

Note of a Conference with the Members of the
Council of Regency, held at the Residency on the
28th March 1849.

In obedience to instructions from the General dated 26th March, I proceeded towards Lahore on the following day and arrived on the 28th.

Immediately on my arrival I communicated to Sir H. M. Lawrence and Mr. J. Lawrence the instructions with which I was charged, and regretted to find that both those officers were fully persuaded that the Council of Regency would on no account be induced to accede to the terms which were to be offered for their acceptance, inasmuch as they had already incurred great odium amongst their countrymen for what were considered to be their former concessions. I however requested that the two most influential members of the Council might be at once summoned to a private conference at the Residency, and Raja Tej Singh and Dewan Deena Nath were accordingly sent for. — The Raja at first excused himself on the ground of sickness and I should have consequently gone to his house, had not been apprehensive that any exhibition of undue eagerness might have been interpreted into too great a desire to obtain his concurrence. I was then intimated to him that as my mission was urgent, and could not be accomplished without

without him, he should come to the Residency, unless he really was seriously ill. Upon this he came, his looks giving no warrant for his excuses, and was accompanied by Dewan Dera Nath. —

After the first compliments had been exchanged, I explained to them the purpose for which I had come, that the Punjab would be annexed to the British Dominions at all events, but that it was for them to decide whether this should be done in an unqualified manner, or whether they would subscribe to the conditions which I was about to lay before them. —

The Raja, who was more than usually nervous and garrulous, opened out in a strain of invective against Raja Sher Singh and all the rebellious Sardars who had brought the famine to this pass, acknowledged that the British Government had acquired a perfect right to dispose of the Country as it saw fit, and recommended that it should declare its will without consulting the Council to sign any conditions. — I replied, that if they refused to accept the terms which the Governor General offered, the Maharaja and themselves would be entirely at his mercy, and I had no authority to say that they would be entitled to receive any allowance whatever. —

The Dewan, who was much more deliberate and reserved than his colleague, commented on the severity of the conditions and particularly on the expatriation of the Raja — and when

when told him it was intended to exclude also
the relatives of the Maharaja from the palace,
in order that the Citadel might be exclusively
in British occupation, he remarked that imme-
diately they were relieved from the restraints
which their present residence subjected them
to, they would begin leading licentious lives,
and bring scandal upon the memory of
Ranjit Sing and his descendants.

After many enquiries from them
about the distance to which the Maharaja
was to be removed, I observed that his destina-
tion would not improbably be the Deccan,
but after they had requested a reconsideration
on account of the remoteness of that Country,
"where" said they "God knows whether the
people are Hindus or Mahomedans" I promised
that the Maharaja should not be sent any
where to the East of the Ganges - pointing
out Meerut, Gurmukteer, Bithoor and
Allahabad, as being all of them places of high
sanctity in their religion. They seemed
to be thankful for this as a concession. But
they had no accurate notion of the exact position
of any of these places except Meerut. The
Raja indeed was astonished to discover that
Lahore was not so far from Allahabad as
from Dewar.

They seemed fully satisfied with the
personal allowance assigned to the Maharaja,
which told them would be about 10,000
Rupees

Ruppes per mensem -

Other subjects were then discussed and they enquired anxiously about their own future position - I told them that it was not intended to deprive them of their jagheers or salaries, and that for this indulgence they would be expected to yield the British Government the benefit of their advice and assistance, whenever they were called upon to do so; that if they did not subscribe to the conditions, I could not promise that any consideration would be shewn to them. The Dewan enquired whether the jagheers would be continued to future generations. I replied certainly not, unless the grants conveyed a perpetual title, and that would be left to the decision of the Officers who would shortly be appointed to investigate the validity of all rent free tenures. -

After much more parley, during which I told them that they were at perfect liberty to decline or to accede to the conditions I had been instructed to lay before them, at the same time that I convinced them of my absolute determination to yield no point, they expressed their willingness to sign the paper - and signed it accordingly not without evident sorrow and repugnance in the part of the Dewan. -

Upon this I requested that Faqeer Nao, ooddeen and Bhaee Nidhan Sing, the only other members of the Regency resident at

at Lahore, might be sent for, and upon informing them of what had passed, they said they would abide by whatever their colleagues were prepared to do.

They then affixed their seals and signatures to the papers in duplicate, and Sir G. M. Lawrence and myself then added our countersignatures. It was agreed that next morning a Durbar should be held at 7 o'clock A.M. in order to promulgate the articles subscribed, and obtain the Maharaja's ratification.

The members then took their leave, after the conference had lasted about two hours.

Lahore

March 29th 1849

Sol. G. M. Elliot

Secy. to the Govt. of India
with the Governor General

1 True Copy

P. M. M.

Under Secy. to the Government of India
with the Governor General