The franchise enquiry led by Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) was a central component in the Indian constitutional reform process of the 1930s. This article examines the general context of the enquiry, as well as the specific circumstances, under which it was conducted in both the United Kingdom and the sub-continent. Lothian’s investigation paid special attention to the means by which increased numbers from untouchable caste groups could be enfranchised. The article explores the ways in which the position of the untouchables became a principal concern in discussions about the franchise and more general political reform. It also examines the close involvement of Lothian in the Round Table movement and its influence on his thinking about expanding the electorate and constitutional change in the subcontinent. A detailed focus is the effort made by Lothian to determine the potential number of untouchable voters in the United Provinces. Here, in one of the most populous provinces of British India, Lothian encountered multiple problems as he attempted to estimate the population of untouchable caste groups. The article argues that many of the difficulties he confronted had their origins in an earlier reticence on the part of the authorities in the province to recognise the untouchables as a minority that should be given any special political consideration. It was, ironically, Lothian’s colleagues in the Round Table who had laid the foundations for this perspective and thus contributed to many of the difficulties and quandaries with which he subsequently wrestled.

Introduction

As part of the protracted investigations and negotiations surrounding the introduction of constitutional reform in India in the 1930s, it was decided to mount a detailed enquiry into the franchise. The findings of the Simon Commission,
the early discussions at the Indian Round Table Conference and, above all, years of nationalist protest across the subcontinent, had made it clear that the imperative for the colonial power to expand the franchise was now irresistible. Whatever reformed political system was eventually adopted, it would need at the very least to seek to be legitimised and stabilised by rather more electoral ballast than the flimsy foundations provided by the existing diminutive franchise. Debates about the franchise had achieved a new general currency at this time. Universal adult suffrage had recently been established in the United Kingdom (UK). Soon after Ceylon (Sri Lanka) became the first colony to conduct elections on the basis of a comprehensive franchise. In India, the demand for universal adult suffrage had recently been raised by the nationalist movement.1

The UK government were anxious to find ways to ‘widen the electorate’, and to examine the means by which a ‘large increase’ in the number of voters could be secured.2 Among the leaders of Labour and Liberal parties, there had always been backing for a degree of political reform in the subcontinent that now came to the fore. During the 1930s support for constitutional advance in India gradually became one of the hallmarks of the progressive centre in the UK.3 It was also accepted within the more pragmatic sections of the Conservative Party that reform was inevitable. Much of the impetus for change had been sustained by the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, who, on retirement, had returned from India in 1931. The Conservative reformers were certainly not making decisive moves towards conceding the demand for a universal franchise or home rule in India; it was more the case that they were looking to consolidate British ascendency in the changing circumstances.4 But even the modest initiatives advocated by the likes of Irwin were strenuously opposed within the Conservative Party by the so-called diehards – those who resisted any further moves towards Indian self-government. The subsequent disagreements between these camps produced a rancorous confrontation that resulted in ‘one of the most bitter struggles within the party during its long history’.5 The diehard sentiment was embodied most assertively in the Conservative grassroots base sustaining Winston Churchill.

Many in authority hoped that widening the franchise would divert Indians away from the Congress-led Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience movements that had dominated the previous decade. They believed that reform could turn the attention of the population towards electoral rather than agitational politics. In some quarters it was speculated that the promise of reform and the lure of office and patronage, particularly in the provinces, might precipitate significant change, and even division, in the nationalist movement and especially within the Indian National Congress. Irwin’s successor as Viceroy, Willingdon, was convinced that Congress would eventually be reconciled to the reform process and agree to participate in elections; ‘the loaves and fishes are too tempting’ he told a former colleague.6 Others went even further
and made the calculation that an expanded electorate would encompass many more newly enrolled voters from sections of the population that had previously shown little enthusiasm for the Congress. Crucially, they looked to examples like the non-Brahmins of Madras supporting the Justice Party, the landed interests of the Punjab rallying behind the Unionist Party and in Bengal the Praja (later Krishak Praja) Party.

Additionally, some thought there was good reason to believe that new voters from the Depressed Classes, the untouchables or Dalits, would be unlikely to enlist in the Congress cause in great numbers. By this time there was ample evidence to suggest substantial hostility on the part of many Dalit groups towards Congress. This was generated in large part by the widespread anxiety expressed by Dalit leaders that the extension of democracy, the widening of the franchise, and possibly even eventually, independence, could be hijacked by the socially dominant and manipulated to maintain the old hierarchical order. Across India, there was no shortage of untouchable representatives willing to express openly their differences with the Congress-led nationalist movement and even their backing for the colonial regime. Dalit activism in this period derived much of its energy from creatively engaging with the institutions of the colonial state and particularly from involvement in the debates about how the Depressed Classes should be represented in the emerging political settlement. In these encounters, Dalit activists repeatedly demonstrated their ability to appropriate and refashion elements of the reform process for their own purposes. Particularly significant was the skill with which publicists articulated an account of Dalit oppression in the demotic idiom of quotidian caste discrimination but also translated this into a claim for political representation in the formal language of constitutional and electoral reform.

A specially constituted Franchise Committee was commissioned to conduct the enquiry. It was explicitly instructed not to investigate the balance of communal electoral representation for Muslims and Hindus. That matter was put off to a later date, in the hope that it could be resolved in the meantime without British involvement. However, the enquiry was given a much less restricted brief in relation to the Depressed Classes and invited to make recommendations about how their interests might best be served, notwithstanding the general ruling about the ‘communal issue’. As The Economist pointed out at the time, the question of the Depressed Classes had thus been brought within the terms of reference of the committee ‘in spite of its exclusion in principle’. As the investigation progressed this dimension of the committee’s work assumed an ever-growing prominence. The enquiry recognised that untouchables had ‘in recent years made their mass influence felt in matters which for centuries have been outside their traditional sphere and customary limits’. No doubt it also had in mind the increased public presence and political mobilisation of untouchable castes that was becoming evident across India.
Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) was placed in charge of the investigation. The work of his committee was to be serviced by a secretariat, headed by the indomitable senior India Office civil servant Gilbert Laithwaite. The enquiry was to progress with the assistance of a more locally based committee in each Indian province as well as taking the advice of provincial governments and various all-India bodies. Eventually, the results of the enquiry were received, at least in Britain, with almost universal approval and considerable praise. Irwin, the recently retired Viceroy, proclaimed that the exercise had been ‘laying the foundations of a Great Reform Bill for India’. The Times hailed the report as ‘the most important’ of the fact-finding committees set up by the Indian Round Table Conferences. It applauded the outcome as ‘an impressive testimonial to Lord Lothian’s energy and power of leadership’. That sentiment was echoed by The Economist which saw the report as ‘the record of a remarkable achievement’ in which the ‘cause of Indian self-government has been well served’. R. A. Butler, a member of the committee, later spoke of his ‘strongest respect for Lothian’s acute intellect’ and pointed to the report being seen as ‘unusually distinguished for its liberalism’. Lothian’s enquiry was especially commended for highlighting the importance of the position of the untouchables in any future constitutional settlement. It was heralded grandly by one very well informed observer as an endeavour ‘to make arrangements by which the Bhangi and the Chamar should be called to the Councils of Empire’.

The remainder of this article first examines the details of the difficult circumstances in which Lothian embarked on his mission; a situation shaped as much by the course of events in the sub-continent as the domestic political dynamics in the UK. It also explores the extent to which Lothian’s approach was informed by his involvement with the Round Table group and its thinking about the future of constitutional change in India. The article then examines the more specific local constraints the enquiry encountered when exploring the possibilities of expanding the franchise among the Depressed Classes in the United Provinces (UP, very largely present day Uttar Pradesh). The province provides a useful setting to investigate the issue as there had always been substantial disagreement about which caste groups in UP could be considered ‘untouchable’. In some estimates, it was thought to be populated by far the largest absolute number of the Depressed Classes as well as having the greatest proportion in the general population. However, UP had also been marked out as a case in which calculations of this sort were likely to give rise to serious disagreements and be open to challenge. The recognition that the practices and segregation associated with untouchability were not as rigorously observed in UP as in some other, particularly southern, provinces further complicated the matter. Nonetheless, it had been made clear from the outset that the franchise enquiries were proceeding on the basis that the term Depressed Classes was taken to mean ‘both the Southern Indian untouchables and the Northern Indian
poorer and socially despised classes’. Uncertainties deriving from local distinctions were amplified by a broader long-standing stated government preference across the whole of British India, but particularly pronounced and reinforced locally in UP, to avoid any sort of precise classification of castes, especially untouchable castes. The authorities had always claimed they were reluctant to give any official recognition to the ‘social disabilities’ associated with untouchability, and policy required that ‘Government should abstain from doing anything which would tend to give rigidity to these distinctions’.

Given the history of these well-established positions, it was clear that Lothian’s enquiry was going to be trammelled in UP by past reluctance to define precisely who the untouchables were, to decide which specific caste groups should be regarded as untouchable, or to count their numbers accurately in any way. Expanding the number of untouchable electors in the province in these circumstances would always present formidable challenges.

The Diehards and the Round Table

The terms of reference for Lothian’s investigation were announced at the end of the second sitting of the Indian Round Table Conference. This session had started in considerable uncertainty as the coalition National government of Ramsay MacDonald assumed office just three weeks earlier and no sooner ‘had the delegates … assembled in London than the new emergency cabinet had to decide what to do with them’. The atmosphere of the conference was then buffeted by the economic crisis that resulted in the flight from the gold standard and soon after by the decision to resolve the political uncertainty by calling a general election. For the best part of October 1931, the India conference proceedings receded into the background. One contemporary observer reported that ‘the whole time and attention of the British people and many of the British delegates were absorbed … by the [election] campaign’. With the election over it became clear that the news of the return of the Conservative dominated National government had been received by the Indian delegates with ‘hardly concealed anxiety, not to say dismay’. It was a sentiment shared by many who believed that the progress of the conference would be hobbled and any reform at all would be frustrated by the diehard wing of the Conservative Party. The diehards had recently intensified their campaign and rallied their support in the country, notably among the rank and file membership of the Conservative Party. Churchill had contributed to this with two key speeches in 1931. In these landmark interventions, Churchill had sought to add a further facet to his crusade by emphasising the position of the untouchables to a greater extent than before.

It had always been a central plank of the diehard platform that what they claimed to be the complex social and religious divisions of the Indian population were an obstacle to any widening of the franchise or extension of self-
Churchill began to link these themes with what he asserted to be the ‘Brahmin domination’ of the nationalist movement and now related it for the first time to the treatment of the untouchables. Churchill had contrived to add another dimension to the strategy of ‘divide and rule’ and in his March speech, to the Indian Empire Society at the Albert Hall, he joined together the dots of his newfound argument:

To abandon India to the rule of the Brahmins would be an act of cruel and wicked negligence …. These Brahmins who mouth and patter the principles of Western Liberalism, and pose as philosophic and democratic politicians, are the same Brahmins who deny the primary rights of existence to nearly sixty million of their own fellow countrymen whom they call untouchable …. They will not eat with these sixty million, nor drink with them, nor treat them as human beings …. While any community, social or religious, endorses such practices … we cannot recognise their claim to the title deeds of democracy.

Concerns about the position of the Depressed Classes, though generally drawing conclusions very different from Churchill’s, were assuming a more important place than ever before in the deliberations about constitutional reform. Officially, albeit largely confidentially, there was considerable speculation about how they would fare as a consequence of the reforms. An India Office briefing prepared for the British delegates to the Second Round Table Conference summed up official thinking and advised that ‘electorally the caste Hindus will inevitably find a way of dominating the Depressed Classes’. A pervasive concern that deadlock would ensue had now taken hold. As the government made clear its intention to press ahead with negotiations and investigating the possibility of reforms, Churchill made ‘it just as plain that he would persist with his opposition’. Like many others, Irwin was exasperated by the diehard resistance and bewildered by Churchill’s stance. He wondered why he persevered when, as he wearily reflected, Churchill’s ‘conception of imperialism is finished’. The Secretary of State for India in the new National government was Samuel Hoare. He shared very few of the opinions of the diehards; primarily he was a reformer, who saw change in the subcontinent as the best way to retain India in the Empire. However, he was also quite capable of making the right sort of gestures to keep grassroots diehards onside. It was probably fair to say that he was ‘apt to think less in terms of the best policy for India than of what would be acceptable to the Party’. Hoare and his Conservative leader Baldwin had manoeuvred the India policy into a sort of suspended animation, ‘halfway between Churchill’s reaction and Irwin’s conciliation, sufficiently vague to include both positions’. British policy towards the nationalist movement had also become characterised by a cycle of alternation between repression and conciliation; a state of affairs Lothian lamented as ‘a vicious circle’. However it was a cycle with a degree of ambiguity; an ambiguity that derived from a calculated calibration on the part of the authorities that ensured
conciliation never came close to conceding the promise of home rule, whilst repression stopped just short of total destruction of the nationalist movement.

Lord Lothian was appointed as Hoare’s Under-Secretary. Hoare had welcomed Lothian’s appointment as his political deputy at the India Office; he was a close personal, and old family, friend. He also respected Lothian’s intellect and ability as well as his long and distinguished record in public life. Hoare had been offered a Conservative nominee for the position as his junior minister but preferred to see the Liberal Lothian appointed. Hoare readily acknowledged Lothian’s considerable experience and insight acquired during his extended tours to the subcontinent. He was equally aware of Lothian’s close involvement with the work of the Round Table movement in India.

For many years, beginning with his time in South Africa as part of the ‘Milner Kindergarten’, Lothian had been at the heart of the Round Table group. This had brought him into regular contact and close collaboration with key figures in the movement; most important were his relationships with Lionel Curtis, James Meston, and William Marris. But he also distanced himself from aspects of the Round Table mission. He was certainly never driven by the sense of racial superiority that stoked the zeal of many of that ilk. Lothian’s early years in South Africa had ‘revealed a young idealist’ who ‘repudiated the racism of Rhodes and implicitly attacked Milner’s importation of Chinese coolie labour’. Whilst Milner and others may have seen race as the glue holding the Empire together, Lothian saw the bonds as ‘primarily cultural rather than racial.’ For some, his support of Round Table ideals even compromised his commitment to Empire. Among them Rudyard Kipling, who was appalled when Lothian was appointed secretary to the Rhodes Trust. The Bard of the Raj indignantly resigned from the Trust in protest.

Over time interest in the original grand political project of the Round Table, to achieve an imperial political federation, had begun to wane. Enthusiasm for that endeavour, amounting to nothing ‘less than the “organic union” of the British Empire’, had weakened when faced with the variety of expressions of nationalism emerging in the Dominions. In truth, federal imperial government was an enterprise for which Lothian had never shown much enthusiasm and was a source of disagreement, particularly with Lionel Curtis. As one long-standing Round Table grandee put it, when it came to federal union, Lothian ‘certainly never held the fixed unwavering faith of Lionel.’ Whilst Curtis may have been seen as one of the leading representatives of Round Table thinking, the ‘overriding impact of his mesmeric personality’ meant he displayed ‘an embarrassing tendency to run ahead of that field’. Arnold Toynbee believed Curtis to be a ‘monomaniac’, whilst Lothian had to console himself with the thought that his colleague and friend just had ‘a complex’. Differences began to be articulated openly during a trip by Lothian, Marris and Curtis to Canada in 1909. Lothian thought the veneration for the Empire displayed by Curtis at that time was ‘little short of idolatry’, and worried that it was like a
‘furnace that burns in his belly [and] produces fumes that overwhelm his brain at times’. But Lothian was concerned that his relationship with Curtis had been ‘through troubled waters lately’ to the extent that:

At the present moment we disagree so profoundly about Imperialism and the work our association is to do, that it looks as if all our plans might fall to the ground … . But to have to break away from Lionel and the other workers in the cause of Empire, with the feeling they are doing more harm than good, is not a cheerful prospect.

But it was during this tour of Canada, and emerging from these tensions, that the idea of self-government for India as ‘the only intelligible goal’ for the United Kingdom first began to unfold. Leading Round Table figures now began to devote much more attention to the question of constitutional reform in the subcontinent.

When establishing the organisation the Round Table founders had ‘scarcely considered’ India, but by 1915, they had become ‘deeply involved in the consideration of possible radical changes in the Indo-British relationship and in Indian government’. Meston and Marris had encouraged the shift when they supported Lothian’s suggestion in 1912 that Indian representatives should be included in any future Imperial legislature. At the time even this limited, and entirely hypothetical, proposal ‘horriﬁed’ the more conservative Round Table supporters. However, gradually a belief in an incremental development of spheres of political responsibility and the expansion of the electorate in the subcontinent took root and became ‘Round Table orthodoxy’. India was coming to be considered markedly different from much of the rest of the colonial Commonwealth. This began to be explicitly recognised in the declaration of the Imperial War Conference in 1917. That gathering formally requested the earlier resolutions confining attendance to the United Kingdom and the self-governing Dominions should ‘be modiﬁed to permit of India being fully represented at all future Imperial Conferences’. The Secretary of State for India remarked at the time that the acceptance of India marked ‘an immense advance in the position of India in the Empire … and full partnership in the Councils of the Empire’. Subsequently, India was not only represented at the Paris peace conferences but also became the only non self-governing member of the League of Nations. Increasingly, the collective term ‘Dominions’ came to be accompanied by the sufﬁx ‘and India’, with the subcontinent becoming differentiated from the rest of the non-Dominion empire.

Hoare acknowledged the years Lothian had spent with Milner in South Africa and his subsequent enquiries in India had given him ‘an exceptional knowledge of constitutional theory and practice’; furthermore he believed Lothian enjoyed the benefit that ‘Indians of all sorts and conditions liked him’. An especially signiﬁcant consequence of Lothian’s leading role in the
Round Table was the close relationship he developed with William Marris who was appointed to a series of successively senior responsibilities in the Indian colonial administration. Crucially, Marris occupied a pivotal position in the constitutional reform process. In Marris Lothian acquired a mentor in the matter of India who was not only exceptionally knowledgeable, but who also came to play a central role at the core of the governance of the sub-continent.

Lothian’s Appointment: Tenure and Tensions

On appointment, Lothian was released from his routine duties as the Parliamentary Under Secretary and soon dispatched to the sub-continent to pursue the franchise investigation. Lothian had taken on these offices only after considerable negotiation and requiring guarantees for himself in an unconventional series of arrangements. First, he managed to ensure his parliamentary appointment would have ‘a status of somewhat more responsibility than that of an ordinary Under Secretary’. Second, and perhaps drawing on his long experience as Private Secretary to Lloyd George, he required, and was granted, extraordinarily as a junior minister, the right of direct access to the Prime Minister. Additionally, although Lothian relinquished all duties at the India Office when he took on the franchise task, MacDonald had directed that he could retain his title as Under-Secretary. But most surprising was Lothian’s insistence that he would only continue with his new assignment as long as he was satisfied that the process was progressing towards placing real authority in the hands of Indians. In short, he would do the job only as long as the investigation was conforming to his belief in the broad Round Table policy of widening the areas of Indian responsibility and self-government. However ‘should the development of the Constitution fall into abeyance’, he declared bluntly that he would ‘resign in order to attend to his estates and other urgent business’. It was clear that Lothian had agreed both to his initial appointment and then his franchise mission, demanding and securing, a considerable degree of independence. Nobody could have been in any doubt that he was taking on the job very much on his own terms with an energy for reform, and an appetite for lasting change considerably greater than most of his new colleagues in government. Lothian had made clear his commitment to increasing meaningful elements of self-government, increasing voter numbers and holding early elections; he was particularly keen to see an expanded electorate encourage the growth of political parties and a robust competitive party political system. His faith in an expanded electorate nurturing the growth of party politics never wavered. He thought that fretting about the details of a constitution was perhaps not as important as India developing ‘a virile, constructive party life’. Lothian always stressed the importance of expanding the electorate and his conviction that ‘political parties, concerned
with political, social and economic reform are the dynamic force which puts force and vitality into the constitutional machine.61

Hoare may have welcomed Lothian’s appointment but he knew it would never be a relationship free from difficulties. Lothian insisted that whilst he acknowledged that the situation was certainly complicated he was convinced of ‘the imperative necessity for an early decision to transfer responsibility, at any rate in the Provinces, at the earliest possible moment’.62 He wrote to ‘Robin’ (in fact his close friend Geoffrey Dawson, Round Table associate and editor of The Times) about the need to escape from the repeated cycles of repression and conciliation – as he put it the round of ‘civil disobedience and repression, relaxation of the Ordinances and civil disobedience again’. He was clear that ‘the only way out of the vicious circle … is an election in the provinces’.63 But most of all he was committed to drive an expansion of the electorate that could enable and encourage the growth of political parties and party competition. He wrote to Jan Smuts and stressed the necessity to create a ‘new order’ for India in which:

A very liberal franchise in some form will be part of it because of the effect of the franchise in liberating individuals, both men and women, from the tyranny of social and religious fatalism.64

During his tour of India he made a number of statements that drove Hoare to plead with him for more caution and a lower profile whilst he was abroad. In a widely reported newspaper interview, Lothian declared that self-government was the only remedy for India’s political ills and that he foresaw ‘a constitutional experiment on a vaster scale than has ever before been attempted in history’.65 Departing India he gave another interview in which he predicted that tens of millions would soon vote in elections.66 At the same time, he proclaimed that his committee’s recommendations would be ‘laying a workable and progressive foundation for self-government in India’.67

Hoare was furious that his junior minister was making statements of this sort whilst so much of substance remained a matter of detailed debate, negotiation and compromise – and a tricky passage through parliament. He repeatedly pointed out to him that Indian issues were a matter of great delicacy and that the majority of parliamentarians ‘are more suspicious than ever’. Finally, in desperation Hoare ordered Lothian that on his return to the UK it was essential:

… most urgently and particularly to give no interviews of any kind. I had the greatest difficulty with them over the interview that you were reported as having given to the Daily Herald, and they are now furious over your farewell words to India. This may be all very foolish, but it is a fact and I feel sure you would like to know it. It is the kind of fact that might very well make my position quite impossible.68
Shortly after his return from India, Lothian was sternly rebuked again for circulating proposals ‘diametrically contrary to those upon which the Cabinet has been working’ for the previous six months. Hoare remonstrated ‘it is still a greater shock that you should send them round to a number of officials in and out of the [India] Office without saying a word to me about them before’. These sorts of admonishments and demands for discretion rarely deterred Lothian. He was never much troubled by disapproval from the opponents of the political reform in which he believed or the critics of his Round Table sensibilities. It was indeed a brave man, and one well prepared for robust reactions, who chose to disparage the tactics of Churchill and his allies in terms as provocative as ‘the Diehards … mobilising their Nazi storm troops’.

**Lothian Arrives**

Lothian may have faced a raft of problems on the home front, but he confronted equally demanding challenges as a consequence of the course of events in India. Although the Civil Disobedience had officially been suspended, unrest persisted. The authorities responded to the crisis and the threat of resumption of Civil Disobedience with the introduction of Emergency Powers Ordinances in December 1931. Dubbed martial law in all but name, these measures imposed wide-ranging and exceptional powers that were used extensively as the cycle turned, once again, from the conciliation advocated by Irwin to the repression now practiced by Willingdon the new Viceroy. Tens of thousands of Congress workers and all of the leadership were rounded up and consigned to prison. At the beginning of January 1932, the provisions were extended, for the first time ever, to cover the whole of British India. Gandhi, when he returned from the London conference, was immediately incarcerated. Willingdon was driven to confess that he felt ‘like a Mussolini in India’.

The atmosphere was therefore tense as Lothian and his colleagues disembarked their ship at the end of January. They were greeted by a black flag protest organised by the local Congress Committee. The leaflets distributed at the dockside denounced Lothian’s visiting delegates as ‘thick-skulled, brazen faced bounders and buffoons’ who should be in no doubt about ‘the contempt and loathing in which they … are held by the people of Bombay’. ‘LOTHIAN GO BACK!’ the leaflets exhorted. It was not an auspicious start; any residual hopes Lothian may have retained of some sort of co-operation in his endeavours by the Congress were quickly put aside.

The certainty of a Congress boycott was not the only concern confronting Lothian about participation in his proceedings. There also loomed the possibility of the withdrawal of any organised presence of the Muslim interest. Throughout the tour of India his progress was vexed by repeated demands
for an early announcement of a settlement deciding the balance of electoral representation between the main religious populations. Although Lothian had been specifically precluded from making any recommendations on the issue, it lurked like an incubus in the shadows of his mission, draining his attention and time throughout his visit. Characteristically, Lothian responded by exercising the extraordinary right of direct access he had secured to the Prime Minister and used his privileged position to lobby the Viceroy as well. He urged them both to postpone the issue until he had completed his work in India and not risk ‘smashing up’ his committee.73 Lothian’s position won the day and Hoare eventually ruled that he could not consider a decision ‘until Lothian’s findings are available’. Hoare emphasised that he wanted all the evidence, both about the Depressed Classes as well as the Muslims, before making any decision.74 Lothian had used his influence to ensure that all ‘minorities’ were to be given due consideration and none was to be allowed to jump the queue.

However, Lothian had a more intractable problem with the issue of the electoral arrangements for the untouchables. Although his committee had been explicitly steered away from any consideration whatsoever of the religious ‘communal question’, his instructions on the Depressed Classes were far more ambiguous. In two respects, however, his guidance had been relatively clear. First the discredited practice of representation by appointing nominated individuals must end.75 In the future representatives of the Depressed Classes had to be elected, by some means or the other. In addition, it was made explicit that ‘adequate provision’ had to be made for increased numbers of the Depressed Classes in the ranks of the electorate. However, the question of whether they would vote in general constituencies or as part of a separate electorate for their own candidates was left hanging; although privately Hoare expressed some sympathy for separate electorates to be granted to this ‘section of the community which probably stands in greater need of protection than any other’.76

MacDonald’s instructions had acknowledged a ‘difference of opinion’ and recognised that the matter was yet to be settled. However, he then went on to speculate to Lothian that his enquiries should ‘place you in possession of facts which would facilitate the devising of a method of separate representation for the depressed classes’.77 With this possibility mooted, however tentatively and even without any detail, Gandhi was bound to protest. Earlier Gandhi had pledged his opposition and, forebodingly, had promised ‘if I was the only person to resist this thing, I would resist it with my life’.78 With an announcement pending he now went further and in a dramatic step he made his intentions explicit. In a letter written from where he was imprisoned, he declared to the Secretary of State that in the event of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes being recommended ‘I must fast unto death’.79
Recognising the Untouchables in the United Provinces

As Lothian took up his enquiries in UP he was confronted by a series of more specific local issues and problems. The provincial authorities had exhibited over a long period a reluctance to making any exceptional political arrangements for the Depressed Classes. Whilst sectional and communal representation may have constituted the foundations of the viewpoint of some British colonial administrators, there were those in UP who took a very different position. This conviction derived from their opposition to dividing further an already sharply differentiated and officially segregated electorate and fragmented public sphere. The origins of this policy dated back to interventions by Lothian’s Round Table colleagues, Meston and Marris, during earlier phases of reform.

Meston had become the Governor of UP by the time the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were initiated in 1917. As the direction of the reforms began to be considered Meston was still smarting from being thwarted in his attempts to limit communal Muslim representation on municipal authorities in the province. The passion with which Meston opposed any form of separate representation was apparent in his interventions at this time in the Legislative Council. He poured scorn on ‘the pious hope of having a glimpse, distant and hazy though it be, of the millennium when separation will lead to compact union’. On another occasion, he spoke of separate representation being like ‘a noxious weed in the fair garden of national unity’. Meston had also been pressing the UK government to pay urgent attention to political reform in the subcontinent. Meston, along with all provincial Governors, was asked by Montagu to formulate preliminary thoughts on further reform, including the arrangements for the franchise and political representation. Most provinces followed a conventional routine in their responses, but in UP the authorities, on the instructions of Meston, adopted a rather more discursive approach. Meston, true to his Round Table principles, and keen to comment on the potential of reform, directed that his submission on behalf of UP should make explicit ‘reference to the theory and principles of democratic self-government’.

In a letter ringing with the rhetoric of the Round Table, Meston put Marris in charge of drawing up a response. Meston reminded Marris of the importance of ‘the education of India for the duties of citizenship’ but especially emphasised the need for ‘the production of the largest possible competent electorate within the shortest possible period’. Another senior ICS officer, Edward Blunt, was given the responsibility for the bulk of the groundwork. In their recommendations, Blunt and his colleagues were united in condemning ‘wholly and unreservedly’ any system of communal representation and separate electorates as incompatible with responsible and representative government. The report Meston and Marris commissioned laid the basis for the outlook and policy in UP for the next decade as the province consistently opposed any further moves towards sectional political representation.
The influence of Meston’s report was first seen in the discussions surrounding increased untouchable representation in 1919. As arrangements for elections were considered, the Government of India suggested that the provinces should:

... treat the outcastes more generously. There should be in each [Provincial] Council enough representatives of the Depressed Classes to prevent them from being entirely submerged and at the same time to stimulate some capacity for collective action.87

The authorities in UP were not at all keen on this suggestion and, ‘rather than increase depressed communities’ representation, would cut it out altogether’.88 Shortly afterwards the UP government adopted the same attitude during the census operations in 1921. The national Census Commissioner had asked each province to provide information on the numbers that could be included in what he called the ‘depressed category’. The Commissioner received responses from all provinces except UP where, he regretted to report, ‘extreme delicacy of official sentiment shrank from facing the task of attempting even a rough estimate’.89

The delicacy of official sentiment in the province was revealed again in 1925 when Marris (now returned to UP as the Governor) took a robust stand against expanding separate Depressed Class political representation. The official response articulated what had by now become the orthodoxy in the thinking of UP about the Depressed Classes and argued ‘to give these classes special representatives ... is to ignore the lessons of historical development’. Furthermore, it asserted:

Politically the depressed classes are in no sense a community in themselves. They are part of the great body of agricultural tenants and labourers who are adequately represented, and in the opinion of some over-represented, in the present electorates.90

When the UP government was asked to reconsider its opinion the next year it reiterated that nothing had led it to revise its views.91 Elsewhere, in many provinces additional Depressed Class members were appointed to the legislatures, but no action was taken in UP. The UP government responded in similar terms to the findings of the Simon Commission; it objected to the proposed numbers of Depressed Class members in the legislature as, ‘representation out of all proportion to their political importance’.92

Throughout the 1920s the authorities in UP demonstrated a consistent reluctance to recognise the Depressed Classes as a distinct category of the population that should be given any sort of special political consideration. Consequently, scant attention had been devoted to defining what castes might be included in the category and no attempt made to establish even vague estimates of their numbers. The reluctance of the authorities in UP to recognise the Depressed Classes as a separate political or electoral category did not mean they were completely inured to the circumstances of the untouchables. It was
more the case that they thought improvements in their condition should be secured through social and economic measures rather than by special political preferment. Once again it fell to Edward Blunt to articulate the official line in UP. He wrote ‘Nothing which any reformer could do to raise the “depressed classes” will be half so effective as a government order making them eligible for appointment to services other than menial’. Influential figures in provincial officialdom thought a profound mistake had been made when communal religious identities had first been recognised as the basis for political representation and then consideration given to extending the principle to caste groups as well. The problem this posed for Lothian was that the original reluctance in the province to treat the Depressed Classes as a specifically electoral minority had transmuted over time into an aversion to recognise them officially as a distinctive minority of any kind at all.

The Lothian Committee in the United Provinces

Before Lothian’s arrival in UP it had become clear that even the mundane daily routine of its work in the province was not going to be straightforward and things did not get off to a good start. Gilbert Laithwaite, as secretary to the committee, with his renowned meticulous eye for detail, carefully recorded the difficulties, including ‘a fearful wrangle over the depressed classes’. However, the criticism was far from one sided and Hailey’s lukewarm attitude toward the Lothian entourage was frequently on display. The Governor’s perspective was revealed in a series of letters where he embarked on an extraordinary attack on the membership and competence of Lothian’s committee, though not of Lothian himself. It was, he railed, composed of people who were ‘intellectually the least competent body of the many which in my time have visited India’. In these exchanges and a number of subsequent letters Hailey took to describing the members repeatedly as ‘a queer collection of freaks and faddists’. He added that Lothian had done well ‘to get any sort of report out of them’. In fact Hailey wondered if the undertaking had all been worth the effort. He thought Lothian’s endeavours had amounted to little and as far as the Depressed Classes were concerned had merely ended in introducing ‘an element of further uncertainty’. A minority of committee members, dissenting from Lothian’s final report, claimed the fact that the definition of the Depressed Classes in UP was ‘not kept clearly in mind’ for much of the confusion. Nonetheless, representatives from the Depressed Classes were determined to have their say. During Lothian’s hearings in UP a quarter of the responses to his initial questionnaire came from individuals and organisations associated with the Depressed Classes.

As well as routine administrative difficulties Lothian faced a series of more substantive problems. Primarily these derived from the fact that given the history of thinking in the province there was simply no agreement on which
caste groups should be included in the Depressed Classes. As belated efforts were made to determine the membership and number of the Depressed Class population, the outcomes gave rise to yet more confusing claims and wildly divergent approximations. Dr Ambedkar, the untouchable leader, irritated by the imprecision complained that he found the various estimates of numbers produced in UP were more ‘amusing than convincing’.99

In the impasse created by the confusion about definitions, names and numbers a solution was sought by calling, once again, on the services of Edward Blunt. After collaborating with Marris in 1917, Blunt had continued to rise in the ranks of the administration. By the time of Lothian’s tour he was a member of Governor Hailey’s Executive Council and arguably his most trusted advisor; he was in effect second-in-command of the UP administration. His various charges had led him to be regarded as increasingly knowledgeable about the caste system and he was in the process of publishing a book on the subject.100 He was recommended to the Franchise Committee as ‘an expert in the matter’.101

Blunt was now set to work and he quickly completed a report. His analysis and his estimates of the Depressed Classes in UP were first submitted to the Provincial Franchise Committee.102 The members of that committee reported that they had found the advice ‘of great value’.103 Blunt sent Lothian fifty copies of the report as well as a copy of his book on caste.104 In the report, he challenged many of the more widely beliefs about the structure, functioning and consequences of the caste system. Most significant was his idiosyncratic notion that castes could be disaggregated into separate components on the basis of economic prosperity.105 On that basis he proposed the administrative bifurcation of the largest untouchable caste, the Chamar. The urban, ‘more prosperous’, sections (around two million people), he argued should not be regarded as ‘depressed’. Blunt’s contribution simply added yet more ambiguity and confusion to Lothian’s enquiries. It also gave the signal and opportunity for Dalit campaigners to intervene and challenge the analysis Blunt had offered. Members of the Chamar caste were particularly aggrieved. One protested to the hearings in Lucknow: ‘Even the name of Chamars is regarded as abominable. I do not understand how Mr Blunt has called some of them touchables’.106

Ambedkar joined the opposition and accused Blunt of misunderstanding and misrepresenting the structure and dynamics of the caste system as well as transgressing the terms of reference of the Franchise Committee. For Ambedkar, impatient of the wild variations and oscillations in the estimates of the numbers of the untouchables in UP, Blunt’s novel re-interpretation of the dynamics of caste was the last straw. He reminded the Franchise Committee that once a caste had been identified as belonging to the Depressed Classes then no further distinctions should be made in terms of ‘rich or poor, advanced and backward, educated and uneducated’.107 Otherwise, Ambedkar pointed out, in
a fundamental and decisive intervention, the wealthier, more educated or more urban, and possibly more politically experienced and better-organised sections of the Depressed Classes would be separated and isolated from their potential wider mass following. Blunt’s suggestion of such an administrative demarcation, Ambedkar argued, ‘is bound to leave the depressed class rank and file without any leaders to lead them’. Ambedkar warned that the adoption of Blunt’s proposals would completely undermine the franchise effort and result in ‘handicapping the depressed classes in utilising the political power that is proposed to be given to them’.108 Much of Blunt’s report was accepted but the proposal to demarcate individual castes according to economic prosperity was eventually dropped.

The Outcome in the UP

Lothian finished his enquiries in UP unable to reach any sort of conclusion about the numbers of the Depressed Classes. In most provinces his committee had at least arrived at some sort of an estimate; but in UP it failed to settle on even a rough approximation. Lothian’s final report was forced to note that authoritative estimates varied from a little over half a million to more than twelve and a half million, whilst less official submissions had put the number as high as twenty million.109 As the committee tour drew to a close the British delegates returned to the UK but Lothian remained in India for discussions with the Viceroy. Lothian also provided the Viceroy with a commentary on the conclusions of his committee’s work in the form of a confidential memorandum that emphasised the urgent need to find a solution to identifying and enumerating the Depressed Classes. In it he stressed the need for decisive action:

Now that the depressed classes are beginning to become self-conscious they may turn to revolution if constitutional remedies are denied to them. The active and vehement propaganda among the depressed classes themselves today is evidence of the ferment going on among them.110

The Viceroy then contacted all provincial Governors distributing Lothian’s memorandum and noting particularly the ‘vexed question’ of the Depressed Classes. He informed them he wished to hear their observations on the main issues, the first of which he saw to be ‘the definition of number of the depressed classes’.111 In UP Governor Hailey, as so often before, turned to Blunt for guidance and advice on the implications of Lothian’s conclusions.112 There now began a series of rapid withdrawals from the position that had dominated thinking in UP for more than a decade.

First came Blunt’s retreat on the issue, which was to prove to be a crucial factor in Hailey’s attitude. Blunt didn’t resile from his views on untouchability and he continued to insist to Hailey that both Lothian and Ambedkar had failed
to understand the dynamics of the caste system and untouchability in the province. He complained:

I have already expressed my opinion on untouchability in the UP. Neither Dr. Ambedkar’s collection of *obiter dicta*, or anything else that is written in the Franchise Committee’s report has caused me to modify it. Indeed, I am now prepared to go further and state that in my belief there is not a single caste, even the Bhangi or the Dom, which is *as a whole* untouchable.\(^{113}\)

However, despite his convictions he realised the prevailing mood was moving against him and conceded that ‘so long as the Franchise Committee insist on maintaining the present definition [of untouchability], we must comply’.\(^{114}\) Blunt had also come to realise in the light of Lothian’s enquiries and the reaction of the Viceroy that much more urgency and precision were now required when dealing with the untouchable issue. He wrote to the Governor echoing many of the concerns Lothian had articulated to the Viceroy:

> The situation is dangerous. The depressed classes are in a state of ferment: if their political and social grievances are not remedied, they are in a mood for revolution … . Revolution and class warfare are possibilities, and not distant ones: and the revolution might be very red.\(^{115}\)

The shift in Blunt’s attitude had been remarkable and it spurred Hailey to embark on a series of exchanges with the Viceroy in which he finally admitted that official thinking in the province about the Depressed Classes in the past had not been, as he put it, ‘consistent’. He attempted to explain the earlier policies by claiming that ‘circumstances had not hitherto forced the detailed examination that the problem has now received’. However, he conceded that those circumstances ‘have now compelled us to study the problem more carefully’.\(^{116}\) Hailey, always an astute early judge of indications of which way the wind was blowing (and an expert practitioner of how to bend with it), had signalled a major revision of thinking.

Next came a more considered and extended justification of the change in UP. It arrived in the form of a long submission to the central government that described in detail the whole history of the issue in the province. It reiterated that the ‘primary object’ of the policy makers in the past had been:

> … to avoid doing anything which would have the effect of attempting to weld into one community those scattered elements which have no common bond save varying degrees of social disability. They were impressed by the danger of creating by means of the electoral system yet another community in India, and of adding by this step to the difficulties of achieving constitutional advance on lines which have been followed elsewhere.\(^{117}\)

But now the UP government declared that whilst it was still opposed to recognising the Depressed Classes as a ‘minority community’ it was willing to
acknowledge that they did constitute a ‘special interest’. However, that was the limit of its adjustment:

It is not desirable to go further than this. The Local [UP] Government are anxious to avoid doing anything which would emphasize any difference which now exists between these castes and the higher castes.\textsuperscript{118}

After more than a decade avoiding the issue the government in UP had finally arrived at a compromise. The authorities now conceded the special circumstances of the Depressed Classes but warily recognised them specifically only as a ‘special interest’ but not as any sort of separate community. And as a special interest they were now willing to identify and enumerate the untouchables renamed as the Scheduled Castes. By the time the White Paper finalised the list of Scheduled Castes in March 1933 over fifty caste groups in UP with a population of around eleven million had been included.

There followed a concerted effort at voter registration that paid particular attention to the Scheduled Castes.\textsuperscript{119} The effort was concentrated on urban areas and in some cities the numbers of enrolled Scheduled Caste voters more than doubled.\textsuperscript{120} These measures were all driven by the conviction, now held by the government, that it was in the cities that ‘the most suitable representatives of some of the depressed classes will most easily be found.’\textsuperscript{121}

**Conclusion**

Lothian admitted that during the conduct of his enquiry questions concerning the Depressed Classes had been the ‘the most acute controversies which we encountered’, primarily, he said because of disagreements about definitions and the ‘great controversy about their number’.\textsuperscript{122} In UP in large part this was a consequence of the legacy of his Round Table colleagues and their earlier establishment of a policy committed to resisting any further segmentation or segregation of the electorate. The concern of the likes and Meston and Marris to avoid creating ‘another community’ brought into being by electoral arrangements had strayed into a general reluctance to put names or numbers to the untouchable population. Lothian may not have immediately resolved this satisfactorily but the reluctance to recognise the claims of the untouchables did not outlast contact with Lothian and his committee for very long. After the impact of his tour, the reaction of the Viceroy to his confidential memorandum and the publication of the report there came a sequence of rapid withdrawals from the positions previously held in the province. Lothian may have been initially frustrated and disappointed by his endeavours in UP but in fact he had shifted the ground decisively.

Lothian did not remain in government to see the results of his efforts. To the surprise of many he resigned, along with the rest of the Free Trade Liberals, in September 1932.\textsuperscript{123} Nonetheless, after leaving office Lothian continued to play
an important role in the relationship of Britain with the subcontinent. During the lengthy consideration of the reforms, Lothian was one of the best informed and most enthusiastic and effective supporters of the reform programme. He contributed to almost every Lords debate, energetically confronting the relentless diehard resistance. When elections were eventually held with the electorate that he had helped to bring into existence he urged Jawaharlal Nehru to lead Congress into provincial government. And Lothian was widely credited with having an important influence in persuading the leadership of the Congress Party to take office more widely as well.

Notes

1. All Parties Conference.
2. Indian Franchise Committee (IFC), vol. I, 252–54. The intention was to increase the electorate fivefold to around thirty-six million. This would enfranchise about twenty-seven per cent of the adult population; forty-three per cent of men and ten per cent of women.
3. Addison, The Road to 1945, 36.
4. Leading authorities agree there was no evidence at all at this time that the British had any intention to ‘quit India, bag and baggage’, Gallagher, The Decline, 155; see also Darwin, “Imperialism in Decline?,” 674; Low, Britain and Indian Nationalism, 17.
5. Owen, “The Conservative Party,” 403.
6. Willingdon to Butler, 25 November 1935, cited in Muldoon, “Politics, Intelligence and Elections,” 177.
7. In the later colonial period India’s untouchables were known as the Depressed Classes and after 1933 as the Scheduled Castes. Today the name Dalit is preferred and is used here where appropriate. However, it was not commonly employed in the period under discussion and is avoided where its use would result in a jarring anachronism.
8. Guru, “Liberal Democracy in India,” 101.
9. For example see Ram, “Untouchability,” 330; Pradhan, The Emergence, 105–09; Lee, Recognition and its Shadows, 141–46.
10. Prime Minister MacDonald referred to it as ‘that formidable obstacle, the communal deadlock’, Indian Round Table Conference (IRTC), 7th September–1st December 1931, 5.
11. “The Lothian Report,” The Economist, 11 June 1932.
12. IFC, Vol. I, 124.
13. For details on western and south India see, Omvedt, Dalits and the Democratic Revolution; for Bengal see, Sen, The Decline of the Caste Question; for the United Provinces see Rawat, Reconsidering Untouchability; for the Punjab, Juergensmeyer, Religion as Social Vision.
14. See Michael Maclagan, “Laithwaite, Sir (John) Gilbert.”
15. Lord Irwin, “Introduction,” in Lothian, “India and the Franchise Problem,” 593. Irwin had no need to remind his audience that he was the great-grandson of the midwife of the Reform Act of 1832.
16. “The Indian Franchise,” The Times (London), 3 June 1932.
17. “The Lothian Report,” The Economist, 11 June 1932.
18. Butler, Art of the Possible, 45.
19. The Bhangi and Chamar were two of the most numerous untouchable caste groups in north India. The comment was made by Sir Theodore Morison, see Lothian, “India and the Franchise Problem,” 613.

20. In 1931 the Government of India asked the census authorities to collect information ‘conducive to a better knowledge of the backward and depressed classes’. Their number in UP was estimated to be around 11.5 million; almost twice as large as any other province, *Census of India 1931, 471–501*.

21. *Indian Statutory Commission (ISC), Vol. II, 67; British Library, India Office Records (IOR) Q/13/2/110, Note on Depressed Classes in UP.*

22. British Library (BL) Hailey Papers Mss Eur E220/23b, Lothian to Hailey, 1 March 1932.

23. *ISC, vol. V (ii), 1341.*

24. Bridge, *Holding India,* 74.

25. Pratt, “Indian Round Table Conference,” 160.

26. Ibid.

27. “A Seditious Middle Temple Lawyer,” 23 February, “Our Duty in India”, 18 March, James, *Churchill: Speeches,* 4982–87; 5003–09.

28. This assertion had gained momentum in the wake of the furore generated by the publication in 1927 of *Mother India.* In that book Kathleen Mayo had fuelled the notion that ‘the social backwardness of India disqualified Indians from any further advancement towards future self-government’, Sinha, *Specters of Mother India,* 5.

29. James, *Churchill: Speeches,* 5007.

30. BL Hoare Papers, Mss Eur E240/65, India Office Memorandum 25 September 1931.

31. James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure,* 230.

32. Low, *Britain and Indian Nationalism,* 32. When Irwin tried to change Churchill’s outlook of ‘a subaltern a generation ago’ by inviting him to meet some conference delegates Churchill responded that he didn’t want his views ‘disturbed by some bloody Indian’, Pimlott, *Hugh Dalton,* 126.

33. As for example when he circulated to his local party members an article he had written in the Morning Post (the favourite newspaper of the diehards), declaring that there would be ‘No Repetition of the Irish Surrender’ and ‘no truckling to the terrorists’, see Muldoon, *Empire,* 213.

34. Moore, *The Crisis,* 119.

35. Bridge, *Holding India,* 65.

36. National Archives of Scotland (NAS) Lothian Papers, GD40/17/159, Lothian to “Robin”, 29 March 1932.

37. Low, *Britain and Indian Nationalism.*

38. It was not an opinion shared by everyone. Lothian engendered strong and very different sentiments. For Robert Vansittart he was ‘an incurably superficial Johnny-Know-All’, see Ian Gilmour, *Termagant*. Beatrice Webb had found him ‘an ultra-refined aristocratic dreamer with sentimentally revolutionary views’ who spent his spare time ‘devising phrases and formulas to express standards of perfection’, *Diary of Beatrice Webb,* 3 June 1917.

39. Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years,* 70.

40. Crossman, “Idealist of the Round Table,” *New Statesman,* 19 March 1960.

41. May, *The Round Table,* 38.

42. Kipling to Otto Beit, 22 June 1925, in Pinney, *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling,* 237–9.

43. Low, “Milner’s Young Men,” 258.

44. May, *The Round Table,* 4.

45. Studdert-Kennedy, “Political Science,” 197; see also Potter, “Richard Jebb.”
46. May, *The Round Table*, 54.
47. Butler, *Lothian*, 38.
48. Ibid., 39.
49. Curtis, *Dyarchy*, 41; Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope*, 164.
50. Ellinwood Jr., “The Round Table,” 183.
51. May, *The Round Table*, 91.
52. Robb, “The British cabinet,” 323.
53. In part as a consequence of the extensive personal lobbying internationally of Curtis, see Sinha, “Premonitions of the Past,” 826–8.
54. *ISC, Vol. V (ii)*, 1333.
55. See McQuade, “Beyond an Imperial Foreign Policy.”
56. Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years*, 70.
57. During Lothian’s first Indian tour in 1911 he had spent much of his time in western UP with Marris who was then the District Magistrate in Aligarh. Marris again was host and mentor to Lothian’s second visit in 1913 when Lothian also stayed with Meston in Lucknow. Marris went on to play the most senior backstage role in India during the preparations for the reforms of 1919. He became Governor of UP in 1922, and rejoined the central government in 1928. For the importance of Marris and Meston in the early reform process see Robb, “The Bureaucrat as Reformer.”
58. Butler, *Lothian*, 179.
59. IOR L/PJ/9/82, MacDonald to Lothian, 11 January 1932.
60. Butler, *Lothian*, 179. In March 1930 Lothian had inherited the marquisate (and nine other different titles) with extensive landholdings, tenancies and country houses as well as an enormous liability for death duties.
61. Lothian to Nehru, 31 December 1935, in Nehru, *Bunch of Old Letters*, 135–6.
62. NAS Lothian Papers, GD40/17/160, Lothian to Hoare, 19 February 1932.
63. NAS Lothian Papers, GD40/17/159, Lothian to “Robin”, 29 March 1932.
64. NAS Lothian Papers, GD40/17/160, Lothian to Smuts, 7 January 1932.
65. “Self-Rule, India’s Only Remedy,” *Daily Herald* (London), 14 March 1932.
66. “India’s ‘Novice’ Election,” *Daily Herald* (London), 11 May 1932.
67. See Mitra, *Indian Annual Register*, 62.
68. NAS Lothian Papers, GD40/17/264/370, Hoare to Lothian, 11 May 1932. Shortly after his return Lothian was asked in the House of Lords if he had the sanction of either the Viceroy or the Secretary of State for his farewell address. Lothian, deploying the get-out clause of the unconventional status conferred by MacDonald, replied that ‘any public utterance which I made in India was made in my personal capacity’, *Hansard* (House of Lords) 28 June 1932, 85(288).
69. NAS Lothian Papers, GD40/17/264/371, Hoare to Lothian, 20 July 1932.
70. NAS Lothian Papers, GD40/17/264/368, Lothian to Hoare, 21 February 1933.
71. BL Hoare Papers, Mss Eur E240/5, Willingdon to Hoare, 29 December 1931.
72. BL Laithwaite Papers, Mss Eur F138/15.
73. NAS Lothian Papers, GD40/17/160, Lothian to MacDonald, 4 February 1932; GD40/17/160, Lothian to Willingdon, 24 February 1932.
74. BL, Hoare Papers, Mss Eur E240/1, Hoare to Willingdon, 18 March 1932.
75. Ambedkar complained that the nomination process had been ‘grossly abused … by Governors’, BL, Hoare Papers, Mss Eur E240/65. See also, *ISC, Vol. XV*, 224.
76. National Archive, CAB/24/224/8, *Cabinet Paper, Government Policy at the Indian Round Table Conference*, 11 November 1931.
77. *IFC, Vol. I*, 253.
78. *IRTC (Second Session), Vol. III*, 1385.
79. IOR L/PO/6/77i, Gandhi to Hoare, 11 March 1932. MacDonald’s ‘Communal Award’ in August 1932 was interpreted by Gandhi as a proposal to create separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes. This plan was then supplanted by reserved seats with a joint electorate in an agreement (the Poona Pact) between the interested Indian parties after Gandhi did indeed threaten to starve himself to death. For details see Duncan, “Gandhi, Ambedkar and British policy.”
80. See Robinson, “Municipal Government,” 438–39.
81. In May 1917 Meston had advised the British cabinet that the demand for ‘further constitutional advance’ had reached a stage at which ‘it merits the early and special attention by His Majesty’s Government’, see National Archive, CAB/24/22/15, *Cabinet Memorandum, Indian Reforms*, 30 July 1917, 6–7.
82. Hocking, “Constituting the ‘Backward Classes’,” 164; see also Fuller, “Colonial Anthropology,” 16.
83. Marris took on the job only very briefly before being transferred to handle the Montagu visit and the reforms centrally. The members of the committee also met with Lionel Curtis who was then on his well-publicized tour of India. When Curtis published his findings a great deal of material was based on UP see, Curtis, *Dyarchy*, passim.
84. BL Meston Papers, Mss Eur F136/19a, Meston to Marris, 4 September 1917.
85. *Report of an Informal Committee*.
86. Ibid., 75–79.
87. *East India (Constitutional Reforms)*, 7–8.
88. IOR L/PJ/9/6, Government of India (GoI) to India Office, 16 October 1919. The provincial government was supported in this view by Motilal Nehru and the provincial Congress who thought the issue of the Depressed Classes was ‘not prominent’ in UP, *Reforms Committee (Franchise)*, 111.
89. *Census of India 1921*, 225.
90. IOR L/PJ/6/1918 no. 545. Government of the United Provinces (GUP) to GoI, 14 July 1925.
91. Ibid., GUP to GoI, 8 March 1926; see also *Report on the Working*, 181.
92. *East India (Constitutional Reforms)*, Despatches, 109–11.
93. Blunt, *Note Explaining*, 8.
94. BL Laithwaite Papers, Mss Eur F138/15, Laithwaite to Dawson, 19 March 1932; see also Laithwaite to Dawson, 28 January 1932.
95. BL Hailey Papers, Mss Eur E220/24a, Hailey to Irwin, 31 May 1932, and, *inter alia*, Mss Eur E220/24b, Hailey to Brown, 15 June 1932.
96. BL Hailey Papers, Hailey to Willingdon Mss Eur 220/54.
97. *IFC, Vol. I*, 228.
98. IOR Q/IFC/73, EUP 273.
99. IOR Q/IFC/51 Ambedkar, “Depressed Classes in the UP”; Ambedkar, *What Congress and Gandhi*, 76. See also “Depressed Classes in the United Provinces.” *The Times* (London) 2 August 1932.
100. Blunt, *The Caste System*. See also Duncan, “Blunt, Sir Edward Arthur Henry.”
101. IOR Q/IFC/61, *Note on the Discussion between the Indian Franchise Committee and the United Provinces Provincial Franchise Committee*, Lucknow 7–9 February 1932; see also Fuller, “Colonial Anthropology.”
102. Blunt, *Note Explaining*.
103. IOR Q/IFC/61 EUP 373, GUP to Laithwaite, 20 March 1932.
104. IOR Q/IFC/7, Blunt to Lothian, 9 March 1932.
105. See Duncan, “Dalits and the Raj,” 139–41.
106. *IFC*, vol. IV, 836.
107. *IFC*, vol. I, 217.
108. IOR Q/IFC/51, Ambedkar, “Depressed Classes in the UP,” 7.
109. *IFCI*, 118–23; IOR Q/IFC/72, Proceedings 4 February 1932.
110. BL Hailey Papers E220/54, Lothian to Willingdon, *The Communal Question and the Franchise Committee Report*, 8 May 1932, 2.
111. Ibid., Willingdon to Hailey, 21 May 1932. The Viceroy further emphasised the sensitivity of the matter by ordering Governors to consider the issue only with British members of their Executives and to exclude Indian members from the discussions.
112. Ibid., Hailey to Willingdon, 9 June 1932.
113. Ibid., Blunt to Hailey, 28 May 1932, Hailey papers, IOR Mss Eur E220/54, 5, emphasis in the original.
114. Ibid. BL Hailey papers Mss Eur E220/54 Blunt to Hailey, 28 May 1932.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid., Hailey to Willingdon, 9 June 1932.
117. IOR L/P/9/82 GUP to GoI, 11 July 1932, No. 409 C. X, 52.
118. Ibid., 49–50.
119. Reeves, Graham, and Goodman, *Elections in Uttar Pradesh*, xlv–xlvix.
120. Ibid.; IOR L/P/9/183 *Statement Showing the Rural and Urban Electorate for the UPLA in the Provisional Electoral Rolls*. In the capital Lucknow the number of voters from the Scheduled Castes went up threefold whilst general voter numbers increased by less than ten per cent.
121. BL Hailey papers Mss Eur220/54 Hailey to Willingdon, 9 June 1932; IOR L/P/9/82 GUP to GoI, 11 July 1932, No. 409 C.X, 51.
122. Lothian, “India and the Franchise Problem,” 606–7.
123. Hoare told the Viceroy that he thought Lothian ‘exceedingly silly in not stopping on’, Butler, *The Art*, 45.
124. Butler, *Lothian*, 183–89; May, *The Round Table*, 275–77.
125. See for example, Lothian to Nehru, 4 March 1937, in Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, 216–18.
126. See *The Times* (London), 6 April 1937, 15; *Hansard* (House of Lords) 8 April 1937, 104 (867–90).

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