

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS' STATEMENT TO PRESS

Following is the text of Sir Stafford Cripps' statement to the Press on his arrival at Delhi:-

I have come to India to discuss with the leaders of Indian opinion the conclusions which the War Cabinet have unitedly reached in regard to India.

I am here to ascertain whether these conclusion will, as we hope, be generally acceptable to Indian opinion.

I cannot disclose the nature of proposals which will be discussed, but their chief object is to set out finally and with precision, the practical steps which His Majesty's Government propose, as the method of fulfilling their past promises of self-government to Indian peoples.

We believe a generally acceptable line of practical action can be laid down now and that thus the main obstacle to India's full co-operation in her own defence will have been removed.

We feel confident that with the political atmosphere thus clarified the leading political organisations will be ready to put forward their maximum effort in preserving their country from the brutalities of aggression.

How best their effective participation in counsels of their country can immediately be arranged will be another matter for discussion.

I have come here because I am, as I have always been, a great friend and admirer of your country, and because I want to play my part as a Member of the British War Cabinet in reaching a final settlement of these political difficulties which have been so long the vexation of our relations.

Once these questions are resolved, and I hope they may be quickly and satisfactorily resolved, the Indian people will be able to associate themselves fully and freely not only with Great Britain and other Dominions, but with our great allies Russia, China and United States of America and together we can assert our determination to preserve the liberty of the people of the world.

There is no time to lose and no time for long discussions. I am sure that in the circumstances of to-day leaders of the main parties and interests in India will be ready to take quick decisions.

My intention is to stay at Delhi for two weeks, for there are many urgent and important matters to be attended to in England and I believe in that time with energy and goodwill the essentials of success can be achieved.

During such a short visit I shall of course not be able to travel about in the country and see everyone I should like to meet. I hope my friends in India will understand that my time is short and will forgive me if I am unable to see them before I leave.

I shall be spending the first two days with the Viceroy and shall be taking the opportunity of meeting the Commander-in-Chief and other Members of the Executive Council and Provincial Governors.

The Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, the Chamber of Princes and the Hindu Mahasabha have been asked to nominate their own representatives to hold discussions with me, and representatives of the Sikhs, the Liberal Party and the Scheduled Castes have also been invited to meet me.

I shall of course see other representative people, including Provincial Premiers.

I am confident that both the Indian Press and the Press in other countries interested, will give their help in the great cause of Indian self-government and defence and will not by misconception or by the spreading of uninformed and ill-considered rumours, prejudice the chance of a successful settlement of all outstanding issues.

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