

## **Indianization of Officer Ranks of Army**

### **Quaid-i-Azam MA. Jinnah : Second Phase 1924-34**

With this purpose in mind, a close friend of Jinnah, B. Venkatapatiraju moved a resolution in the Central Assembly on 18 February 1925. Speaking on this resolution, Jinnah vehemently criticised the government for failing to fulfil its promises made recently. The Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, who was also member of the Central Assembly at that time, in his rebuttal to Jinnah, tried to defend the Government's position. Jinnah was not the person to let him go easily. He charged him: You have not made a real, earnest, honest endeavour to enable the people of India to have a proper training in military matters". As the chief of Indian Army was making various excuses that he could not find capable Indians to be appointed against such posts, Jinnah warned him not to make "one excuse or another" but asked him to come forward as a gentleman to fulfil the task. After an exchange of hot words between him and Jinnah, the matter was dropped. Jinnah, however, appealed to the government that if the government was really earnest in fulfilling its promises, it should "appoint a committee with comprehensive terms of reference to tackle this question" which was deeply related to the "public opinion in India". This proposal was fully supported by almost all the elected members of the Central Assembly including Rangachariar and Motilal Nehru. In such a situation the government had no other option except carrying the motion with its majority in the house.

As a follow-up of this, the Government of India with the consent of the Home Government, appointed the Indian Sandhurst Committee in March 1925. The committee consisted of Lt. General Sir Andrew Buxton, Chief of General Staff (Chairman), and Motilal Nehru, M.A. Jinnah, Sardar Jogendra Singh, Sir Phiroze Sethna, Ramachandra Rao, Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum, Capt. Hira Singh, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad, Capt. J.N. Banerjee, Major Thaku Zorawar Singh, Capt. Haji Gul Mawaz Khan, Major Bala Sahib Daffle, and E. B. Urdon.

1925 at Simla. Initially, it took more than a week to settle the terms of reference and the nature of proceedings: whether the proceedings were to be kept secret or open? The official members were mostly in favour of keeping the proceedings in camera, but Jinnah and his colleagues vehemently argued in favour of making the proceedings open to the public and press. Ultimately it was Jinnah's argument which prevailed upon others and on 22 August a decision to this effect was taken to allow the press to have access to the proceedings. Terms finally settled were:

- a) By what means, may it be possible to improve upon the present supply of Indian candidates for the King's Commission both in regard to number and quality?
- b) Whether it is desirable and practicable to establish a Military College in India to train Indians for the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army?
- c) If the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, how soon should the scheme be initiated and what steps should be taken to carry it out?
- d) Whether, if a Military College is established in India, it should supercede or be supplemented by Sandhurst and Woolwich, so far as the training of Indians for the

commissioned ranks of the Indian Army is concerned, On this basis a decision was arrived at as to the form the committee's questionnaire should take and as to what further measures should be adopted for the purpose of collecting evidences. In order to give members an opportunity of acquainting themselves with various implications of the problems under discussion and to ensure also that, as far as possible, the questionnaire would be complete, a number of specially chosen experts, both military and civil, were asked to give oral evidences of a preliminary nature between 28 August and 12 September 1925. These preliminary evidences came from the Commandant and Headmaster of the Prince of Wales' Royal Indian Military College, Dehra Dun, Lt. General Sir John Shea, Adjutant General in India, E. Littlehales, Officiating Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, Sir Sivaswamy

For the first time, the Committee met on 12 August

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Aiyer, and F.A. Leslie Jones, Principal of the Mayo College, Ajmer. On hearing these witnesses, the Committee finalised and issued its questionnaire, after which the members adjourned until December, by which time all the replies to the questionnaire were expected to be received in the Committee headquarters.

Separate forms of questionnaires, numbering ten in all, were framed for the Governor's Provinces and Local Governments, the general public, Educational Authorities, Indian States, Commanding Officers of the Indian King's Commissioned Officers trained at Indore, Indian King's Commissioned officers trained at Sandhurst, and Viceroy's Commissioned officers. A special questionnaire was also sent to all Indian Universities asking them whether it was possible to recognise the Prince of Wales, Royal Indian Military College, Dehra Dun, as an educational institution, and to determine the equivalence of the course of academic studies in relation to courses of study in Universities is whether a cadet after successfully completing his course of studies at the RIM. College, Dehra Dun could be accepted as having passed as a graduate. For security reasons, certain positions of the questionnaires and the replies received thereto, were treated as confidential.

Alongwith the constitutional advance of the country, Jinnah believed in the political education of the public. He was particularly keen to educate Indian public opinion in the need to Indianise the King's Commissioned ranks of the armed forces, for this purpose he addressed a number of public meetings. The newspapers, which carried the official viewpoint, misreported him, alleging that while addressing the Indian public in the need to increase the number of Indian commissioned officers he had spoken contemptuously about the British nation. To counter this propaganda, he issued a press statement in August 1925 in which he said:

In the first place I must tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that

it is most improper and undesirable to attack the British

nation as a whole or the British Army as a whole, or officers and students at Sandhurst as a class. I deprecate such an attack. The question is not whether the British army or the British nation is competent to defend India. The question before us is what ways and means we should devise to take over the defence of our own country in our own hands, and we must concentrate our efforts and attention on that issue.

In the Committee's proceedings at an early stage it was also decided that a sub-committee should be sent to England, France, Canada and U.S.A. to study at first hand the military training institutions there and also the system of education which usually precedes admission to a purely military college. This sub-committee consisted of Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah (Chairman), Sir Pherose Sethna (Member) and Zorawar Singh (member). Major Lumby acted Secretary of this sub-committee. Motilal Nehru resenting Jinnah's appointment as Chairman of this sub-committee that he resigned his membership of the Sandhurst Committee. The Quaid, along with his colleagues, sailed from Bombay in S. S. "Kaisar-i-Hind" on 10 April 1926 and arrived in England on 24 April. Upto 30 April the sub-committee visited various institutions of England. Then it proceeded to France to visit military institutions of that country. From 3 to 6 May, it visited various military institutions of France. Then it returned to England, where it stayed for another two weeks to visit the remaining English institutions. Then the sub-committee sailed for Canada on 28 May 1926. It landed on the Canadian soil on 6 June. For three days it visited the Canadian military institutions and then it reached the United States of America on 9 June. The American military educational and training institutions were also visited by this sub-committee for three days and then it returned to England. There the sub-committee re-assembled on 1 July. In this third visit the sub-committee visited Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. In the light of the experience gained in Canada and the USA, the sub-committee again visited France for the second time.

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Finally the sub-committee embarked at Marseilles on S.S. "Kaisar-i-Hind" at Marseilles for their return journey on 30 July. While the "Kaisar-i-Hind" was passing through the Arabian Sea, the report of the sub-committee was dictated by Jinnah and it was finalised on 9 August 1926. The details of this report along with the questionnaires and witnesses examined by Jinnah and his colleagues in the sub-committee is available at the India Office Library and Records, London. The sub-committee returned to India on 13 August 1926.

The Sandhurst Committee appointed another sub-committee headed by Lt. General Sir Andrew Skeen himself. Skeen was also chairman of the main committee. Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad and Major Bala Sahib Daffe were members of this sub-committee. On 8 August, it set out on a tour of Indian universities for the purpose of studying on the spot the extent to which suitable candidates for the army

career were to be found in these institutions. This sub-committee visited Bombay, Poona, Madras, Calcutta, Banaras and Allahabad. The Punjab and Aligarh Universities were omitted as they were then closed for the summer vacations.

The two sub-committees finalised and submitted their recommendations to the main Sandhurst Committee which met in Simla on 22-28 August 1926 to further review these recommendations and, if need be, to invite further suggestions from the concerned quarters. The replies to the questionnaires already circulated and suggestions received at the Committee headquarters were also to be reviewed after the arrival of the two sub-committees. The report of the Sandhurst Committee was prepared as a draft which was finalised in its meetings from 23 October to 4 November 1926 at Delhi and Bombay.

Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah was included on the Indian Sandhurst Committee because of his importance in the Indian political world. Otherwise, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead was not happy over Jinnah's conduct in England and America. He particularly noted and wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin:

Jinnah's conduct over here has been disgraceful, and the other two members of the Committee showed little sign of dissociating themselves from him. I believe that their behaviour in Canada was little better, and that they devoted themselves mainly to gathering opinions as to the probability of Canada seceding from the Empire:

The sub-committee has done much harm, and I am sure it was a grave error to let them loose without Skeen to control them.

I had originally intended to get them to meet Worthington Evans and the C.I.G.S. at my house, but Jinnah had made it impossible for me to show them hospitality. I shall not see him unless he requests an interview. If he does, I shall talk to him very plainly.

In his reply, Lord Irwin admitted what was said by Birkenhead but at the same time he explained his difficulty of engaging Jinnah in such a committee because of the pressing Indian political atmosphere. The Viceroy wanted to keep Jinnah engaged in activities other than politics and even to make him absent from Indian political life at least for some time. Initially Jinnah was not ready to serve on this Committee, but the Viceroy persuaded him with great difficulty to obtain his consent for this purpose.

During his tour of England and America as Chairman of the Sandhurst sub-committee, Jinnah issued a number of press statements which were disliked by the British Government. The British Government had intended to keep Jinnah away from the political scene in India, but failed to prevent Jinnah's participation in politics. In all his speeches and statements during his tour of Europe and America in connection with military matters, Jinnah linked the defence of the country to the independence of India. He insisted on emphasising the necessity of a free country to defend itself against foreign aggression. There could be none to check him from expressing his political opinions. British officials avoided an open confrontation with Jinnah on this issue,

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because they feared that he would expose them to the international media. It was through other means that they wanted to check his activities. They avoided direct clash with Jinnah because of the fear that if they resorted to such methods, there would be no one to stop Jinnah from emerging as the leader of a dangerous Indian political movement leading to early freedom. The Secretary of State for India had no option except expressing his wrath to the Viceroy of India. Jinnah's statements were termed "rebellious" by Lord Birkenhead:

In an interview on 10 July 1926 in London to the representative of the Daily Herald, Jinnah said that he was enormously impressed by the pattern of training cadets in France. The American Westpoint Military Academy was termed by him as "the finest organisation". On his return to Bombay on 13 August 1926, Jinnah gave a "long and interesting" interview to the representative of the Times of India. Replying to a question as to what pattern of military training was best suited for the Indian armed forces officers, Jinnah

said:

We saw various institutions in France, England, Canada, and America. The system, no doubt, was different in each country. You cannot take any single system en bloc and apply it to India having regard to the circumstances of this country. Therefore, you will have to consider what particular elements in each system would suit Indian conditions and probably it will ultimately be a combined system in its main features. Whatever system India may adopt ultimately its success will greatly depend upon enlisting the co-operation of the educational authorities in India.

The views of the sub-committee headed by Jinnah were basically the views of Jinnah. Therefore, detailed analysis of its recommendations will throw light on Jinnah's ideas. In its recommendations, the sub-committee report particularly noted the treatment of Indian cadets at Sandhurst, attitude of the instructional staff to the Indian cadets and the relation of

Indian boys with those of the British cadets. Regarding the latter, it particularly noted:

On the other hand the Indian cadets without exception complained to us that there was a prejudice against them among the majority of British boys, and particularly among those who had some connection with India. This prejudice, they say, is based upon the general notion of the British cadets that Indians belong to an inferior or subject race and cannot be their equals; it does not take the form of actual rudeness, but rather of an aloofness which makes any real mixing of the two elements, except within the precincts of the College, virtually impossible. It is of course natural that a foreign element, such as the Indian cadets at Sandhurst represent, should feel itself to a certain extent left out in the cold, but, while we are convinced of the commandant's sincerity when he assured us that none of his company commanders would tolerate any general attitude of aloofness on the part

of the British cadets, we are inclined to think that, if a special endeavour were made to do so, the relations between the two elements could be improved.

In this connection the experience of Lt.Col. Stooks was particularly cited as he was famous for his "harsh treatment" towards certain wards.

It was reported that the Army in India consisted of about 60,000 British troops which were stationed in India as Imperial forces, and about 150,000 Indian troops. The former were commanded entirely by officers of the British Service while the officers of the latter category belonged, in the main, to Indian Army proper, but included also a considerable British Service officers posted to the Indian establishment for duty with technical units, e.g., artillery and sappers and miners. The total number of officers of both categories of troops amounted to somewhere between six and seven thousand. Of these the cadre of officers serving with Indian troops accounted for 3,600, if included artillery officers serving with Indian units and engineer officers serving with Indian units or in technical military appointments, which

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numbered 122 and 278 respectively. The wastage which occurred each year in this total of 3,600 was about 180, a figure given by the War Office representative, which when examined, could be taken as almost accurate for this purpose. As against this total the maximum number of King's Commissions which it had been possible for Indians to win every year up to date since this form of commission was first thrown open to them in 1918 had been 10, which was the number of vacancies allotted annually to Indians at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. Entry to the technical arms through the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich has so far been closed to them altogether. The total number of Indians who had obtained the King's Commission through Sandhurst, from the time the first batch passed out of the College in 1921 up to the first half of 1926, is 42. Of these two had since resigned their commissions.

A comparison of all the educational and military institutions visited by this Sub-Committee was also made by which superiority of English and American institutions was generally recognised. This, according to the Report, played an important part in the building up of character and the development of the power of leadership. This system was recommended for adoption by the proposed Military College in India for which it was recommended that early steps should be taken by the British Government.

The recommendations of this Sub-committee were considered at length and adopted in the Report of the main Committee and a scheme of Indianisation was suggested by which 10 more seats for the Indian cadets were to be added to the Military College, Sandhurst. An Indian Military College on the model of Sandhurst was to be established in six years, i.e. by 1932. These Army officers from India were to be increased gradually so that by 1952 half of the officers would be Indians.16

The way the Quaid examined the witnesses and cross-examined them is interesting and throws new light on the mind and thinking of the man who at that time showed Indianization of Officer Ranks of Army

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that he was a statesman and one who possessed the qualities of a founder of a state. His sincerity to the cause of

Indianisation is also shown by these examinations. On 28 August 1925 examining Lt. Col. H.L. Haughton, Commandant,

Royal Indian Military College, Dehra Dun, Jinnah said that it was in 1918 that Army Commission was opened to the Indians but at that time, despite official promises, the number of Indian commission was fixed at ten. To a proposal that Kingston (Canada) would be the best model suitable to India advanced by Lt. Col. Haughton, Jinnah said: 'Canada is a very large territory with a small population, while in India you have got a vast population. Would it not be better to have feeders in different centres? I do not suggest provincial schools, but schools at certain centres throughout the country. The feeders would be like Dehra Dun and you have the Sandhurst to which the boys from these would go, to qualify themselves to become officers. Do you think that would be more suitable to the conditions of India?' Haughton and others agreed with Jinnah's proposal. He also desired the increase of educating at least 70 children a year.

Lt. General Sir John Shea was put searching questions by the Quaid and cross-examined on the points from the statement submitted by him before the Committee. Main purpose before Jinnah was how to integrate the Viceroy's commissioned officers, Indian, and King's commissioned officers, mainly British. What Jinnah intended was, he himself put into a question form: "I do not make any distinction between British or Indian, I am only taking the principle. My point is this: on the one hand you have a young officer holding the King's commission who as a subaltern is superior in rank, and on the other hand you have a Subedar Major holding the Viceroy's Commission, who has 26 years service, has probably been in action half a dozen times and has performed heroic services. Does not his artificial position make him resent his suppression?" Lt. General Shea replied: "If you send your Indian boy to Sandhurst and give him exactly the same education as you give to an English boy

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who eventually gets his commission, I firmly believe that the Indian officer with the Viceroy's commission does not resent him. If, however, you produce your Indian King's commissioned officers in any other way. he will resent him."

All the military officers recruited as Junior commissioned officers were inducted as Viceroy's commissioned officers. This scheme was started on the basis of a recommendation of the Report of 1918. To train cadets for this cadre two military schools were opened, one at Indore and the other at Dehra Dun. The Indore school

was established in Oct 1918 but closed in 1920. The Dehra Dun College was started in March 1922.<sup>1</sup> It was this college whose status was later raised in

1932, again on the pressure from Jinnah. The Commissioned officers in the Army were termed as the King's commissioned officers. They were all trained at Sandhurst in England. In 1918 it was mainly because of Jinnah's pressing arguments in the Central Assembly that the British Government agreed to grant at least 10 commissions to the Indians as King's Commissioned officers.

Touching the point of superiority of British Army officers over the Indian officers as pointed out by Pandit Motilal Nehru, Jinnah put this point differently:

It is not due to the fact that the British officer belongs to the central power which controls his future promotion and prospects, and therefore, in existing circumstances, he feels that he depends upon the good opinion of the British officers. Supposing I was a Subedar-Major and you were a subaltern if I incurred your displeasure, the matter would not merely rest with you; it would go further, because you would speak of it to your fellow officers. So I have to respect you because you belong to a class which has the central power in its hands. And Indian subaltern with the King's commission is merely an individual at present. He has very little power in his hands. This was because "there is a distinct and definite racial distinction".

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Lt. General Skeen, Chairman of the Committee, thus picked up Jinnah's question: "Looking at it from the point of view of the question Mr. Jinnah put, I cannot understand any commanding officer not listening equally to the representations of British and Indian King's commissioned officers that they were not being treated with respect. Reacting to this that the Chairman was giving different turn to his question, Jinnah was bold enough to clarify: "That is not my suggestion. My point is this: you have the Army officered by the British officers with a small sprinkling of Indian officers among them. The rank and file, being all Indians, must necessarily, I suppose, be more careful of the displeasure of the officers who are from the bulk, and not so much of the individual. That feeling has a very important bearing on the question and that is one of the reasons I suggest for their apparent lack of confidence".

Thus Jinnah raised questions and clarified them in a confident and aggressive tone to the British, but Nehru's style was simple and straightforward by recognising the facts as they were without antagonising the British.

Risaldar Sardar Khan pointed out the discrimination even within Indian people on the basis of their respective social status of the family: "Capt. Gul Mawaz Khan knows an Indian officer's son who has just gone to Sandhurst. He knows the social standing of his father at home, and I am sure the man of the same village, if by chance he comes to the same regiment, will say: "We know his father, we know his grandfather". They will certainly think of his social standing". Jinnah thus entered into an argument with Sardar Khan: "A boy by virtue of his education and his



abilities obtains a King's commission and comes back from Sandhurst. You say that, if his social position is not quite good, he will not be respected". Risaldar Sardar Khan replied: "I do not mean that he will not be respected at all, he will be respected to a certain extent". "If a man of respectable", Jinnah retorted, "but poor family was educated at Sandhurst and received a King's Commission, would the Indian rank and file

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and the Viceroy's commissioned officers who live in the same village respect him?" "They would", Sardar Khan replied, "of course, I say he came from a poor family but nothing more". Thus Jinnah got the desired answer. As Jinnah's questions showed he wanted to abolish distinctions between the British and the Indian, on the one hand, between the son of a noble and an ordinary man's on the other. The distinction should only be on the basis of ability, merit and qualities of the officers tested during their performance in training and education.

Naturally Jinnah's emphasis was to impart the best education and training to the cadets. In his questions to F.A. Leslie-Jones, Principal, Mayo College, Ajmer on 12 September 1925, Jinnah's emphasis was mainly on how best to impart instructions to the cadets before their entry and during the period of their training at the Indian Sandhurst.<sup>20</sup>

On :16 December 1925 special witnesses were orally examined. Jinnah questioned Major-General R.N. Harvey, Engineer-in-Chief, on the training of officers of the engineering corps especially with reference to U.K., Canada, and

U.S.A. The objective of Jinnah seemed that institutions like those of Chatham, Oxford, Cambridge, Woolwich, should be established in India on the same standard so that the Indian boys could be given the best education. During his examination of Lt. Col. H.L. Haughton, Commandant, Prince of Wales' Royal Indian Military College, Dehra Dun, Jinnah asked:

Let me make my point clear to you. It does not matter whether we send our boys to Sandhurst in England or whether we establish a Sandhurst here, I am now confining my attention merely to the fact that we have to arrange for at least 150 boys to get King's Commission in the course of a year. Before we get to Sandhurst, what system of recruitment would you suggest which should enable us to get 150 boys for Sandhurst either in India or in England.

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Lt. Col. Haughton replied:

I should say that you should go on increasing Dehra Dun to the point at which you think it will be satisfactory to stop.

That point is a matter of opinion which can be discussed.

And when you have reached that point, then build another

Dehra Dun.

This served the purpose of Jinnah who expressed:

Then it comes to this that your opinion is that we must have specialised institutions for the purpose of preparatory institutions before entering Sandhurst, Indian or English?

To this Lt. Col. Haughton replied in the affirmative, a point with which Jinnah became very happy as it served his purpose.

Next the oral examination of King's Commissioned Indian officers trained at Sandhurst was conducted. The matters of service, attitude of the British officers towards the Indians, efficiency of Indian officers, process of Indianisation were the questions which Jinnah put to the officers of this cadre who appeared before the Committee for examination. Jinnah also asked these officers about their views on the sharing of expense on the defence by the provinces and the states. On this Major-General A.P. Onkar, of Kotah State, was particularly asked by Jinnah on 27 February 1926. Gen Onkar was against states' sharing the defence expenditure, whereas Jinnah, as the tone of his questions showed, was in favour of states' share in the expenses of the Sandhurst College in India because the states were also to benefit from this institution.

Oral examination of the general public was also conducted on 17 December 1925 in which Jinnah exchanged important questions and replies with Honorary Capt. Ajab Khan, a retired army officer. A selection of this exchange is reported here:

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Jinnah: "We are told that there is a lack of spirit amongst the people of India. Is that not partly due, speaking generally, to the fact that people have been disarmed for very long time?"

Capt. Ajab Khan: "That is correct".

Jinnah: "If the policy is altered, don't you think that in that even boys belonging to good families will come forward and consider it a pride and honour to serve in the army of their country".

the way".

Capt. Ajab Khan: "Yes, if the political leaders lead

Jinnah: "But what can the political leaders do when there is no opening now? You must make an opening".

Capt. Ajab Khan: "Yes".

Jinnah: "I will now get on to my next point which is about these 8 units. You may know that in Egypt a similar experiment was tried?"

Capt. Ajab Khan: "Yes, I know that, and it proved a total failure".

Jinnah: "You know that these 8 units are very un popular with the Indian officers".

CaptAjab Khan: "Yes, I have gathered that from their conversations with me".

Jinnah: "It is alleged that one of the reasons for the creation of these 8 units is really to save the British Junior Officers from what they consider to be the indignity of receiving orders from Indian officers. I ask you if this statement is correct".

Capt. Ajab Khan: "I have heard it",

Jinnah: "And that would be the case owing to the scheme of these 8 units? No Indian officer would be able to command any British officer?"

Capt. Ajab Khan: "In the unit itself yes".

Jinnah: "I am talking of the unit. The Indian officers will always remain under the command of the English officer until it is completely Indianised?"

Capt. Ajab Khan: "Yes".

Thus with his exchange of questions/answers with Capt. Ajab Khan, Quaid-i-Azam successfully tried to prove that complete Indianisation of the army officers was the matter of utmost importance from the political point of view. During other questions with other persons appearing before the Committee for interview, Quaid-i-Azam tried to maintain this point but from a different angle. His objective was based on the consideration of the candidate's ability and merit for the post.

When S. Satyamurti, Member of Legislative Council, Madras, in his examination on 30 January 1926 tried to plead Indianisation without the consideration of ability or high standards of training, Jinnah cross-examined him making it very clear that Indianisation should never be obtained at the cost of efficiency and high standard of discipline. Nothing was to be done at the cost of merit which was to apply equally to the British and Indian boys. In this way military skill was to be transferred from Britain to India without prejudice against the Indians.

Confidential oral examination of special witnesses invited from the states was also conducted by the Committee

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who were also thoroughly cross examined by Jinnah. In his examination of Major E.W. Reynolds, Adviser, Indian State Forces, Gwalior, on 16 December 1925, Jinnah favoured the idea of having in India, both for the British India as well as for the states, one unified Indian Army on the basis of unified training system. In this way the provinces and states were required to develop a common army for the country.

Quaid-i-Azam used to study deeply the written statements filed by each person so that when he appeared for examination before the committee the Quaid caught him on his filed statement as a point of start. If there was any point which resembled his idea and that was not much elaborated the Quaid used to ask the witness to spell out the details in his mind so as to project Jinnah's viewpoint before the Committee. Jinnah was always prudent in making the witnesses give utterance to ideas suggested by Jinnah but which appeared to be the opinion of the witness.

Last public sitting of the Sandhurst Committee was held on 27 February 1926 when the last batch of witnesses was examined. During his interview a witness Captain Lawford agreed with Jinnah that there was a certain class of people who would not join in the rank and file but would willingly enlist in the higher ranks of Army if it was open to them. If military careers were denied to some people, Jinnah argued, for a number of years they would lose their aptitude for the army.

The Quaid's blunt and sometimes disconcerting questions mainly against the authority of the British Government and for the purpose of establishing Indian officers' equality with those of the British army officers was tolerated with great difficulty by the official circles. This toleration was because Jinnah was a very important political personality, a man of ideas whose support in this matter was considered of vital importance for the continuity of British Raj. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, who recognised this fact already termed Jinnah's support to the recommendations of the Indian Sandhurst Committee a matter which was "politi

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cally valuable" to the British Government. He also admitted that it was with great difficulty that Jinnah's consent to the Sandhurst Committee Report was obtained.

The report was released to the press on 31 March 1927. Here, the question arises as to why this report was released to the press on the lapse of a couple of months after its submission. The answer to this is that the report was thoroughly examined by various departments of the Government of India. Even the India Office headed by the Secretary of State for India thoroughly examined it before its release to the press. Moreover, the Government was not initially ready to release this report to the press but on consistent demands by the politicians and the political parties that a decision to release it to the public was taken. The AIML in its session held in December 1926 also demanded its release to the public.

Along with his participation in the Indian Sandhurst Committee deliberations, Jinnah believed in educating the public with the intention of preparing them to be ready to send their youth to join the officer ranks of the Indian army. For that purpose he addressed a number of public meetings. In Bombay he addressed the public meeting for one and a half hour on 4 September 1926 on the issue of "The future of India" at a fully packed hall. An army was thought by him a "key to self-government". Jinnah regretted the formation of a number of political parties in British India, each pursuing its separate policy. In this connection he recalled that when he was recently in America, he was asked why 350 million Indians could not drive away an army of 115,000 English men, a question to which he was "ashamed" to answer because the Indian politicians were most disorganised and

indisciplined and in most cases were “quacks”, who needed to be put down. What the Quaid meant was that most of the leaders who had entered politics did not, as a matter of fact, understand the game of politics. Despite this, though the future appeared to him to be “gloomy”, still, he hoped and appealed to “his hearers to learn the true conception of

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duties, obligations and rights of citizenship fair and just treatment of every one”.

At another meeting arranged by the Bombay Muslim Students Union on 14 September 1926, the Quaid said that the King’s Commission had been thrown open to Indians by the Government. By explaining the pattern of military training at Sandhurst he exhorted the students to prepare themselves and take advantage of a fresh, “but limited” field, the scope of which, he was sure, would be widened in the course of a few years. A Military career had its own charms, Jinnah impressed upon them, and was a noble and glorious profession. He even made it clear: “Unless they were prepared to enter the battle-field and face the bullets to defend their own country, self-governance was impossible of attainment”. While he admitted it was “the fault of Government that they were so backward in military education and a foreign Government could not be expected to do much for them, young men must stir up and do something for themselves”

At Lucknow also he addressed a public meeting on 26 April 1927 arranged by the Servants of India Study Circle. He delivered his extensive speech as President of this function. First, he deprecated the delay in the publication of the Indian Sandhurst Committee Report. He clarified that “so long as India was unable to defend herself, no Swaraj would come to her either from outside or from Within”. In no country except India, he was reported to have continued, was there an army without the nation behind it. It was not a regular army that counted for either offensive or defensive purposes, but the reserves of volunteers. Indians were hopelessly helpless in the matter of defence. In America the regular army, Jinnah pointed out before the public, consisted of barely 125,000 men, but in three months they could put in the field one million soldiers, mostly volunteers. He also disclosed that there were only 44 Indian officers in a total of 3,600 army officers. At this rate, centuries would pass before India had her army officered by her own men.

Regarding even ten vacancies in Sandhurst annually, the

British Government took extra care to select only such candidates as were most likely to prove unsuccessful during their training. The percentage of failures among Indian cadets since 1918 had been as high as fifty, whereas the corresponding figure for English cadets never exceeded five. The Sandhurst Committee’s recommendations to remedy this state of affairs had been characterised as revolutionary by the Anglo-Indian press, and received as such by the Government of India. Jinnah urged upon the public, “not to cease agitation till the Committee’s

recommendations were translated into action". This was said because he doubted the intention of the Government.

Along with such public expressions, Jinnah pressurised the Government in the Indian Legislative Assembly debates, as its member, urging upon them to faithfully implement the Report of the Sandhurst Committee. This was because the Quaid developed doubts about the intention of the Government to delay the Report's implementation. In official papers this Sandhurst Committee is also termed as the Sken Committee, thereby naming it also the Sken Committee Report, after the name of its President. The delay on the part of the Government to implement the Sken Committee Report was bitterly resented by the Quaid in his Assembly speeches. For the purpose of putting further pressure on the Government and on the Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army, who was also member of the Imperial Assembly, Jinnah made another elected member of the Assembly to move resolutions for the purpose of implementing recommendations of the Sken Committee Report. According to the strategy, after the resolution was moved, he himself became the chief spokesman to express in favour of the Indian interests. As part of this scheme, on 25 August 1927, Dr. B.S. Moonje moved such a resolution in the Assembly. To this an "agreed amendment" was later tabled by Srinivasa Iyengar, another member-friend of Jinnah, by which a demand was raised urging "immediate effect" to the recommendations of the Indian Sandhurst Committee Report. Then

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Jinnah spoke forcefully in defence of this resolution on 13 September. In this speech Jinnah bitterly criticised Col. J.D. Crawford, official member who was defending the official position in the Assembly and objecting to the nature of resolution. For this Jinnah said that he was not only "amazed" but "wondered" about the attitude of the official member. What worried Jinnah most was the fact that the material he collected from England, France, Canada, and U.S.A. with great labour was not allowed to be published, despite the fact that the Report was published. For this he even demanded "justification" by pointing towards the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Even some of the evidence selected from witnesses by Jinnah in the meetings of the Sken Committee in India were not placed before the Assembly. Naturally Jinnah was perturbed and rightly felt as if it was because of Jinnah that these witnesses and their cross-examinations were not allowed to be published in the press or otherwise. Jinnah, therefore, pleaded for their early publication.

The government benches were shaken by the remarks of Jinnah. Even the President of the Assembly, who was initially opposed to the Resolution, became ready to put the resolution to voting after he heard the strong arguments advanced by Jinnah and allowed Jinnah more time to speak on the resolution. Making things more clear the Quaid warned the government "not to play with Indian people any more" by their delaying tactics to implement the Sken Report. G.M. Young, Army

Secretary and member of the Assembly, in an effort to rebut Jinnah, stated that the “Government have already sent to England their own provisional recommendations on the Report”. The reason for this delay, as given by him, was that the Report had raised for the Government “almost as many problems” as “it purports to solve”. Jinnah was not ready to be convinced about the genuineness of these official arguments. His plea was how the Report could create problems for the Government when the pace of Indianisation is very slow, i.e. 20 officers out of 120 annually. Regarding the publication of proceedings of witnesses, Jinnah’s plea was when the main Committee in its two sittings had “decided that the report of the sub-committee and the proceedings should be published”, there was no reason for the Government for withholding its publication. Despite these bitter remarks the Resolution was allowed to be passed by the Assembly by the majority vote. The official intention for permission to pass this Resolution seems to be to allow ventilation to the bitter feelings expressed by Jinnah and other members of the Assembly.

Though the Resolution was approved by the Assembly, yet nothing substantial was done. In March 1928 Jinnah had to remind and again raise the issue in the Central Assembly. His grievance was that not only the Report was not implemented, but the sub-committee report and proceedings “still remain suppressed and concealed by the Government” on which the Commander-in-Chief of Army was asked to explain the reasons. Jinnah also admitted that though he was not satisfied with the pace of Indianisation suggested by the main committee report, yet he agreed because he wanted at least “to lay the foundation, the beginning of a Military College in India, that will establish our own traditions, that will establish a system of our own, and the sooner that is done the better”. What astonished him most and made him express this on the floor of the Assembly was his conviction that the Government was not interested even in this small beginning from the core of its heart. In rebuttal the Commander-in-Chief of Army spoke but in his speech he avoided any direct reference to the arguments advanced by Jinnah.

Nothing substantial was done until the London Round Table Conferences (1930-32) when the issue was again taken up by Jinnah with much force and vigour in the Conference deliberations. The issue was raised by him in the Defence Sub-Committee of the Indian Round Table Conference as its member. Jinnah pleaded for “rapid”

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and passionate insistence. His previous plea for making the Indian army a “national” army was repeated in the Defence Committee proceedings. Jinnah’s remarks received wide publicity in the British press. The Daily Herald thus reported:

Mr. Jinnah said that if Indianisation was desired there should be no further British recruitment. India was capable of providing annually the number of officers required to fill up the present normal wastage.

Ultimately the Government established a Military College in India in 1932 on the Sandhurst model. However small it may have been, it was still a great achievement on the part of Jinnah that he succeeded in establishing a Military College in India for which he had endeavoured so hard for the last two decades. But as far as the publication of the report and proceedings of the sub-committee headed by him was concerned, Jinnah's complaint remained justified as it was never published during his life time. This was because the British Government considered some of the expressions in the style of questions of Jinnah to the witnesses appearing before the sub-committee dangerous to the continuity of British raj in India.

Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah was amongst the very few politicians of British India who gave high priority to the question of Indianisation of officer ranks of the Army and linked defence to the basic issue of freedom of the country. For realisation of his objective he used all the public, press and legislative platforms and maintained his pressure on the government, though the British Government tactfully handled the issue and at the same time avoided confrontation. It kept up the tempo of giving false hopes and promises but in reality nothing substantial was done. This was the policy of the Government but Jinnah was justified in his suspicious and brutal criticism of government policies.

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