

Colonel Iskander Mirza came to see me last night to have a talk about the position in the Punjab and generally.

2. Order was being maintained and General Azam continued to do very well. A strong hand was however vital if the position was to be held, and there was still a good deal of trouble in towns throughout the countryside (this last statement was confirmed to me last night by the Prime Minister.) *Little Punjab*

3. Consideration was being given to the future. He had indicated that he would not himself be prepared to act as a Section 92A Governor in the Punjab since he felt that would play into the hands of the Punjab elements which suggested that they were being ruled by Bengalis. In his view the right man to send there was the Governor of Sind, Mr. Aminuddin. An administrator was essential.

4. But in his, Iskander's view, it was not enough to put a strong man into the Punjab. It was also necessary to eliminate from the Central Cabinet some of the principal elements of weakness. They were, in his view, Pirzada the Food Minister, who was corrupt and inefficient, Fazlur Rahman the Commerce Minister, Sardur Abdur Rab Nishtar and Doctor Mahmud Husain. Doctor Mahmud Husain, who was a very second rate individual, had ventured in the resumed Cabinet discussion on Monday to suggest that the wise course for the Cabinet now to pursue would be to get in touch with one of the leading mullahs, who was at present in prison in Karachi for his share in the Karachi riots, and try to open negotiations through him. He, Iskander, had at once said that if any step of that nature were taken he would withdraw the Army from Lahore, and Cabinet had agreed that it could not be considered.

5. His own view was that the present Governor of the Punjab was not up to the job, but might be quite a good Minister of Commerce and succeed Fazlur Rahman, for whom some other employment could be found. It had been represented to him that Nishtar would be very awkwardly placed financially if he lost his post in the Central Cabinet, was there any reason why he should not go as Governor of Sind?

6. Instructions have been sent to spare no pains to apprehend and shoot if found the leading mullah, who had escaped from the Wazir Khan Mosque (see paragraph 11 of my note of a conversation with Sir Zafrullah.)

*J. I. L.*