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## **\* Sir R. Lumley (Bombay) to the Marquess of Linlithgow (Extract)**

*MSS. EUR. F. 125/56*

CONFIDENTIAL

GOVT. HOUSE, BOMBAY, *24 April 1942*

### **Report No. 104**

1. *Reactions to the result of Sir Stafford Cripps' Mission.* As is always the case here, it is not easy to assess precisely the public reactions to the breakdown of the negotiations conducted by Sir Stafford Cripps. I am glad to say, however, that I do not notice any deterioration or any bitterness, with the exception which I shall mention later. In fact, I am inclined to think that, as I hoped would be the case, the proposals, though they have failed, have produced a nett gain, particularly in those quarters which were formerly our most persistent opponents. From an informant whom I have usually found reliable, I learn that a very much better feeling exists amongst those who professed to have doubts about our ultimate intentions. The Draft Declaration has satisfied a great many of them on that point. I also hear that local informed Congress opinion was quite prepared to accept the provision of non-accession, and considered it to be the only method so far put forward, with any prospects of success, for obtaining Muslim agreement to discussions about a future constitution. This view is said to find a good deal of support amongst local Congress people, although it has not been declared openly, and all nationalist newspapers condemn the proposals mainly on the ground that they would vivisect India.

There have been no public declarations by Muslims here, but most Muslim newspapers appear to be well satisfied with the result of the

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\*The Transfer of Power, Vol. I, No. 684, pp. 846-47.

negotiations on the ground, first, that they have not been let down, as they feared, and secondly, that the negotiations cannot have failed to have opened the eyes of the British Government to the fact that it is Congress intransigence which is the real obstacle. Parsees, I am told, are generally relieved that, for a time at any rate, Congress will not regain power.

The exception to which I have referred is Ambedkar. He came to see me to discuss the establishment of the National War Front, and although he has, with no enthusiasm, agreed to give it some support, he took the opportunity to let off to me some very bitter steam about the Draft Declaration. He said that he had been as good as told that Congress and the Muslim League were the only bodies which counted, and that if they agreed to the proposals, it would not matter what he or the Depressed Classes thought about them. He professed to be bitterly disillusioned and to feel humiliated. He declared that the proposals went back on the August Declaration, and that, with the example of the Irish Treaty before him, the suggestion that minorities could be safeguarded by means of a treaty was a very poor joke. How, he asked, could he and his friends be expected to continue their support of Government if they were to be let down in this way ? He had thought of resigning from the National Defence Council but had decided to carry on for the time being, but he could not be expected to show any enthusiasm in support of Government. I reasoned with him as best I could, but I fear made little impression upon him. This mood of disgruntlement has been noticeable in Ambedkar for a long time— certainly since he was not taken in to the expansion of your Executive Council, as he had hoped. He will, I expect, succeed in obtaining some support for his views amongst his followers in this Province, for he is the only individual amongst them who is capable of thinking for them. Nevertheless, I feel pretty sure that this disgruntlement is largely a personal matter. As you know, his own financial position has been worrying him for some time. I have reason to believe that he owes money to certain people who have helped him in the past, and that he is unable to pay any of it back, and is even rather rude if they mention the subject. As you know, too, he has been, for some time, anxious to obtain a position in the High Court or elsewhere, in which he could have a chance of providing for his own future. He has given

me, for some time, the impression of a man who is no longer really interested in the work he is doing for his own followers, and is anxious to reach a different sphere. He is inclined, unfortunately, to attribute the difficulties of his own position to influences at work against him because he is a member of the Depressed Classes, and from that it is an easy step to the belief that we do not concern ourselves about him unduly because we do not think it worth-while to secure the support of the Depressed Classes. I would very much like to see something done for him, and I hope that, if a further expansion of your Council is now possible, he will be included,—not on personal grounds alone, but so that we may retain the interest of the Depressed Classes. He has been unhelpful about recruitment of Mahars, and does not put his weight behind it overmuch, in spite of the fact that he has long clamoured for Mahars being taken into combatant units. Nevertheless, the recruitment of Mahars continues, but not as well as it would do if he were really keen to help.

Apart from the bitterness displayed by Ambedkar, I think that the failure of Cripps' negotiations has left us in no worse position, and the nett result is probably some gain.

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