government would be reduced to a farce. The Congress cannot afford to impose its will on warring elements in India through

1. The reference is to the Great Calcutta Killing of August, 1946.

2. The formula ran: "The Congress are prepared in the interest of communal harmony to accept the intention of the Statement of May 16th, that Provinces cannot exercise any option affecting their membership of the Sections or of the Groups if formed until the decision contemplated in Para 19 (viii) of the Statement of the 16th May is taken by the new Legislature after the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation and the first general elections have been held."

3. The announcement that the Viceroy had invited the Congress President to form a Government and that the latter had accepted the invitation.

the use of British arms. Nor can the Congress be expected to bend itself and adopt what it considers a wrong course because of the brutal exhibition recently witnessed in Bengal. Such submission would itself lead to an encouragement and repetition of such tragedies. The vindictive spirit on either side would go deeper, biding for an opportunity to exhibit itself more fiercely and more disgracefully when occasion occurs. And all this will be chiefly due to the continued presence in India of a foreign power strong in and proud of its arms.

I say this neither as a Hindu nor as a Muslim. I write only as an Indian. Insofar as I am aware the Congress claims to know both the Hindu and Muslim mind more than you or any Britisher can do. Unless, therefore, you can wholly trust the Congress Government which you have announced, you should reconsider your decision, as I have already suggested.

You will please convey the whole of this letter to the British Cabinet.¹

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

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The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
28th August 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of today. I have telegraphed the whole text to HMG in accordance with your wish.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

1. A cable that Gandhiji got sent at the same time to Sudhir Ghosh. in London ran: "Gandhi says Viceroy unnerved owing Bengal tragedy. Please tell friends he should be assisted by abler and legal mind. Otherwise repetition of tragedy a certainty." For British Cabinet's reactions to Gandhiji's letter to Lord Wavell, which the Viceroy cabled to London, see Appendix XXIV.

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
25th September 1946.

My dear Mr. Gandhi,

H. E. the Viceroy asks me to say that he understands you are likely to leave on the 27th or a day or two later, and he hopes he may have the opportunity of seeing you before you go.

If you are able to come and talk to him perhaps you could get one of your staff to ring me up and arrange a time to suit your convenience.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
G. E. B. Abell

Private Secretary to the Viceroy

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
27th September 1946.

Dear Friend,

It occurs to me that I should reduce to writing my impressions of our talk of yesterday.

You were good enough to explain to me at length the result so far of your effort at peace-making between the Congress and the Muslim League. In the course of our conversation you told me that your leanings were towards the League. In your opinion there was left only one point of difference between the two parties, viz., the question of representation of a non-League Muslim out of the Congress quota. You recognised fully the reasonableness of the Congress position but you held that it would be an act of high statesmanship if the Congress waived the right for the sake of peace. I urged that if it was a question of waiving a right

it would be a simple thing. It was a question of non-performance of a duty which the Congress owed to non-League Muslims. I entirely agreed with you on the proposition that it would be a great day if and when the Congress and the Muslim League came to a mutual understanding without reservations, mental or otherwise, and that it would be worse than useless if the two came together only with a view to fight each other. Moreover, I stressed the point that Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah should seek an interview with Pandit Nehru and try to come to an honourable understanding. If, however, the worst happened and the Muslim League boycott of the Constituent Assembly persisted and the British Government decided to discontinue the Constituent Assembly, I would hold it to be perfectly honourable. For, even though the Cabinet Mission had led one to suppose that they would continue the Constituent Assembly, I did not expect that they would or could continue it, in spite of the successful boycott by one of the major parties. You then interpolated the remark that there were three parties, not only two. The States were the third party. You added that if the boycott persisted you had grave doubts as to whether the States would come in.

Though I might be alone to hold the view, I said that I could not envisage the framing of a workable constitution if one of the two parties withheld cooperation and force had to be used to keep the boycotters under restraint.

You then asked me to work out the logical conclusion of the discontinuance of the Constituent Assembly and asked me what I thought of the Interim Government. I told you that I had little doubt that no matter what happened, the National Government, having been once summoned, should continue to function unless they themselves felt unable owing to their own incompetence or inability, to do so. I added that the Congress had put up its very best men not at all in the spirit of gaining power for a party but in the spirit of selfless service of the whole nation. They were so considerate towards you and the League that they had hesitated to fill in the two Muslim seats in the hope of the League coming into the Interim Government. You doubted if you could contemplate the continuance of the Interim Government

and that in any case you were only a servant of the Crown and that you would have to take your order from His Majesty's Government. Whilst I appreciated your stand, I said the continuance of a *bona fide* National Government at the Centre was a vital necessity and that any departure from it would lay the British people open to the gravest suspicion on the part of the people of India and would be a tragedy of the first magnitude.

At the conclusion of our cordial talk, encouraged by you to say anything further if I wished to, I mentioned the Kashmir case about which the Working Committee had passed a very just resolution which, in the event of Kashmir State's obstinacy or notions of false prestige, might lead to far-reaching consequences and I asked for your friendly assistance distinguished from legal assistance to smooth out rough edges.

I had a talk last night with Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel and as a result I have decided to stay on here for some days, may be even a month.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

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The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
27th September 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of today. I think it is unwise during negotiations like those now in progress to attempt to secure agreed minutes of conversations. It was decided not to do so during the Cabinet Mission's negotiations. I will therefore not comment on your letter except to say that I definitely did not say that my leanings were towards the Muslim League. There are several other points which, if we

had to reach agreement on the record, I should have to suggest changing.

I was glad to see you, and I hope you will use your influence for a settlement.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

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Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road, New Delhi,
28th September 1946.

Dear Friend,

I have your letter of yesterday's date for which I thank you. As the conversation between us turned out to be important as I conceived it, I thought I would let you have my impressions so that you could correct me if I had erred. For I had to report the purport of our conversation to Pandit Nehru and other friends. Even during the Cabinet Mission's negotiations I had sent to Lord Pethick-Lawrence or Sir Stafford Cripps, as the case may be, my impressions of our talks and this was beneficial. As for your correction, of course I accept it unhesitatingly. But my impression definitely was that at the very outset of your description of what had happened between you and Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, I understood you to say that although in some of his presentations he was unreasonable, your leanings were towards the Muslim League. But after your correction my impression loses all its value.

I would like to have your other corrections also if you have the time. Although we may never make public use of our conversations, I have found, throughout my 55 years' stormy public life, written records of inestimable value for promoting mutual understanding and further conversation. "But of course, I am in your hands in this matter and your wishes shall prevail for I want to fulfil your "hope" that I "should use" my "influence for a settlement". For this cause, which I have at heart, I would naturally ever want to understand

you correctly and fully if only because, of all the persons in India, you enjoy a unique position.

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. the Viceroy,
The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi.

337

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
29th September 1946.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I thank you for your letter of yesterday. I quite see your point about securing an accurate record, but I would prefer to stick to the principle of not agreeing [to] minutes of personal discussions during these negotiations, and I will not therefore comment further on your first letter.

I am very glad indeed to hear that you will use your great influence for a settlement. That it is essential to secure a settlement now is common ground. It will be a proud and happy day for us all when the Interim Government becomes a fully representative coalition.

Yours sincerely,
Wavell

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.

X
CORRESPONDENCE
WITH THE GOVERNOR OF BIHAR : 1947

338

Patna,
17th March 1947.

Dear Friend,

I was so struck by your reference (strange for a bureaucrat) to individual conduct that I referred to it on Saturday at my after-prayer speech.¹

Yesterday evening I met your Ministers and gave them the purport of our talk of last Saturday. I told them that

- (1) you considered them to be dilatory about placating the Muslims who were so much the injured party,
- (2) permanent officials interpreted this to mean that the ministers did not want them to be prompt in taking energetic action to restore confidence among the Muslims,
- (3) the guilty ones were not properly dealt with,
- (4) the League demands were turned down not on merits but because they were League demands.

The Ministers present totally refuted all these imputations and the Chief Minister expressed considerable surprise. The Chief Minister said that he and his colleagues had often differed from you on several questions including the minorities. He added however that on behalf of himself and his colleagues he had given you the assurance that in their handling of the minority question they would readily accept your advice even though there were differences between you and them.

I am showing this to the Chief Minister to check up my version of what the Ministers had said.

1. "To my agreeable surprise the Governor said that those who were responsible to the people had to begin with themselves. If they did not begin with their individual life and showed relative perfection, they should not be real reformers or servants of the people."

My only reason for writing this is not to advertise differences between you and your Ministers but to remove misunderstandings and to assist, wherever I can, in promoting goodwill between the retiring British official world and the Indian politicians who are, and are becoming growingly responsible, for the well-being of the people whom they guide and serve.

I casually referred to the condition of the working men in the mica industry. But I shall await your promised note before I can pursue it fully.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

H. E. the Governor of Bihar.

339

Government House,
Patna,
17th March 1947.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am sending a separate letter in reply to yours of today.

This note is only to invite you to make use of my garden while you are in Patna. It is large and quiet, and you may sometimes, in early morning or evening, like to have a quiet walk or rest in it, away from the crowds which often throng you. I will give orders that you are not disturbed in any way.

Yours sincerely,
H. Dow

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Patna.

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Governor's Camp,
Bihar,
17th March 1947.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

Thank you for your letter of today's date. I have always held that no public man can hope to reform other people and make them better unless he searches his own heart and

devotes his first attention to trying to become a better man himself. I do not know why you should have been so surprised at this view being held by what you call a bureaucrat : it is probably not rarer among them than among other loosely labelled classes.

I do not wonder that my Ministers reacted strongly to your summary of our conversation. May I put your points a little more fully :—

- (1) From the beginning of the riots I thought my Ministers should have at once declared their intention to compensate those who had suffered damage in them. Had it been done immediately, I think a good deal of the organised hostility against the Ministry's measures would not have arisen. As it was, it was only after considerable delay that an announcement was made.

The Prime Minister is well aware of my views about this. On my part, I quite realised the difficulties he felt about making a commitment of unknown financial liability.

- (2) I think it is true that some officials drew from this the inference that the Ministry did not regard the matter as urgent. When I visited Chapra in the middle of January, no money or materials had actually been distributed, although the riots had taken place at the end of October, and the debris was just as the rioters had left it.

I told the Prime Minister my impressions on my return, and I am glad to say that he took the necessary steps at once by impressing on district officers that rehabilitation was the most urgent work before them. I believe the Prime Minister has always realised this, and I certainly did not intend to convey to you, that the Ministry themselves were in any way half-hearted about it. But for some months, in my opinion, this view was held by many subordinate officials, because of the original delay in getting off the mark.

- (3) I have no recollection of having touched at all on the topic of punishment of the guilty. Perhaps,

as you have been seeing so many people in rapid succession, you have attributed to me views given by some of your visitors.

Actually, my views on this are rather the reverse of those suggested. I do not think it is going to be possible to punish, judicially, any but a tiny fraction of the culprits, and that a lot of time of police and magistrates, that might be better spent, is likely to be entirely wasted in the attempt. In my opinion, the only effective way in which this matter could have been effectively dealt with was by the imposition of collective fines.

- (4) I do not think the Ministry has turned down League demands merely because they were League demands. But I think the Hindu public of Bihar was, and perhaps is, averse from treating Muslim refugees more generously than they think Hindu refugees are treated in Bengal, and in the beginning there was a tendency to wait and see.

I think we have been unwise in taking up a hostile attitude to "pockets". What we should have done was to have been prepared to consider such proposals on their merits, and to place on the Muslims themselves the responsibility for suggesting definite schemes and carrying them out if they were sanctioned. I have discussed this with the Prime Minister who is aware of my views and I think not hostile to them. When we have paid compensation to a sufferer, it should be left to him to decide where and how he will spend it, just as it would be if he had drawn his compensation from an insurance company.

As regards question of minorities in general, differences between me and my Ministers have never, I think, gone to a stage when they were not resolved by friendly discussions. In this particular matter of the recent disturbances, I have never had occasion to think of exercising any special powers in opposition to ministerial advice. The question of restoring confidence between the two great communities is one of extraordinary difficulty, and I should not like you to get the

impression that there has been any lack of co-operation between me and the Ministers on this subject.

As regards the mica industry, I will send you a note as soon as I can prepare it. But my personal concern in this is not about the condition of the working men in the industry, about which I know little, but about the way in which *child labour* is exploited.

Yours sincerely,
Hugh Dow

M. K. Gandhi, Esqr.,
Patna.

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Governor's Camp,
Bihar,
18th March 1947.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I enclose a copy of a letter, which speaks for itself, with reference to a note which I have, at your request, written about child labour in the mica factories.

Yours sincerely,
H. Dow

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.,
Patna.

[ENCLOSURE TO THE ABOVE]

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Patna,
18th March 1947.

My dear Prime Minister,

In the course of my talk with Mahatma Gandhi the question of child labour in mica factories cropped up, I think at my instance. He asked me to let him have a note on the subject, which I promised to do.

I enclose two copies of this note.¹ In writing it, it occurred to me that I ought not to pass on to him, without your concurrence, information which gives the Bihar Govern-

1. See Appendix XXV.

ment's views on a matter still under correspondence with the Government of India. Personally, I see no objection to it in this particular case: (I am referring to paragraph 5 of my note). If you agree, will you send one copy of the note on to Mr. Gandhi : I am sending him a copy of this letter.

Yours sincerely,
H. Dow

Hon'ble Mr. S. K. Sinha,
Prime Minister of Bihar.

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Patna,
21st March 1947.

Dear Friend,

I have your three letters for all of which I thank you. As you know at present I am touring in the affected parts of Bihar. But I shall bear in mind your kind offer about making use of your beautiful garden to rest a little from the din and noise that surround me.

The word bureaucrat was used by me in its original sense. You do not represent autocracy. Certainly not democracy. But, as I hold, you essentially represent bureaucracy. Several English friends, some holding as high a place as you do, told me frankly that, representing as they did a big corporation of bureaucrats, they were unable to give effect to the full man in them. With this thought at the back of mind I could not help admiring your remark that experience had taught you that after all the true reformer must begin with himself.

As to the rest of your letter of March 17 which you were kind enough to send so promptly, I gladly accept your correction and the presentation of your position. I am hoping that something will come out of this frank interchange of views.

I got your letter of the 18th instant only this morning. It was delivered some time yesterday. But it came into my hands only today. The note referred to in your letter to the Prime Minister of Bihar has not yet come into my hands.

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