

**Relevance:**

**Title:** The Transfer of power 1942-7 / editor-in-chief Nicholas Mansergh, assistant editor E. W. R. Lumby.

**Other Entries:** Mansergh, Nicholas.  
Lumby, E. W. R. (Esmond Walter Rawson)  
Moon, Penderel, 1905-  
India Office Records.  
India Office Library.  
Constitutional relations between Britain and India.  
India; the transfer of power 1942-7.

**Published:** London : H.M.S.O., 1970-1983.

**Description:** 12 v. : facsims., col. maps. ; 28 cm.

**ISBN:** 0115800166 (v. 1)

**Notes:** At head of title: Constitutional relations between Britain and India.

On spine: India; the transfer of power 1942-7.

Unpublished documents drawn either from the official archives of the India Office in the custody of the India Office Records or from the private collections of the Viceregal papers in the India Office Library.

Beginning with v. 5, assistant editor P. Moon.

Includes bibliographical references.

**Contents:**

v. 1. The Cripps Mission, January-April 1942.--v. 2. Quit India, 30 April-21 September 1942.--v. 3. Reassertion of authority, Gandhi's fast, and the succession to the Viceroyalty, 21 September 1942-12 June 1943.--v. 4. The Bengal famine and the new Viceroyalty, 15 June 1943-31 August 1944.--v. 5. The Simla Conference, background and proceedings, 1 September 1944-28 July 1945.--v. 6. The post-war phase: new moves by the Labour Government, 1 August 1945-22 March 1946.--v. 7. The cabinet mission, 23 March-29 June 1946.--v. 8. The interim government, 3 July-1 November, 1946.--v. 9. The fixing of a time

limit, 4 November 1946-22 March 1947.--v. 10. The Mountbatten Viceroyalty, formation of a plan, 22 March-30 May 1947.--v. 11. The Mountbatten Viceroyalty announcement and reception of the 3 June plan 31 May-7 July 1947.--v. 12. The Mountbatten Viceroyalty, princes, partition, and independence, 8 July-15 August 1947.

## 232

*The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery**Telegram, MSS. EUR. F. 125/23*

IMMEDIATE

NEW DELHI, 29 November 1942, 8.45 pm

PERSONAL

*Received: 29 November, 7.30 pm*

No. 3372-S. Following is my personal appreciation for period 17th to 28th November. The majority of the Ahmedabad mills reopened on 23rd November with 80 per cent. of the workers present although five attempts were made to blow up electric sub-stations supplying the mills. Full working is expected shortly. Situation in remainder of Province shows slight improvement.

2. Bengal. In Midnapore District Congress Workers are reported to be inciting population to refuse to accept relief measures organised to counter effects of recent cyclone or to work on reconstruction of dykes, &c. Except for the derailment by sabotage of a troop train in Assam (four killed, forty injured) and a goods train in the United Provinces, no other major incidents to report.

Repeated to Ambassadors, Washington, Chungking (for Agents-General) and Kuibyshev.

## 233

*The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery (Extract)**MSS. EUR. F. 125/11*

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI, 30 November 1942

PRIVATE AND PERSONAL

Many thanks for your letter of the 30th October<sup>1</sup> and for the interesting comment in it. I agree about sterling balances—it has given us both a very great deal of trouble, and I hope, as you say, that the creature will now be allowed to go quietly to sleep, though I shall not feel happy until, first Raisman has been able to get the result of his discussions in London through my Council (who propose to consider them this week) and, secondly, we have been able to give the Assembly the explanation which they wanted last session and which, for reasons with which you are familiar, had then to be postponed.

2. Mudaliar sent me an amusing account<sup>2</sup> of his talks with Cripps and others on the suggestion that the political crisis should be side-tracked by a vigorous policy of social reform; and from his account of what passed I should have

<sup>1</sup> No. 128.<sup>2</sup> No. 53.

242

*The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery**Telegram, MSS. EUR. F. 125/23*

IMMEDIATE

NEW DELHI, 3 December 1942, 6.30 pm

*Received: 3 December, 5.50 pm*

No. 3402-G. Your telegram No. 20480<sup>1</sup> dated November 28th. Information received since my telegram No. 3356-S<sup>2</sup> of November 27th indicates serious deterioration in food situation in India. It is essential that you and Cabinet should be acquainted with the situation immediately. Earlier forecasts indicated that while the 1942-43 rice crop would be short of quantity required for normal Indian consumption *plus* Army requirements *plus* exports to Ceylon, Arabia, &c. by something over two million tons there would be a surplus of slightly under 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  million tons millets, 175,000 tons wheat and 25,000 tons gram leaving a total deficit of about 200,000 tons. Substitution of millets for rice would have been essential and would have caused some difficulty in case of rice-eating communities but could probably have been managed. Information recently received, however, indicates that Bombay and adjacent States which were forecasted to produce three-quarter million tons of the surplus millets have suffered an almost total failure of this crop due to lack of rain in October and that instead of a millet surplus are likely to show a deficit. In consequence our statistical position will probably be a shortage of about one million tons of foodgrains. In addition to the Bombay failure the recent cyclones in Bengal and Orissa likely to worsen the position. Accurate estimates of losses in the above three calamities are not yet available. The statistical position is alarming enough but as I have explained in previous telegrams actual position is likely to be even less favourable owing partly to hoarding by dealers for higher prices, building up of large reserves by middle-class consumers and the tendency on the part of the small subsistence farmer to keep back more of his grain than usual for his own consumption, a course rendered possible by the enhanced prices realised by such part of his produce as he sells. Present position is thus one of acute difficulty. There is increasing evidence to show that in the past few weeks private merchants have been unable to buy wheat in the Punjab for which they hold export permits at anything like the control price. This state of affairs is confirmed by Government's own buying agents and the question of Army's food supply is causing acute anxiety, wheat deliveries this

<sup>1</sup> From Secretary of State to Government of India, External Affairs Department, conveying Cabinet direction to ensure that G. of I. were aware of urgency of meeting Ceylon's requirements of rice. L/E/8/3297: f 306.

<sup>2</sup> Stating that between 1 November and end of year, Ceylon was likely to receive 43,000 tons of rice plus anything additional that Bengal and Madras could spare. MSS. EUR. F. 125/23.

year being short by five months' quota. The whole situation and certain proposals for controlling the prices of all the major foodgrains and raising the existing control price of wheat to parity with them are under consideration in Council, but I think it probable that until our own position becomes clearer we shall have to stop all exports of foodgrains from India and also ask for additional imports of wheat at least sufficient to ensure half the Army's total annual requirements of 500,000 tons. I realise that this will mean serious difficulty in Ceylon and Arabia and an unwelcome call on shipping but export of foodgrains from India has already excited considerable public criticism. If it continues despite a threatening internal shortage it may become a political issue of considerable gravity and until our own position is clearer and we see whether the new measures now in contemplation improve the situation continuance of exports is likely to do serious harm. On the other hand the announcement that in future there will be no exports of food-stuffs and that large shipments of wheat have been arranged is likely to have a stimulating effect in India and may go far to induce a freer flow of grains into the market. In that case it might prove practicable for us if we can make the internal position safe to resume exports and perhaps to reduce the additional imports of wheat.

## 243

*The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery*

*Telegram, MSS. EUR. F. 125/23*

PRIVATE AND PERSONAL

3 December 1942

No. 3408-S. Sir Mohd. Usman tells me that he asked Jinnah a few days ago what his attitude would be towards the Indianization of Council by the appointment of non-officials to Home and Finance. Jinnah replied that he would regard any such change as a matter on which under the general undertakings which had been given by His Majesty's Government and by me he would be entitled to be consulted. Usman asked whether this was necessarily the case seeing that such a change could be made *within* the present Act by appointment of persons in substitution for the two officials who had a sufficiency of Service under the Crown in India. Jinnah replied that that was merely a technical point; that the intention of the framers of the Act had never been to meet the Service qualification in that way, and that his view remained as expressed. His position would be made impossible with the Muslim League were we allowed to fill these posts by non-officials since his followers would see the Muslim position suffering still more and their opponents getting into power. I got the impression of a very clear hint that if he were consulted in such

of the incapacity or reluctance of the Indian to accept or carry it. I am thinking, incidentally, of bringing out in my speech to the Associated Chambers of Commerce at Calcutta on the 17th December, that the real trouble is not Britain's reluctance to part with power but the fact that Britain has offered to part with power, and that it is that which has led to every item of difficulty, disturbance and uncertainty in the Indian problem today. The worst of it is that there is so little chance of any of these prominent political personalities facing the facts or realising that India has no hope of standing in the future world without the moral support (and in certain circumstances the military support) of a great power; while there is almost equal reluctance to face up to the shortage of qualified personnel which India herself is likely to throw up, and the fact that the moment she acquires independence or dominion status, or whatever you may call it, she loses her present protected position.

19. I have read with some amusement the telegram<sup>6</sup> of which I enclose a copy in this bag from the non-Brahmins of the Central Provinces indicating that they view with frightful alarm the activities of Rajagopalachari! I am sending them a polite reply.

\* \* \*

21. I am becoming very seriously disturbed about the food situation here. Lumley reports grave shortage in the Bombay Presidency, and the same is true of the Deccan States. There are complaints in Madras, and Herbert has sent most urgent representations to me as regards Bengal. In Delhi itself the shortage of wheat is very marked. In other words there are indications from widely differing points, all of them of very great importance, that we are going to be hard pressed over food supplies; and Lumley, indeed, goes so far as to suggest that in Bombay they may have to adopt famine measures. Simultaneously with this we are under heavy pressure (the reason for which I quite recognise) from His Majesty's Government to keep Ceylon going. I have just received a telegram urging that we should send some wheat to Persia, arrangements for payment being made later: there are these demands from the Arabian Principalities (Aden too is asking us) to help them. A particularly important indication now reaching me is that the Indian States have in them the germ of very serious trouble; and if I am right in that we shall just have to look after India first, whatever the political reactions outside India. I think it well that the Cabinet should realise how potentially serious the situation is here (and this is complicated by Congress agitation in favour of hoarding, &c.) and that they should realise that things may come to the pass which I have just mentioned. The new Food Department will, I am certain, give us very valuable help, but I fear that this is not merely a question of machinery. I propose therefore to get my people to put together a telegram giving a general review of the position so that you may be warned well in advance.

*This was written 5 weeks after the cyclone, before its full impact was known, & certainly before fungus destroyed the crop*

11. If the idea generally commends itself to you I would propose to set up an *ad hoc* committee, possibly under someone like Zetland, at this end, to consider a little bit how the thing might work out, while at a later stage the right sort of emissary from the British Council could go out to India to pave the way and see what interest he could create in the starting of an Indian Council.

*I shall have to consider whether to tell Council of this.*

L.

12. All this is by way of preliminary warning. I hope to receive a memorandum and material about the British Council in the next few days and to send you a much fuller letter on that asking for your views and I hope your blessing; but pending that I thought you might as well have a preliminary notion of what is in my mind. The subject is one on which Gwyer might have ideas, possibly in the direction of making Delhi University the focus of an Indian Council whose business it was to interpret Indian culture not only to Britain but to the world at large.

All my best wishes for you and yours for Xmas and the coming year—you deserve them!

<sup>4</sup> No. 251, paras. 6-8.

265

Government of India, Food Department to Secretary of State

Telegram, L/E/8/3297: f 297

IMPORTANT

NEW DELHI, 9 December 1942, 11.10 pm

Received: 9 December, 10.15 pm

9796. Your 19013<sup>1</sup> dated November 3rd. Food situation in India has deteriorated seriously in the past month. Forecasts of 1942-43 crops indicate that the country is likely to be over 1½ million tons short of internal requirements of rice. This position (? is) due to loss of Burma rice, floods in Sind, cyclones in rice growing areas of Bengal and Orissa and an indifferent rice crop generally in Bengal which is the main rice producing province. Anticipations of covering rice deficit by increased millet production disappointed owing to lack of October rains in western India where millet crop is reported to be total failure in two out of three divisions of Bombay. Now estimated that total food grains crop 1942-43 will be at least 500,000 tons short of internal requirements and if needs of Ceylon and Arabia are added deficit will be increased by nearly another 500,000 tons.

<sup>1</sup> On supply of wheat for civil and military needs. MSS. EUR. F. 125/23.

N.B. there is (a) an indifferent rice crop generally  
(b) cyclone damage in specific areas.  
Written before full damage caused by cyclone  
was known. Certainly before the damage  
caused by fungus was known.