



## Chapter 10

### ● Last Years of the British Administration



*Colonel Richard Meade*

According to the agreement, the young prince Chamaraja Wodeyar X, was to be recognised as *de facto* king at the age of 18 in 1881. As a result, up to Rendition, the British Chief Commissioners' administration continued.

Bowring was succeeded by Colonel Richard Meade as Chief Commissioner in February 1870. The present day Cubbon Park which was created during his time was initially named Meade Park. But it was at the wishes of Meade himself that it was renamed as Cubbon Park. Meade was an able officer and held a brilliant record as army commander during the 1857-58 uprising. Then, he had captured Gwalior and subsequently Taty Tope, and had worked as Political Agent there. He had also arrested and deported Malhar Rao Holkar and worked in Baroda. While he was a Commissioner at Mysore, Meade had been invited to a mission in Baroda for six months.



*Cubbon Park as in 1870*

“His able administration was therefore subject to unlooked-for interruptions of harassing nature,” says Rice who summarises his achievements as Senior Commissioner like this: “Among more important measures of this period a great impetus was given to public works in raising all works of irrigation to a complete standard of repair and efficiency, in opening out communications in the remotest and most difficult parts of the country, in surveys for railway extension, and in erection of public buildings, and carrying out of local improvement in towns. Education continued to flourish. A topographical survey, planting of villages’

groves (topus), improvement in agriculture and other useful works were set in foot.”<sup>1</sup> “In 1871, Sub-Divisions, composed of groups of taluks were formed, and an Assistant Superintendent was placed in charge of each Sub-Division, the object being to bring government officers into closer communication with the people and give the Assistant Superintendents a greater interest in their work,” says Hayavadana Rao.<sup>2</sup>

In 1873, designation of the Commissioner was substituted for Superintendent through all grades, including Divisional Commissioner. In the same year, establishment of *Munsiff's* Court with purely civil jurisdiction was brought into operation. This was an important measure. The *Amildars* were thus relieved of the jurisdictions of civil cases and judicial powers of other officers were greatly modified. The strength of the local military force was reduced to an extent, but it was greatly improved by proper selection of men and horses and by enforcement of regular drill.

Re-organisation of the police was commenced. One of the principal features of the reforms was placing reorganisation and utilisation on a reasonable footing of efficiency. The State was equipped with 22 *Munsiffs*, eight Judicial Assistants, Deputy Commissioners, three Commissioners, a Judicial Commissioner and a Small Cause Court, as a result of these reforms.<sup>3</sup>

Two sets of rules, one for the organisation of the Village Police and the other for Regular Police, were drawn as per the orders of Government of India. The Village Police was restored to a reasonable level of efficiency. They were to be guided by simple rules. The *Kandachar* police was replaced by Constabulary. There was no need for the Regular Police to be drilled and the *Barr* took care of explosive situations formerly handled by them. This was as per the rules drawn by Judicial Commissioner, Mangles in the days of Cubbon. In 1874, *Potgi* Rules were promulgated with a view to remunerate the *Patels* and *Shanbhogs* in cash as per the decision taken during Survey and Settlement.

### Educational Progress

In the field of education, positive developments were recorded during the period. At the end of 1872-73, all *Hoblis* had schools except 39. Each *Taluk* boasted of a superior vernacular school. There were 11 District Schools teaching at Matriculation standard. Five high schools were teaching at BA Standard. A total of 149 students appeared for the university examination in 1873, while 122 appeared for the matriculation examination (of which 55 passed). Thirteen attended the First Examination for Arts, with three passing it. Of the 14 appearing for B.A., seven passed. The number of grant-in-aid schools swelled to 90. There were 693 institutions and 24,201 pupils in attendance.

The total expenditure on education in 1872-73 was Rs. 3.28 lakhs. The Annual Report for the following year (1873-74) state: “On comparing the

<sup>1</sup> Rice, I, p.438.

<sup>2</sup> Hayavadana Rao, II, p.2973.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., IV p.238.

progress of education since the Department was established with what has been done in other parts of India, it will, I think, be admitted that Mysore has not been behind hand in contributing to the general improvement throughout the Empire, and that while, in the higher cultivation of English, she has attained an honourable position, the promotion of instruction in vernacular has received particular attention.”<sup>4</sup> The percentage of schools was 1 to 99 of the population. Such progress is attributed to the *Hobli* scheme sponsored by Bowring.

The Bangalore High School, called **Central College** in 1875, was affiliated to Madras University as a first grade college. The Raja’s School of Mysore and the Shimoga District School were made high schools, teaching up to FA.



In 1864, a separate Irrigation Department had been formed which was divided into two branches in 1874 – Buildings and Irrigation. Many district *cutcheris* and court buildings were raised by the Building division during this period. A permit from the *Shekdar* for collecting wood from the forests had been made mandatory from 1869. However, this power was soon seem to be greatly misused by the *Shekdars* and it was realised that the district authorities did not hold sufficient authority to protect the forests. In 1871-72, this power was withdrawn from the *Shekdar*, in preparation to outlining the District Forest Scheme.

As mentioned earlier, the post of the Commissioner made way for that of a Superintendent in 1873. Native agencies were systematically introduced in every department. Special training was provided to native officers to serve in Public Works, Survey and Forest departments. Young men from respectable

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp.498-99.

families were appointed as *Attaches* to enable them to gain experience in civil and revenue matters before being entrusted with responsible charges.

Meade was a capable and active officer and despite his short stay (he was called for duty to Baroda for several months), his regime witnessed many radical changes and much progress was evidenced.

During Meade's tenure, revenue increased from Rs. 60 lakhs in 1870-71 to Rs. 71.71 lakhs in 1873-74. Income from forests rose from Rs. 3.38 lakhs in 1870-71 to Rs. 5.13 lakhs. Similarly, *Abkari* revenue increased from Rs. 10.68 lakhs to Rs. 11.50 lakhs; *Sayar* from Rs. 7.50 lakhs to Rs. 8.68 lakhs, *Mohatarfa* from Rs. 2.75 to Rs. 3.73 lakhs.<sup>5</sup> These were the major sources of State income.

The Local Fund had been established in 1862 from collection of plough tax, ferry funds, proceeds from stray cattle and fine from cattle trespass (in 1863, the plough tax was removed from the Local Fund sources). This Fund was to be utilised for construction and upkeep of local roads. A cess of one *anna* per rupee was levied together with revenue from 1871-72 for repair of roads, education etc. In Inam village, it was one percent of total levy. In the wet lands, one *anna* per rupee was levied for Irrigation Fund. The ryots were permitted to take firewood or wood for building purposes from the forests upon payment of one rupee per cartload after seeking proper permit.

Following Meade's appointment as Special Commissioner at Baroda in 1875, R.A. Dalyell of Madras Civil Service and Member of the Viceroy's Council took charge as Chief Commissioner in April 1875 and officiated over the post for a year. Subsequently, C.B. Saunders who had served as Resident in Hyderabad, took over from Dalyell as Chief Commissioner. Saunders had earlier also worked as Judicial Commissioner in Mysore.

### **Famine and Relief Work**

Saunders' regime was marked by the most severe famine in the region that plagued it for two years, from 1876 to 1878. After the heavy delay of the rains in 1875, the following year (1876) witnessed no rains at all. Without any fresh supplies coming in, the surplus grain stocks were all consumed. Nearly one million people died of starvation in the State. The famine was evidenced all over the Deccan. Of the many relief works started in the state, the Bangalore-Mysore Railway work was notable, where about 20,000 people who worked on the project were paid in grains. The period also marked a huge influx of people in thousands to Bangalore and other towns in search of food and work. Governor General Lytton visited the State in September in 1878 and took an avid interest in the relief work. Charles Elliot was appointed the Famine Commissioner and put in charge of the relief work. Sinking of new tanks and repair of old ones was one of the relief works undertaken and a new tank was sunk on the Tumkur Road. Relief kitchens were opened at Binnamangala, Yelahanka and Cantonment and at Subedar Chatram around Bangalore.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.397.

Relief kitchens were also set up in Mysore and other centres, where food was served and grains distributed. The total number of people attending the relief kitchens in the State was 2,27,000.

From Madras to Bangalore, 400 to 500 tons of foods grains travelled daily through the only railway line, from September 1877. Since thousands of cattle had also died of starvation during the famine, forests were kept open for grazing without restrictions. Seeing the distress and misery all around, Lytton inducted many officers from North India to join in the relief works, while volunteers were also invited to help. The Christian Missionaries and the Arya Samaj engaged themselves in famine relief.

“Relief works were now concentrated, and gratuitous was confined so far as possible to those whose condition was too low to expect any work from them at all. Bountiful rains in September and October 1878 caused cloud to lift, and the pressure of famine began to abate, but mortality from attendant sickness continued and relief works were not closed till November 1878,” says Hayavadana Rao.<sup>6</sup>

Rice points out that the Mansion House fund from England, a charity organisation, provided help in reinstating a number of agriculturists to restart their vocation. If craftsmen like weavers had sold their looms, agriculturists had lost their bullocks in the famine and everyone had to start afresh. Missionaries also started orphanages for the victims. The government had spent a surplus of Rs. 63 lakhs on revenue account and was forced to raise a loan of Rs. 80 lakhs from the Supreme Government on 5 percent interest. The revenue collection which had been Rs. 109 lakhs in 1875-76 fell to Rs. 69 lakhs in 1877-78. All efforts were made to reduce governmental expenditure and in the process, many European officers were substituted by locals. The newly formed Sub-Divisions created by Meade were abolished to reduce expenses further, as were many newly created posts.

Meanwhile, James Gordon was made the custodian of the young Maharaja in 1877, while Porter, Principal of Kumbhakonam College, was assigned as his tutor. The financial repercussions of the famine proved disastrous in view of the approaching Rendition in 1881. In April 1878, Gordon was made the Chief Commissioner in addition to his responsibility as the royal guardian and he also was assigned the responsibility of taking the final steps for the Rendition.

In 1880, the young Maharaja, accompanied by Gordon, toured the whole state, an experience which helped the prince acquaint himself with the State that he was to rule. The remodelling of the administrative machinery was elaborate. An administrative organisational setup had to be adopted as per the new circumstances. The famine had caused a lot of disorganisation. The State was groaning under a heavy loan. Retrenchment was resorted to all departments so that income and expenditure could be balanced. Only a few European officers who were departmental heads were retained. Those European

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., II p.2975.

officials who had left had to be replaced by carefully chosen Indian heads at a lower salary. For separation of judiciary from executive department, the Commissioners of Divisions were replaced by three separate Civil and Session Judges.

The Military Department had to be reduced to the actual requirement of internal protection. The Forest Department had to be abolished and a separate setup shaped in the existing setup. The costly inspecting agency had to be replaced by a cheaper arrangement in the Education Department.

Even in the Public Works Department, there was considerable curbing of expenditure by reducing staff strength and abolishing the Irrigation Branch altogether. Retrenchment was resorted to. The cost of laying the railway line between Bangalore and Mysore had to be met from the current revenue. C.V. Rangacharlu who took over as Dewan in 1881 was aware of the 'extravagant expenditure' of the European officers and the excess number of European officers which had caused a huge drain on the State treasury.

### **Raja installed**

The young Raja's installation ceremony took place on 25 March 1881. Governor of Madras W.P. Adam led him to the throne. Gordon was made the new Resident. The Instrument of Transfer was signed by the Maharaja.



*Chamaraja Wodeyar* X Opening of Ghat roads was a boon to reach ports in Canara. The foundations were laid for Dewans like Sheshadri Iyer to think of production of electricity and M. Visvesvaraya to disseminate ideas of modern technology and spread the slogan, 'produce or perish'.

The Rendition was the threshold for the new Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV to lead Mysore into the modern era and in doing so, he was assisted by eminent Dewans who were highly progressive in their thinking. Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV was young, curious and open-minded to new ways of thinking. Under him, Mysore achieved new heights in industry, education, agriculture and arts. This philosopher-king was a firm believer in Divine Right Theory.



*James Gordon*

