



*Photograph by Vandyk*

THE MARQUESS OF ZETLAND, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

## THE MARQUESS OF ZETLAND

1876-1961

**I**N a long and distinguished career of public service, the Marquess of Zetland, who died on 6 February 1961 in his 85th year, touched life at many points, held great office and carried grave responsibilities, and contributed at all times to the utmost of his powers to the task in hand, whether it was freemasonry, racing, sport in its widest sense, travel and exploration, authorship, county business, or affairs of state. But his principal work was in connexion with India, and India and its problems were, throughout his life, his dominating and decisive interest, an interest for the pursuit of which he was particularly qualified by temperament, experience, and study.

Lawrence John Lumley Dundas, 2nd Marquess of Zetland, K.G., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., K.G.St.J., F.B.A., was born on 11 June 1876, eldest son of the 4th Earl and 1st Marquess of Zetland, K.T., sometime Viceroy of Ireland, and Lady Lilian Lumley, third daughter of the 9th Earl of Scarbrough. He was educated at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and, as Earl of Ronaldshay, a style which he continued to bear until his succession to the Marquessate in 1929, had visited Ceylon, Egypt, and Kashmir before joining the staff of Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, as an A.D.C. in the spring of 1900. It was at the Viceroy's suggestion that in the autumn of that year he began the long series of travels in Asia in the course of which, between 1900 and 1906, he visited Persia, Burma, Russian Central Asia and Siberia, Mongolia, China, and Japan.

Ronaldshay had for some years been a prospective Conservative candidate, and in 1907 he entered Parliament as Unionist Member for the Hornsey Division of Middlesex in the Liberal Parliament of 1906. He continued to hold this seat through successive elections until 1916. He had again visited India in 1911, and from 1912 to 1914 he served, under the Chairmanship of Lord Islington, as a Member of the Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, the investigations and journeyings of which gave him a close acquaintance with all parts of the sub-continent, and one of his colleagues on which, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, was a future Labour Prime Minister.

The bent of his interests had already clearly been shown by a series of works, published between 1902 and 1911: *Sport and Politics under an Eastern Sky* (1902); *On the Outskirts of Empire*

*in Asia* (1904); *A Wandering Student in the Far East* (1908); *An Eastern Miscellany* (1911).

In 1916 he was offered by Austen Chamberlain, then Secretary of State for India, the succession to Lord Carmichael as Governor of Bengal, and he took up this important post in the spring of the following year.

Ronaldshay assumed the Governorship of Bengal in circumstances of some difficulty. That Presidency was still smarting under the removal of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911. Ronaldshay's earlier association with Lord Curzon, whose Partition of Bengal in 1906, however well intentioned, had given rise to bitter local feeling, was counted against him, as was the fact that he had been a Conservative Member of Parliament. He was at pains, on assuming office, to show how mistaken those were who might regard him as reactionary, conservative, and out of sympathy with Indian aspirations.

The times were difficult. Terrorism, a characteristic of Bengal political life for some years before Ronaldshay's appointment, had, under the strains of war, reached an acute stage when he took over. Bengal, with its sensitive and intelligent population, and its communal difficulties, called for skilful and patient handling. The complexity of the situation was not lessened by the presence of major European interests, and of the largest European population in any part of the sub-continent—a population whose great commercial importance, and whose long association with the country, had made a major contribution in the past to the prosperity of the Presidency.

Finally, there was the problem of future political development in India. Ronaldshay had for many years held the view that the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1908, whatever the intentions of their authors, inevitably carried in themselves the germ of a far more marked degree of constitutional advance. Shortly after his appointment to Bengal there came, on 20 August 1917, the declaration that the policy of the British Government was the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. At the end of the year the Secretary of State, Mr. Edwin Montagu, and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, undertook the extensive travels and discussions in India which resulted, on 8 July 1918, in the recommendations of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and, in due course, in the Government of India Act 1919 which provided for the establishment of dyarchical rule in the provinces

of British India, and for the formal delimitation of the spheres of the Central and Provincial Governments. (It may be recorded that Montagu, incisive, if not always charitable, in his assessments, remarked, in his diary, of the Governor of Bengal that Ronaldshay was 'alive, and had some driving force'.)

The five critical years, 1917-1922, during which Ronaldshay governed Bengal with outstanding success, presented him with many anxious problems. He had to deal with the stresses of the concluding years of the War, with terrorism, with the rise of non-co-operation, with a Moslem community gravely exercised over the fate of Turkey, consequent on the Versailles Conference, with the grave disorders in Calcutta in 1921-2, and with the introduction in 1921 under the India Act of 1919, of the dyarchical system of Government, which was inaugurated by the Duke of Connaught in his visit of 1920. These issues he handled with dexterity, resolution, and sympathy: and his own Parliamentary experience was of great value in initiating the new constitutional scheme.

The problems of terrorism, and of the revolutionary movement, acute when he assumed office, remained so throughout his Governorship, and they were investigated in 1919 by the Rowlatt Commission. Ronaldshay had at all times shown himself understanding of the idealistic element in the background of terrorism, and of the psychological antipathy to the thought of Western domination which underlay the activities of many of the younger men who were drawn into it. But he combined this understanding with the courageous application of a firm hand in dealing with political unrest, whether Hindu or Moslem, and, in the steps which he had to take to deal with it, he was able to carry with him, and have the full support of, his Indian Ministers.

His great success in Bengal may be attributed to his tact, integrity, and patience, to his skill in choosing colleagues of high quality, and to the complete confidence which he reposed in them. His extensive touring in the Presidency, and the wide personal contacts which resulted from it, were a material factor. His public speeches (he was at all times a good and impressive speaker) attracted much attention. He showed himself, above all, understanding of a sensitive and intelligent people. The keen interest which he displayed in the religious background of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, and, as Rector of Calcutta University, in Hindu philosophy and culture, gained him the respect of an intellectual audience in Bengal with which

contact had not always been easy in the past. With the important European population of Calcutta, and the great commercial interests for which it stood, his relations were at all times of the best. He had their full confidence, was at pains to appreciate their difficulties, and was trusted and highly regarded by them.

On the material side the Governor could claim to have initiated during his term of office a major campaign against malaria, to have done much for agriculture, for the rural co-operative movement, and for irrigation. In the political field he had kept an even balance. He left the dyarchical system working: his efforts to persuade public opinion of the reality of the advance represented by the new constitutional scheme had produced their effect. While non-co-operation and terrorism remained sharp and unresolved issues, the situation was in hand. Ronaldshay left Bengal amid expressions of great general goodwill, and with an established respect and popularity among both Indians and Europeans.

He had been made G.C.I.E. on his appointment as Governor. On the conclusion of his term he was made G.C.S.I., and sworn of the Privy Council.

On returning to England, Ronaldshay made no attempt to re-enter the House of Commons. Parliamentary life he regarded as an invaluable experience. But with his wide interests, and the many claims on him, he was not, in his own words, prepared to contemplate with equanimity a lifetime given up to it.

In his autobiography *Essayez* (1956), he describes the period 1922-32 as 'A Ten Year Interlude with Pen, Rifle and Race Glasses'. That not unfairly summarizes his principal activities after his departure from India in 1922 until he returned to political life in 1932, and again after he ceased to hold office in 1940. It may be convenient at this point to review the range of his interests, and his contributions in a singularly varied field.

He was throughout his life an active sportsman, who in his Asian travels had shot a wide variety of big game, and who after his return to England took for many years the greatest pleasure in deer stalking in his remote Highland fastness of Letterewe. In addition to his duties as a great landowner in Yorkshire, and in Scotland, he was an active supporter of the Territorial Movement (he had been commissioned in the North Riding of Yorkshire Volunteer Artillery from 1900 to 1908; served as a Major in the 4th Battalion Green Howards; and was Hon. Colonel of the 73rd Northumbrian Field Battery from 1932 and of the 62nd Northumbrian Anti-Aircraft Brigade

R.A. (T.A.), 1937-8.) He was a Steward of the Jockey Club from 1928 to 1931, and on the administrative side did much for racing, especially at Redcar: his family colours, well known on the turf, were first registered in 1774, and he turned out a number of winners from his stud over many years. He was Provincial Grand Master of the Freemasons of the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, an office filled continuously by members of his family since the formation of the Province in 1821, from 1923 to 1956. In Yorkshire he had great influence, and after his resignation in 1940 as Secretary of State for India and for Burma, he continued to play a prominent part in county business as Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding from 1945 to 1951, and in Scotland, where he was Governor of the National Bank of Scotland (a post which he had already filled from 1926 to 1935) from 1940 to 1951. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, a distinction which he greatly prized, in 1929.

A man of action and of fine physique, he was throughout his life keenly interested in travel. Reference has already been made to his extensive journeys in Asia between 1900 and 1906, and he paid various visits to the States adjoining Bengal during his time as Governor. He was a Founder Member (1901) of the Royal Central Asian Society, and for many years up to his death an Honorary Vice-President. He was President of the India Society from 1923 to 1950, and of the Royal Asiatic Society from 1928 to 1931. As President of the Royal Geographical Society from 1922 to 1925, and a Trustee until 1947, he took the closest and most active concern in every detail of the Society's work, gave full support to the Mount Everest Expedition of 1924, was continually determined that the Society should be associated with explorations, and showed his great administrative capacity in his interest in the important library and map collections.

He paid particular attention to the work of the National Trust, of which he was Chairman from 1931 to 1945, and played no small part in building up the Trust, and in its remarkable achievement.

Above all, he employed the period from 1922 to 1932 in authorship. A striking trilogy of books on India and her neighbours (and more particularly the States in and adjoining Bengal which he had visited during his Governorship)—*Lands of the Thunderbolt, Sikkim, Chumbi, and Bhutan* (1923); *India, A Bird's Eye View* (1924); and *The Heart of Aryavarta* (1925)—not only recorded the result of long meditation and extensive travel.

They showed also his close and sympathetic interest in the great religions of the East, the depth of his feeling for Indian philosophy and thought, and his appreciation of the problems presented by Indian resistance to any suggestion of domination by the West of the ancient culture of the sub-continent. It was to the profound impression created by *The Heart of Aryavarta* that he owed not only the signal distinction of election to the British Academy, to which reference has already been made, but the Gold Medal of the Royal Empire Society for the most outstanding book of the year which bore on the affairs of the empire.

His Indian trilogy was followed, in very different fields, by the authorized biography of Lord Curzon (1928), for whom and for whose work in India he had a great admiration, which he was invited to write by the literary executors of his former chief; by his edition (1929) of the Letters of Disraeli to Lady Bradford and to Lady Chesterfield; and, in 1932, by the authorized biography of the first Lord Cromer. In 1935, shortly before becoming Secretary of State for India, he published *Steps Towards Indian Home Rule*. His services to literature and to public life were recognized by the Hon. LL.D. of Cambridge and of Glasgow, and by the Hon. Litt.D. of Leeds.

Zetland, who had succeeded his father in 1929, refused offers of political employment at various stages between 1929 and 1932. In 1929 he declined the High Commissionership in Egypt in succession to Lord Lloyd. In December 1931 he refused an invitation to serve on the commission about to be appointed by the League of Nations to study the causes of dispute between China and Japan. But India, always closest to his heart, was now emerging as the major political problem of the day. It had not been his fortune to be chosen to succeed Lord Reading as Viceroy in 1925: and he is said to have admitted to keen disappointment, in view of his long association with India, and his knowledge of her peoples and her problems, that the choice should have fallen elsewhere.

But with the Report in 1930 of the Simon Commission, and the intense concentration that followed on the problem of Indian constitutional advance, there was immediate general recognition of the value of the contribution that Zetland could make to its solution.

He was an active and constructive member of the Indian Round Table Conferences which took place from 1930 to 1931. He was equally active, after a visit to Canada in 1932-3, on

the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament appointed in April 1933, from the deliberations of which there emerged ultimately the Government of India and the Government of Burma Acts of 1935 which were to hold the field until 1947. Under their provisions Burma was separated from India. Responsibility for relations with the Indian States was transferred from the Government of India to the Viceroy in the new capacity of Crown Representative. New Provinces of Sind and Orissa were created. The Indian Provinces, subject to protection for various special interests, European and Indian, and to certain reservations, were to become autonomous within the field allotted to them. There was to be an ultimate Federation of British India and the Indian Princely States, pending the achievement of which an interim scheme of Government was to operate in the centre.

When Sir Samuel Hoare, later Viscount Templewood, was translated from the India Office to the Foreign Office in the spring of 1935, Zetland was an obvious successor. In June 1935 he became Secretary of State for India, and, in April 1937, also the first Secretary of State for Burma, offices which he held under first the Baldwin, and thereafter the Chamberlain Government until May 1940. His appointment was warmly welcomed in India and Burma, where his sympathy for Asiatic culture, and the active part he had played in the recent constitutional discussions were well known.

He had strongly disagreed with the Communal Award of 1932, in particular as it affected Bengal. His endeavours to secure some modification of it had been unsuccessful. But while maintaining his stand, he did not feel this an obstacle to his taking office so long as his position was clearly understood.

The India Bill had come under sharp criticism in the Commons on the one hand from the right wing in the Conservative Party, which thought that it went dangerously far; on the other, from the Labour Party, which thought that in certain respects it did not go far enough. Zetland's first task as Secretary of State was to pilot the Bill through the House of Lords. His success in doing so, in face of much opposition, and the substantial Government majority on Second Reading, were a tribute to his patience, his readiness to concede small points while standing firm on all issues of principle, and to the respect which he commanded in the House.

Zetland became Secretary of State for India at an anxious time.



In British India, now that full and effective self-government was seen to be so much closer, all communities were concerned to safeguard their own interests in any new scheme of things. There was, in consequence, a progressive increase in strains between the Congress, the Moslem League, and the minorities. It had still to be seen whether the requisite minimum of the Indian States, with which the decision lay, would decide to accept the Federal scheme, and so make the Federation of India possible, and what, in the contrary event, would be the answer to Indian constitutional aspirations. Over the situation as a whole lay the ever-growing and ever-closer threat of a world war and of its effect on the political future of India.

Throughout his period of office Zetland, as Secretary of State, exercised official control through the India Office over the actions of the Governor-General in Council, at first under the India Act of 1919 and then, for his last three years, under the Transitional Provisions of the Act of 1935. He was also responsible for the recruitment and management of the Secretary of State's all-India Services. But, beyond this old-established official relationship, it was his duty to maintain constant personal consultation with the Viceroy (and, after 1 April 1937, with the Governor of Burma) on the more important constitutional and political issues of the time, and on the playing of the political hand, and to give guidance and direction with the knowledge and approval of the Cabinet, which, in its turn, placed much reliance in matters Indian on his long experience and sound judgement. He had, moreover, at all times to bear in mind those elements in Parliament which, for one reason or other, continued to feel doubt about the wisdom of the Act of 1935, and, in particular, of its right-wing critics. His skill as a speaker, and his prestige and authority in the House of Lords, which increased progressively during his term of office, were of material assistance in this.

When Zetland assumed office, Lord Willingdon's Viceroyalty was drawing to a close, and he was succeeded in April 1936 by the Marquess of Linlithgow, who had successfully directed the discussions of the Joint Select Committee on the Indian constitution.

The relation of a Secretary of State for India and a Governor-General was always one that called for delicate handling on both sides. Historically it had often been marked by major strains. Willingdon and Zetland had been colleagues as Presidency Governors. Their high regard for, and confidence in,

one another, made for easy co-operation. It was fortunate, again, that Zetland and Linlithgow, who were to work together over four testing years, were throughout on close and understanding personal terms. They had seen much of one another in the Joint Select Committee and during the passage of the India and Burma Bills through Parliament. Temperamentally akin, with a very similar background, the excellence of their personal relations, their mutual respect and liking, and the scale and freedom of their private correspondence, contributed materially to smooth and co-operative relations between the India Office and the Government of India, and to the handling of the major political developments that took place during those years. And a visit by the Viceroy to London for consultations in the summer of 1938, not only gave Zetland the opportunity for direct personal discussion with Linlithgow on the various facets of the political position. It also enabled the two men to work together in the closest association on the developments which culminated in the Munich crisis.

On the Indian stage, the essential issues during the period from 1935 to 1940 were the introduction of Provincial autonomy, the preparations for a Federation of India, and the separation of Burma. Before the end of Lord Willingdon's term, he and his Government put in hand the first preliminary steps. In particular, in the winter of 1935-6, proposals were framed for the delimitation of the constituencies in the future Indian provincial legislatures and in Burma.

It was to be for the new Viceroy to steer the ship through the stages leading to the provincial elections under the new constitution, to take the initial steps with the Princes over Federation, and to watch the arrangements for the separation of Burma from India.

The provincial elections took place successfully in the winter of 1936-7. Burma was separated from India on 1 April 1937. The Indian elections gave the Congress a majority in six provinces. Their hesitations about taking office were resolved by personal explanations and reassurances given by Linlithgow, with Zetland's approval, on 22 June 1937. Despite a series of crises, on occasion acute, in the Congress Provinces, provincial autonomy worked, broadly speaking, well in all the Indian provinces, and in Burma, until the outbreak of war. During the years following the introduction of Provincial autonomy, the Secretary of State was relieved of the duty of controlling the actions of Provincial Governments within their allotted sphere,

save where the Governor used his special powers, and so came under the discretionary supervision of the Governor-General, who was, in his turn, subject to the Secretary of State.

Preparations for Federation, again with Zetland's approval, were urged on with great vigour by the Viceroy, and *Essayez* records the close personal interest taken by Zetland in the problems that arose in that connexion from 1936 to 1939.

In the winter of 1936 the abdication of King Edward VIII, on the matters leading up to which Zetland kept the Viceroy in the closest touch (his moving final letter announcing the conclusion is quoted in *Essayez*), happily passed over without the disturbing reactions in India and Burma that had been feared.

At the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in May 1937, Zetland had the honour of carrying the Sword of State.

This is not the place to record the many issues, of greater or less importance, that arose in India and Burma in Zetland's term of office—the Waziristan operations of 1936–8; the United Kingdom–India Trade Agreement; the Chatfield Defence Mission; the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, and Moslem reactions to that treaty and to the settlement of the Palestine question; or the detail of the gradual and successful development of autonomous government in Burma. But mention should be made of the insistence both by Zetland and by Linlithgow on the importance of the north-eastern frontier of India.

With the outbreak of war the political scene radically altered. Thereafter the burdens on both Zetland and Linlithgow were sharply enhanced. In the political field the nine months up to Neville Chamberlain's resignation in May 1940 were of critical importance.

On 3 September 1939 the Viceroy proclaimed a state of war emergency, and appealed for unity in support of the war effort and of the ideals in issue. Since, constitutionally, India was not a Dominion, she came into the war automatically on the Viceroy's Proclamation, and not, as in the case of the Dominions, consequent on Parliamentary approval. Had the Federation already been achieved, the unfortunate consequences of this might have been mitigated. But the necessary minimum of Princely adherences to the Federal scheme had not yet been obtained when war broke out. As it was, further progress with Federation, at any rate at that stage, was not possible. With the Cabinet's approval, its postponement was announced in the Indian Legislature on 11 September 1939. It was post-

ponement, and not cancellation, though in the outcome events were to overtake and supersede the Federal scheme.

Congress, committed some weeks earlier to a policy of non-co-operation in the event of war unless India herself was free, now sharply condemned the proclamation of war without India's consent. While there was immediate support from the Princes, and from the Moslem League Ministries and their legislatures, Congress stood aside, and sought assurances on British war aims and India's constitutional future as a condition of support (Mr. Gandhi, while accepting their view, subsequently remarked that he had been sorry to find himself alone in seeking that whatever help was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally.) The organization of India for war and India's ready response to the challenge were qualified by Congress non-co-operation. For all that, it was immediate and most generous, and India's readiness to contribute without delay in men, money, and supplies, was made clear from the very outset.

The Cabinet was concerned to remove any misunderstandings that might stand in the way of India's full support for the war effort; and, following on discussions between the Viceroy and representatives of all parties and interests in India, Zetland secured the approval of the Cabinet to a major political Statement by Linlithgow on 17 October 1939. The Statement dealt with the question of war aims. It reaffirmed that Dominion Status remained the constitutional goal. It made provision for closer association of Indian public opinion with the war effort. Most important of all, it declared that His Majesty's Government were prepared, at the end of the war, to reconsider the scheme of the Act of 1935 in consultation with leaders of opinion in India.

These undertakings did not satisfy the parties. Discussions arranged by the Viceroy, after consultation with Zetland, with and between Congress and the Moslem League showed, far from agreement, a hardening of their conflicting claims. Both now pressed for further guarantees and elucidations. The Congress Ministries resigned in October–November 1939. Thereafter the government of the 'Congress' provinces was conducted by the Governors under the supervision of the Viceroy, and so ultimately of the Secretary of State. On 6 November 1939 the Viceroy announced the breakdown of further talks which, after conversations with Gandhi and Jinnah, he had arranged between the parties. Jinnah's subsequent claim (February 1940)

that any constitutional settlement must be governed by the fact that India was not one nation, but two, was to result later in the establishment of Pakistan.

Zetland and Linlithgow had still not succeeded in their earnest and repeated endeavours to reassure the Indian political leaders as to India's constitutional future when, in May 1940, Neville Chamberlain resigned, and Mr. Winston Churchill, as he then was, took over the leadership of the British Government.

Zetland, who had played so important a part in constitutional developments in India and Burma, was not destined as Secretary of State to handle their later stages. In March 1940 he was injured, and had a narrow escape from death, when Sir Michael O'Dwyer was shot dead by one Udhan Singh at a meeting of the East India Association and the Royal Central Asian Society. On Neville Chamberlain's resignation in May 1940 he was succeeded as Secretary of State by the late Mr. L. S. Amery. He makes it clear in his autobiography that his inclusion in the reconstructed Government would scarcely have been possible because of the fundamental difference between Mr. Churchill's attitude to the India problem, and his own; and, while his interest in India and Burma, and in their affairs, remained keen and active to the end of his long life, he devoted himself thereafter to the non-official interests, particularly in Yorkshire, to which reference has been made above.

In 1942 he was made a Knight of the Garter.

Zetland was a man of high character. Conciliatory, persuasive, but unbending on any issue of principle and wholly indifferent to personal considerations, the range of his activities, public and personal, and the success with which he pursued them, testify to the skill with which he organized his life, and to his capacity to combine a mastery of significant detail with a full appreciation of broader issues. Distinguished in appearance, up to his later years a man of great physical fitness and energy, with a certain austerity of manner and an aristocratic detachment which was consistent with warm personal relations, he will rank high on the roll of those who, during the British connexion, rendered great service to India and Burma. In knowledge of India, and sympathy with her problems, there can be few, if any, who have surpassed him.

Zetland married in 1907, Cicely, daughter of Col. Mervyn Archdale, who survives him and to whom in his personal memoir he pays a glowing tribute. They had two sons and three

daughters. The younger son was killed while serving with the R.A.F. during the war. The elder, who succeeded to the family honours, and who was known until his father's death as Earl of Ronaldshay, was born on 12 November 1908, married in 1936, Penelope, daughter of Col. Ebenezer Pike of Little Glebe, Fontwell, near Arundel, and has three sons and a daughter.

A portrait of Zetland by Oswald Birley, in the robes of the Garter, hangs in the house of the Royal Geographical Society. A portrait by Hedley in hunting costume hangs at Aske, and another, in Masonic Regalia, by T. C. Dugdale R.A., in Freemasons' Hall, Duncombe Place, York.

GILBERT LAITHWAITE