Chapter II

PREPARATIONS FOR SATYAGRAHA

The Lahore session of the Indian National Congress ended on 1 January 1930 with a well-defined plan of work for its leaders to execute in the near future. As a first step Motilal Nehru resigned from the Central Legislature and addressed letters to the Congress members of the central and provincial legislatures exhorting them to send forthwith their resignations to the Viceroy in obedience to the Lahore resolution. Other prominent leaders like Vithalbhai Patel, Seth Govind Das, D.P. Mishra, V.V. Jogish, B.N. Chaudhury and Lala Bodh Raj also submitted their resignations. V.J. Patel, President of the Legislative Assembly, in his letter of resignation to the Viceroy on 10 January 1930, wrote, "The Congress has burnt its booz and no man is more sad at the turn events have taken than I am.... Nothing is easier for me than to tender my resignation, particularly when there are only a few months to run, and by doing so, I can be immensely popular with my people for the time being."

Motilal Nehru was much critical of the British policy in India. In his press statement at Allahabad, he expressed doubts about the unambiguous declaration by a responsible member of the Labour government, Earl of Russell, that Dominion Status was not possible at present. While expressing his sentiments about the

1. The Tribune, 5 January 1930.
2. The Tribune, 7 January 1930.
3. Halifax Papers, V.J. Patel to Irwin, 10 January 1930.
future plan of his party, he stated, 'We have now come to the parting of ways and each is at liberty to follow his own course. It will serve no useful purpose to ridicule the Congress which will not be deflected from the course it has decided to follow. This is all I have at present to say to those who are not in the Congress.'

Through his writings in *Young India*, Gandhiji revealed the technique of satyagraha to achieve the objective of the Congress. In his article, 'The Cult of the Bomb', he wrote, 'We are now entering upon a new era. Our immediate objective and not our distant goal is complete independence.... It is not enough that we drive out Englishmen by making their lives insecure through secret violence. That would lead not to independence but to utter confusion. We can establish independence only by adjusting our differences through an appeal to the head and the heart, by evolving organic unity amongst ourselves.'

Meanwhile, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and M.A. Ansari were authorised by the Nationalist Muslim Party to issue an appeal to the Muslims on its behalf on 5 January 1930. They stated that the momentous step forward taken by the Lahore Congress involved a complete orientation of policy and aspiration. They advised their co-religionists that the struggle for _purwa awal_ having been launched, the question of ultimate reward had receded into the background and the question of rights became irrelevant, if

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2. *Young India*, 2 January 1930.
not ungraceful. They had no doubt in their minds that the Muslims owed it to their motherland to respond to the historic call of the Congress and join it with determination to see the national struggle through. They thought that it was doubly incumbent on the Muslims to support it with enthusiasm in view of the fact that the Congress had given an assurance that the Nehru constitution having lapse, no future constitution for India would be countenanced by it unless it gave satisfaction to the minorities. They further opined, 'We specially appeal to those of our brethren, whose main grievance against the Congress is of its endorsement of the constitution based on Dominion Status, to come forward now and strengthen the hands of the Congress. The Mussalmans have never lagged behind any other in sacrifice for good cause and in this hour of the country's trial, it is their supreme duty to stand by her and deserve well of a free India'.

The Viceroy informed the Secretary of State on 9 January 1930, 'Striking effect on political situation has been made by recent meeting of Congress at Lahore'. The Governor of U.P. expressed much concern in his communication with the Home Member: 'The announcement about Independence processions, commencing from the 26th, gives me a little anxiety ... it is proposed to organize these processions as a regular form of challenge. If we interfere with them, then this is to form the basis of a campaign of civil disobedience. If we do not interfere with them, then they

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
are to be a proof to the world of the growth of the popularity of the programme of independence.'

The Home Secretary, Government of India, felt that the meetings and statements of the prominent Congress leaders constituted a direct challenge to the government and recommended that it, 'should be met at once and unmistakably, and that action on similar lines should be taken all over India.'

Lord Birkenhead who was opposed to the idea of granting Dominion Status to India, contributed a series of articles to the *Daily Telegraph* on 'Peril to India' in which he painted a sombre picture of India if Britain withdrew. He stated that if India invoked, 'Ignorantly and rashly' Civil Disobedience, Britain must must make it a plain trial of strength. He averred that the application of Dominion Status for India was a 'ludicrous idea'.

The *Manchester Guardian* in an editorial stated, 'The least that is needed to avert a catastrophe in India is to show that we are actively exerting ourselves to remove difficulties in the way of Dominion Status. It is surely worthwhile to exert ourselves and face some risks for the sake of securing India's loyalty to the Commonwealth'.

Meanwhile Gandhiji was 'furiously thinking night and day' about the programme of Civil Disobedience but for sometime he could not see light coming out of the surrounding darkness. In

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2. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
his speech at the All-India Educational Conference in the Vidyapith campus at Ahmedabad, he exhorted the students thus:

"Ours is a movement of self-purification.... I want you all to realise the implications of our creed. I want you all to shed the fear of death, so that when the history of freedom comes to be written, the names of the boys and girls of national schools and colleges may be mentioned therein as of those who died not doing violence but in resisting it, no matter by whom committed."

Subsequently, in an interview to the Daily Express on 22 January 1930, he stated that the great trial of strength in the country was at hand and events depended entirely on the attitude of British government. He refused to participate in any conference unless it was called to consider 'our complete secession from Great Britain'. He stated that Indians were engaged in a struggle for complete severance of British connection and they would not rest until that aim was achieved. He was not sure of the form the movement might take as it depended upon the response of the people. He was not afraid of arrest and stated clearly that it was quite open for the government to precipitate the reign of violence as it had done in the past. He said, 'I am not in the happy position of a general who knows before hand the whole of his plan, who works according to a time-table and can profess to be able to forecast results with certainty.' He was to evolve a plan of civil resistance which would not cause destruction or involve bloodshed.

1. Young India, 25 January 1930.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
On 26 January 1930, Gandhiji put forth the programme to be carried out by the people. He said that it was easy enough to pass the independence resolution at Lahore, but it was difficult to achieve it even by 'peaceful and legitimate means'. The people should know, understand and appreciate the message of the Congress, and they must know what independence meant and what it was likely to cost. He stated that the Working Committee had fixed Sunday, the 26th January, as Purna Swaraj day, when a declaration approved by it would be made after flag hoisting without any speech, and with complete discipline, restraint, reserve, dignity and strength. He advised house-to-house visits for distributing leaflets and delivering the message of the Lahore Congress to the masses. In the villages, the programme was to be announced by the drumbeat. The rest of the day was to be passed in doing some constructive work, such as spinning, service to untouchables, reunion of Hindus and Muslims, prohibition work, sale of khadi and visit to the neighbouring shops to apprise their keepers of the evils of earning a livelihood or making money by sale of foreign goods.

The ACC announced a declaration for 26 January stating the inalienable right of the people to be free and to enjoy the fruits of their toil as well as to have the necessities of life, so that they might have full opportunities of growth. If any government deprived them of these basic rights and oppressed them, they had the right to change it. It explained clearly

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
that the British government in India had not only deprived the
Indian people of their freedom, but also based itself on the
exploitation of the masses and ruined India economically,
politically, culturally and spiritually.

Economically, the revenue derived from the people was
out of all proportions to our income. Village industry such as
hand-spinning had been destroyed leaving the peasantry idle for
at least four months in the year.

Politically, India's stature had never been so reduced
as under the British regime. All administrative talent was
killed and masses had to be satisfied with petty village offices
and clerks' ships. 'The tallest of us have to bend before the
foreign authority. No reform has given real political power to
the people'. Disarmament had made the people unmanly and the
presence of an alien army of occupation, employed with deadly
effect to crush, the spirit of resistance in the people had made
them think that they could not look after themselves or put up a
defence against foreign aggression, or even defend their homes
and families from thieves, robbers and miscreants.

'... we will therefore prepare ourselves by withdrawing,
so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British
Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience, including
non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but with-
draw our voluntary help and stop payment of taxes without doing
violence, even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
assured. We, therefore, hereby solemnly resolve to carry out
the Congress instructions, issued from time to time for the
purpose of establishing "pureswaraj".

With these ideas in mind, the ceremony of hoisting the
national flag was performed and Independence Day celebrated
throughout India on 26 January 1930 with unprecedented enthusiasm.
Lehks of people resolved to attain complete independence.

In Lahore, thousands of people hoisted national flags over
their houses and shops. Anarkali, a fashionable marketing centre,
presented an imposing sight, national flags fluttering on every
shop. At almost all college hostels, including the hostels of the
Government College, Medical College, F.C. College, Hailey College
and S.D. College, national flags were hoisted with due ceremony
and the students made merry.

A huge procession was led by the elite of the town.
About 50,000 persons of all classes and communities assembled
under the presidency of Maulana Abdul Qadir Kasuri. Independence
resolution was read out to the audience from six different
platforms by Maulana Kasuri, Lala Duni Chand, Maulana Zafar Ali
Khan, Dr. Kahn Chand Dev, Dr. Peres Ram and Parvati Devi, daughter
of Lala Lajpat Rai. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Dr. Satyapal on
1 February 1930, "Lahore has done splendidly. My hearty
congratulations".

1. Ibid.
2. The Tribune, 26 January 1930.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. MCC Papers, Jawaharlal Nehru to Dr. Satyapal, 1 February
   1930, File C-63, 1930.
Calcutta celebrated the Independence Day with the hoisting of flags in every park and ward of the city and over all national institutions. The imposing ceremony was the rally of the Bengal volunteers at the Deshbandhu Park in north Calcutta, wherein to the accompaniment of bands, they marched the flag past, after J.M. Sen Gupta, the Mayor, hoisted the flag amidst cries of 'Bande Mataram' and revolutionary slogans. The impressive feature was the participation of a large number of ladies and girl students headed by Mrs. J.M. Sen Gupta, Mrs. Sarat Bose and Lotika Bose.

Addressing the gathering J.M. Sen Gupta said, 'We see through the flag a grim determination of the millions of starved countrymen to achieve independence or perish in the attempt. In saluting the flag this morning, let us remember that it shall under no circumstances be allowed to be lowered so long as a single Indian is alive. We must stake our existence to keep it flying aloft.'

Impressive ceremonies were performed at the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee and Manda Bazar Patrika offices which were decorated in oriental style. For the first time in the history of the Calcutta Corporation, the national flag was hoisted in the terrace of the central municipal office in pursuance of the resolution of the corporation by K.A. Razak, the Deputy Mayor. After hoisting the national flag, he said, 'National flag is the emblem of national determination to achieve freedom. The decision of hoisting the flag marks the most definite and decisive step symbolising the national will of the citizens of the premier city.
of India. It shows that the patriotic move which is surging throughout India, has not left our city fathers cold.

Enthusiastic scenes marked the observance of Independence Day at Chaupati, in Bombay, where a daylong programme opened with the hoisting of national flag at the Congress House by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya. Prominent local leaders like K.F. Nariman and Abbas Tyabji addressed the meeting. The latter exhorted the audience to keep the national flag flying and to carry on a ceaseless non-violent struggle to free the country from foreign domination and make independence a reality in the immediate future. At the conclusion of the meeting, the leaders headed a mile-long procession through the streets, carrying banners with the inscriptions, 'British Rule Means Jallianwala Bagh, Murder of Lalaji, Death of Jatin Das'; 'British Rule Means Poverty, Hunger, Exploitation'; and 'Long Live Revolution'. The crowd which included a large number of women was orderly and peaceful.

The celebration of Independence Day at Ahmedabad began with the hoisting of national flag on the grounds of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee. Its leaders including Vallabhbhai Patel, the Sardar of Bardoli, advised the people to get ready even to die for the honour of the national flag. The huge procession surpassed those of non-co-operation days. Headed by Sardar Patel, the processionists sang national songs and raised revolutionary slogans. They passed through the principal thoroughfares and finally collected on the banks of Sabarmati.

1. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
where the independence resolution was read and unanimously passed. The inmates of the ashram observed fast during the day and kept themselves busy in spinning. In the evening, they passed the independence resolution in the presence of Gandhiji. The city observed hartal. Most of the shops remained closed.

At Allahabad, the Independence Day was celebrated with much enthusiasm by students of the university, disregarding vice-chancellor's advice not to participate in the demonstrations. They hoisted the national flags on the top of almost every hostel. Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the national flag in the Purshottamiah Park. While addressing the audience, he said, 'The pledge has been taken. The flag of freedom has been hoisted. Let no one who has taken that pledge forget it or weaken in his resolve and let no one do anything which may bring dishonour to the national flag.... Let us work to redeem the pledge with a right goodwill.'

Delhi celebrated the Independence Day by carrying out the programme of the AICC. Dr. Ansari unfurled the national flag in the Queen's Gardens in the presence of a large gathering, numbering about 50,000 persons. The Congress volunteers were seen busy the whole day either making arrangements for procession or selling independence flags. By 12 o'clock, most of the shops in Chandni Chowk were flying independence colours, so also several motor cars and cycles. At 2 o'clock, a procession of about 10,000 persons was organized at the Clock Tower which was headed by several women in khadi and followed by bearers of independence flags —

1. Ibid.
2. The Leader, 27 January 1930.
ladies, students, members of the Naujavan Bharat Sabha, the
Mandir Sabha, Congress volunteers and the public. They carried
placards, sang national songs and raised revolutionary slogans.
The half a mile long procession took three hours to pass
through the main streets of the city.

Independence Day was observed with great eclat in Ajmer,
Beawar, Nasirabad, Pushkar, Nalund and Nagaur. National flags
were hoisted, processions were taken out and enthusiastic scenes
were witnessed with meetings and Khadi hawking.

Besides, the observance of Independence Day in other
important cities like Peshawar, Multan, Agra, Benares and Nagpur
occupied prominent place in the newspapers. Even the smaller
towns and bigger villages all over the country reverberated
with the new enthusiasm.

The Akali leader Master Tara Singh exhorted the Sikh
councillors to resign their seats from the legislatures and give
an impetus to the rising tide of national movement.

The celebrations in various parts of India showed the
enthusiasm and the keenness for satyagraha amongst the Congress
leaders and the people in general. The towns and villages vied
with each other in showing their enthusiastic adherence to the
independence resolution. They were greatly encouraged by the
subsequent speeches and press statements of Gandhiji who assumed

2. Ibid.
3. AICC Papers, File 24, 1930.
4. Ibid.
5. The Tribune, 29 January 1930.
the responsibility of leading the nation against the British Raj for the second time.

The President of the Indian Majlis, Cambridge, sent a message of goodwill on that momentous day and prayed for India to attain her proper place soon among the nations of the world.

Jawaharlal Nehru expressed satisfaction over the country-wide celebrations and 'respectfully' congratulated the nation on the success of the solemn and orderly demonstrations expressing the resolve to free the country. In Lahore, the Congress had spoken on behalf of the nation and proclaimed complete independence as its immediate objective. On Independence Day, it was the nation itself that took the pledge of independence with a million voices to sever the British connection which had ruined her in so many ways. Nehru has given a glimpse of Independence Day in his autobiography thus:

Independence Day came, January 26th, 1947, and it revealed to us, as in a flash, the earnest and enthusiastic mood of the country.... Events followed them in quick succession, like a drama working up to its climax.... We had no time to argue for events were on the move. They were moving politically before our eyes from day to day in India, and hardly realised by us at the time, they were moving fast in the world and holding it in the grip of a terrible depression. 2

Lord Irwin's reaction to the celebrations of the 26th January was diplomatically mild but firm. He tried to direct the attention of the nation to his attempt to bring about unity among the Indian leaders on the constitutional issue. He made a statement in the Legislative Assembly that a conference of leaders of

different shades of opinion would be summoned in any case at
an early date. He declared that its main object would be to
harmonize opinion in the country, but the final decision on the
constitutional issue would rest with the British Parliament, the
highest constitutional authority on Indian affairs. He re-echoed
Benn's sentiments that the real obstacle to progress of the
constitutional issue was the absence of unity in India and made
an appeal to Indians to use the interval, before the conference
was called, to finding a solution among themselves which would
create great effect on the world opinion. He admitted that the
Secretary of State had made an omission in saying that India
already had in action Dominion Status in relation to foreign
affairs, and agreed that there was 'fateful flaw' in the present
affairs, as His Majesty's concurrence was the final factor in
all decisions. He made no reference to political prisoners and
only stated that the prosecutions would be confined to men
preaching sedition or men who challenged the British authority
established by law.

The only effect of the Viceroy's speech was to add
materially both to the volume and intensity of the forces of
discontent, dissatisfaction and restless impatience that were at
the bottom of the Civil Disobedience Movement and this effect
was heightened by the minatory reference made by the Viceroy to
the movement.

Meanwhile, the government's policy on the question of
amnesty to the political prisoners was explained by James Crerar,

1. Debates Legislative Assembly, 1950, Vol. I, No. 5,
pp. 277-282.
2. Ibid.
the Home Member of the Viceroy's Council on 29 January 1930 in the Legislative Assembly. He felt surprised how, in the prevailing political atmosphere in the country -- the countrywide demonstrations on the 26th January and threats of Civil Disobedience Movement -- hopes could be entertained in certain quarters that amnesty could be granted to the prisoners who had committed offences against law with political motive.

It was made clear that while the British government did not desire to concern itself with mere expressions of political opinions which were not believed to be leading towards revolutionary action, its policy was directed to checking the dangerous activities prevailing in the country and to this policy it must obviously adhere. Thus it became evident that self-determination was out of question and joint deliberations of political leaders as envisaged by the government was just an excuse for rejecting the political demand. It became clear to the Congress leadership that what India might expect was neither 'self-determination nor joint determination, but some other determination.'

On 26 February, a largely attended urgent meeting of the UPCC was held at the Congress office, Allahabad, in the presence of most of its district representatives. Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Krishna Dutt Paliwal, Sri Prakasa, Mohanlal Seksen, Seth Damoder Swarup and Baba Sita Ram were among those

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1. Debates, Legislative Assembly, 29 January 1930.
2. Ibid.
present. The UPCC welcomed the decision of the Congress Working Committee authorizing Gandhiji to initiate Civil Disobedience and called upon all Congressmen of the province to give every assistance and co-operation to this campaign.

Several all-India leaders including Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Jamnalal Bajaj held a special meeting with Gandhiji at the Sabarmati Ashram where a strategy of approaching the Viceroy to find a way out of the deadlock with government before embarking on Civil Disobedience was decided upon, and a draft ultimatum, to be sent to him by Gandhiji, in the event of failure of talks, was prepared.

On 2 March Gandhiji sent a letter to Lord Irwin, embodying the eleven demands through Reginald A. Reynolds. In that draft the British rule was held to be a 'curse' but the Viceroy was assured that Gandhiji would not intentionally hurt anyone, even though he might do the greatest wrong to him; that he did not intend harm to even a single Englishman or to any legitimate interest he might have in India. He claimed many Englishmen as his dearest friends.

Giving reasons for regarding the British rule as a curse, he stated that it had impoverished the 'dumb' millions in India by sustained exploitation and by a 'ruinously' expensive military and civil administration which India could never afford. It had reduced the people to serfdom and had sapped the foundations of Indian culture. He hugged a 'fond hope' that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution. He

1. Ibid.
2. The Tribune, 5 March 1930.
3. Halifax Papers. See the full text of the letter from Gandhiji to Irwin, 2 March 1930.
pointed out that the Viceroy was getting over Rs.700/- per day against India's average income of less than annas two per day and stated, 'On bended knees I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon.... A radical cutting down the revenue, therefore, depends upon an equally radical reduction in the expenses of the administration. This means a transformation of the scheme of government. This transformation is impossible without independence.' He made it clear to the Viceroy that his letter was not in any way intended as a threat but was a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister.

The Mahatma asked the Viceroy to satisfy these very simple but vital needs of India which were by no means exhaustive, if he wanted talk of Civil Disobedience to end, and the Congress to participate in any conference, with perfect freedom of expression. According to him, the greatest evil was undoubtedly the economic pressure and corroding feeling of inferiority which the people experienced in every walk of life. They would refuse to be satisfied with the 'airy' peace and rather risk anarchy if perchance thereby they could be released from the grinding pauperism.

In reply to this letter, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy sent a very brief note which was simply an expression of regret that Gandhiji should be 'contemplating a course of action which is clearly bound to involve violation of the law and danger to the public peace.'

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Halifax Papers. Private Secretary to Viceroy to Gandhiji, 4 March 1930.
This was an open challenge of Gandhi to the British government. He took resort to it because he knew that secrecy, deception and underground conspiracy would pose very difficult problems for a movement using non-violent action, in which it was important for the actionists to obtain and retain the initiative even in the defensive phases of the struggle. In a satyagraha campaign, the mode of fight and the choice of tactics, e.g. whether to advance or retreat, offer civil resistance or organise non-violent strength through constructive work and purely selfless humanitarian service, were determined according to the exigencies of the situation.

When these parleys were going on, the government gave no quarters to any demonstration or threat of direction which it considered unlawful. Arrests went on briskly in various parts of the country on one pretext or the other. In the Meerut Conspiracy Case, of the thirty-two accused, all but one were committed to trial in the sessions. In Calcutta, S.C. Bose and eleven others were convicted and sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment.

In the Congress camp, in obedience to its mandate, 172 members of the legislature resigned by February 1930, the Central Assembly contributing 21 and the Council of States 9, Bengal Provincial Council 34, Bihar and Orissa 31, C.P. 20, Madras 20, U.P. 16, Assam 12, Bombay 6, Punjab 2 and Burma 1.

Those who did not resign or resigned and sought re-election were asked to resign their party offices or face disciplinary action.

These happenings in India did not attract the British newspaper press in England. Horace G. Alexander wrote to Gandhi that the most English people remained in complete ignorance of Indian conditions and concluded, 'whatever may come, I believe you will not forget that you have friends in England; and you will not forget, as I hope we shall not either, that we are all children of one Father, even though some of us may be erring children.'

The Governor of Bombay informed the Viceroy, 'Gandhi's announcement of this Civil Disobedience campaign is disturbing.... I fear he is out to make trouble for us and for himself. Civil Disobedience must be a very difficult matter to deal with. It is such a direct challenge to authority, and if authority does not assert itself, it will probably be brought into contempt with direct consequences.'

News travelled to Bombay that Gandhi might raid salt depots somewhere even before the meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Sabarmati, and after the Sabarmati meeting, the atmosphere became surcharged with salt.

Taking the letter of Gandhi as a danger signal for the British, the Viceroy lost no time in gearing up the whole machinery of his government. In a telegram to the Secretary of

State on 5 March, he communicated to him the contents of his letter to Gandhiji and stated that he 'contemplates action which is clearly bound to invoke violation of law and grave danger to public peace.'

On 6 March, the Viceroy repeated, 'I have had Gandhiji's ultimatum.... It is a curious document, and though many people will say that it is a sincere cry from the heart of an earnest servant of the toiling millions, I am sorry to say that I find my mind drifting more and more into rather sceptical mood about him.... I think he wants to get himself arrested, and that is one reason that naturally makes one a little reluctant to do it.'

Gandhiji's appeal for support was made easier with the arrest of Vallabhbhai Patel at Ras on 7 March. When the news of his arrest reached Ahmedabad, all the mills, schools, theatres, Hindu shops and the municipality's administrative offices were closed. A protest meeting gathered two-and-a-half thousand persons and the Millowners' Association passed a resolution condemning the government's action.

In his letter to Lionel Curtis, the Viceroy called Gandhiji an enigma. He verified his earlier estimate of him as an 'unbalanced unworldly saint' and expressed more cynical views about him.

The Secretary of State agreed with the Viceroy and supported his stand. Instead of advising any probable action to

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1. Halifax Papers. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 5 March 1930.
2. Halifax Papers. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 6 March 1930.
be taken against Gandhiji, he simply stated that it could be all to the good, if he could make impossible for Gandhiji to take recourse to his declared action. However, if he committed offence against law which presumably would be trifling, he should be dealt with corresponding to his offence. Instead of suggesting any positive action against him, he simply invited the views of the Viceroy on the issue and his plan of action against him.

Not satisfied with this reply, Lord Irwin sent another telegram to the Secretary of State on 9 March in which he stated Gandhiji’s plans and expressed his fears that though his offence might be trifling, the challenge he would pose to the government would be so plain and public that his government would not afford to disregard it or treat it as a trifling matter.

To G. Dawson, the Editor of The Times, Irwin wrote on 10 March about the political situation in India: “You will see that we are getting to grips about civil disobedience, and so far as I can judge I find it very difficult not to arrest Gandhi.... Everybody will say that we have acted with great lack of imagination and have thrown away every chance of conciliation, or any possible terms, and that, therefore, a clash between us is inevitable”. A day later, he wrote to Lord Winterton and also sent a copy to Viscount Cecil of Chetwood, “I think we are in for trouble and I shall not be surprised if within a week or ten days,”

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1. Halifax Papers. Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, 8 March 1930.
3. Halifax Papers. Telegram from Irwin to G. Dawson, 10 March 1930.
we have to lay Gandhi by the heels.... I am afraid he will never sense at all, and the truth is that people of his temperament become a public danger when they adopt the role of political leader. ¹

The stage was thus set for salt satyagraha by Gandhiji by violating the 'obnoxious' salt law, and the Viceroy's plan for his conviction seemed unflinching. According to his plan, salt was to be freely manufactured and the government salt depots were to be picketed by the satyagrahis all over the country.

A day prior to the commencement of the Dandi march, the Secretary of State replied to the Viceroy by the same mode on 11 March: 'No doubt Section 117, IPC, is more appropriate to Gandhi's real offence than Salt Law, but I fear that the proceedings under the former may be more protracted than under the latter. I am of opinion that a lengthy trial with all its opportunities for propaganda should above all be avoided. Can we not ensure an immediate and final decision with penalty manifestly not vindictive?' ²

¹ Halifax Papers. Irwin to Earl of Winterton, 11 March 1930.
² Halifax Papers. Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, 11 March 1930.