

CHAPTER X.

Chamaraja Wodeyar X—1881—1894.

Establishment of a Representative Assembly—Experiment of establishing Anglo-Indians and Eurasians in agricultural and industrial occupations—Death of Rangacharlu.

Chamaraja Wodeyar assumed the reins of Government under very favourable circumstances so far as he was personally concerned. The Supreme Government had shown unwearied solicitude in providing for him a general education which was to befit him for the exalted position to which destiny had called him. His Highness had been placed under able tutors who spared no efforts to instil into his mind high ideas of public morality and conduct. His political training was attended to by some of the high officers of the State and the British Government evinced a sincere anxiety that when their young ward was placed in power no occasion should arise for interference similar to that of 1831. No doubt the Instrument of Transfer placed on His Highness' shoulders full responsibility for efficient administration of the country. But, at the same time, care was taken to surround His Highness with expert advisers and to provide him with a machinery of Government which enabled him when dealing with measures coming up for his decision to obtain all facts bearing on the subject at one view in a thoroughly sifted form as well as the opinions of his expert officers who were more or less veterans in the public service. At the time His Highness received the country from the hands of the British there was, however, one great cause of anxiety and that was that the country was just emerging from the evil effects of a disastrous famine which had disorganised the finances of the State burdening it with a debt of 80 lakhs of rupees to the British Government, not to speak of the disappearance of the surplus of about a crore of rupees and of the loss to the country of a million of its inhabitants and of property worth 10 crores of rupees. His Highness and his advisers were fully mindful of the situation in which they were placed and faced their task in the early years with courage and prudence.

The new Government after it was established earnestly wished to provide itself with the means to gauge popular opinion on the measures of Government from time to time. Accordingly, encouraged by Sir James Gordon who was the first Resident after the Rendition the now famous Representative Assembly was brought into existence by a proclamation of the Maharaja, dated the 25th August 1881, only five months after the date of the investiture of the Maharaja with power. In this proclamation it was stated that the object of the establishment of such an assembly was to make better known to the people and better appreciated by them the views and objects of His Highness' Government in the measures adopted for the administration of the State. For the attainment of this object a beginning was to be made by an annual meeting at Mysore immediately after the Dasara festivities of a number of representative landholders and merchants from all parts of the State, before whom the Dewan was to place the results of the past year's administration and a programme of what was intended to be carried out in the coming year. Such an arrangement, it was considered, by bringing the people into immediate communication with the Government would serve to remove from their minds any misapprehension in regard to the views and actions of Government and would convince them that the interests of the Government were identical with those of the people.

The first Assembly the members of which had all been nominated by district officers was attended by 144 members, although the attendance had been declared voluntary. Rangacharlu placed before this Assembly which met on the 7th October 1881 an abstract of the financial position of the country as well as the administrative, industrial and other measures that were in contemplation, and the following paragraph from this address affords instructive reading:—"I must not omit to place before you the important truth that the prosperity of the country can never be assured until the labour of its people yields a surplus over and above the food consumed by them. So long as the labour of the agriculturists scarcely yields the food consumed by them, it is not possible to avoid their complete prostration on the occurrence of a famine or other calamity. Improvement in this respect can only be

effected by diminishing the proportion of the human labour employed in the production of the country by the application of machinery and capital. Irrigation works answer this purpose to some extent as they enable a larger quantity of produce to be raised by the same labour. But on the much wider area of dry lands the produce yielded is scarcely more than sufficient for the consumption of the cultivator and his family. It is even worse with the artisan and manufacturing classes. Hitherto the high rate of interest for money in the country and the cheapness of labour have told against the employment of costly machinery. But now that English capital is being drawn to India on cheap terms and a wide gap has been made in the labouring population by the recent famine, the present time offers a particularly favourable opportunity for raising the status of the people by the introduction of capital and machinery in industrial pursuits. Extensive tracts of good land lie waste for want of labour both in this province and in the neighbouring British territories affected by the famine. They offer a good field for capitalists to bring them under cultivation for the growth of exportable articles by means of steam-ploughs and other machinery. Such an extension of cultivation and manufactures by means of machinery by outstripping the growth of population will tend to increase wages and raise the status of the labourer. At present population increases at a more rapid rate than production and increasing want and poverty is the inevitable result."

The railway from Bangalore to Mysore was opened for through traffic in February 1882 and proved not only a great boon to the country from the beginning but also a profit-yielding concern. The idea of having teak sleepers from the Mysore forests for this line was found not feasible. Although there was a large demand for timber in connection with the construction of Bangalore-Mysore line, it was found cheaper to get Rangoon timber from Madras than to use the timber of the Mysore forests, except to a small extent at the Mysore end of the line. Creosoted pine sleepers which were considered superior to the teak for this particular purpose were brought all the way from Europe by sea and by the railway from Madras and were delivered at Bangalore at cheaper rates than the

Mysore teak sleepers and with a rapidity which could not be hoped for in the Mysore forests.

In 1882 Rangacharlu inaugurated a measure of great financial importance which marked a new policy in obtaining capital for profitable undertakings. In that year in order to extend the railway line from Bangalore as far as Tiptur, a loan of Rs. 20 lakhs was floated by the new Government at 5 per cent interest per annum. Tenders from private English and native gentlemen were received from Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, Allahabad, Peshawar, Karachi, Ahamedabad and other places to the extent of nearly one-half of the loan. The most noticeable feature however was the large amount subscribed in small sums by the ryots and merchants in the Shimoga, Kadur and Tumkur districts showing how much the railway was appreciated by them. It was at the same time realised that the full advantages of the railway could not be obtained unless it was carried to Kadur and the great arecanut mart of Birur and both places brought into nearer communication with Shimoga. In undertaking the local railways it was intended not only to meet the necessary and urgent wants of the people but also to train a select number among them in the working of the railways and of the engines and machinery connected with them. Arrangements were also made for placing a number of native young men of intelligence and good health and physique in the locomotive workshops to receive their training, so that a considerable portion of the working staff might be manned from them in future.

Although reductions to the extent of 8 lakhs of rupees had been effected in the charges of the administration before the country was transferred to the Maharaja's hands, yet the new Government found that further reductions were indispensable, especially as the extension of railways was a pressing need. Rangacharlu was fully alive to the financial situation of the State and in his speech to the Representative Assembly in 1881 observed that it was obligatory on a Government wishing to reduce its expenditure to direct its efforts to a proper retrenchment rather than depend on any vague expectation of deriving an increase of revenue from an impoverished country. Accordingly in 1882 Rangacharlu went to the length of

reducing the eight districts of the State to six by the abolition of Hassan and Chitaldrug districts and by the reduction of 69 taluks to 60 replacing them by 3 sub-divisions under Assistant Commissioners and 17 sub-taluks under Deputy Amildars.

It was a matter for gratification that after the Representative Assembly was instituted in Mysore the Government of India resolved upon a comprehensive scheme for extending self-government in local matters throughout the British territories in India. Their despatch of 8th May 1882 which contained their orders on the subject from its earnestness of purpose, its liberal views and far-seeing statesmanship might be regarded, said Rangacharlu, as introducing a new era in Indian administration. The universal satisfaction with which it had been received throughout India was also proof of the appreciation of the boon by the people and refuted the assertion often made that they were not yet prepared for self-government. The stirring appeal which he then addressed to the representatives is worth recalling to mind even now and bears testimony to the earnestness of purpose with which his mind was actuated. "If the spread of any high degree of education among the great mass of the people were to be insisted upon," he said, "we may have to wait for ever. What is required in the great body of representatives is common sense and practical views which are sure to be possessed by men of ordinary knowledge engaged in industrial and other useful occupations. The real education for self-government can only be acquired by the practical exercise of representative functions and responsibilities under the guidance, as observed by the Government of India, of officers possessed of administrative tact and directive energy and evincing an earnest interest in the success of the experiment..... It cannot be too often impressed on the representatives that in the discharge of the important functions entrusted to them they are expected to evince a true public spirit and to be actuated by considerations not of any personal wants or grievances or of even those of any particular caste or section of the community only but considerations of the interest of the public at large. It cannot however be concealed that Government officers themselves require as much education in the matter as the less informed representatives

of the people and earnestness on their part to promote the public interest, not to mention considerations of personal distinction and importance, begets a desire to devise and carry out what appear to them useful works; and this is not unnaturally followed by intolerance of difference of opinion or opposition from others. These have to give way to the higher qualities of a patient and watchful interest in the proceedings of others which they must be content to guide and direct by advice and suggestions without any abatement of their earnestness to promote the public interests. District officers have to be strongly imbued with the idea that in municipal and other matters the public interests are better served by diffusing sound ideas on the subject amongst the people and thereby inducing them to work out the results for themselves than by the Government doing the work for them. Though the objects arrived at may not be accomplished so promptly and successfully as by Government agency, the result will be enduring and will have a spreading influence amongst the people and will be less subject to those changes which often characterise the improvements initiated by public officers.

“ Whatever Government or any few outsiders can do must be small compared with what the great mass of the population engaged in industrial pursuits could accomplish in their several occupations when stirred up by a desire for advancement. When all the world around is working marvellous progress, the 200 millions of people in India cannot much longer continue in their long sleep simply following the traditions of their ancestors of 2000 years ago and earning a miserable subsistence, ready to be crushed on the first occurrence of a famine or other calamity. Steam began to be utilised in Europe as a motive power only in the beginning of the 19th century. India then used to export cloths to England. Now England notwithstanding a severe competition from the other countries of Europe and America supplies the greater portion of the world with cloths and other manufactures. These are not the fruits of any large individual discoveries which alone can attract the attention of the official mind but the result of numerous individual men devoting their intelligence to effect small discoveries and improvements from day to day in their several occupations which

in their aggregate produce such marvellous wealth and general prosperity. What then may not be accomplished if the large population in this country once entered on a similar career of progress. The one great problem to be solved by Indian statesmen is how the people could be raised from the crushing influence of officialdom and stirred up to industrial enterprise and progress."

A unique experiment of establishing Anglo-Indians and Eurasians on the land received encouragement from the Mysore Government at this time. A Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association had been formed in 1879 for the purpose of improving the economic condition of the families belonging to this community and industrial and agricultural pursuits were intended to be largely encouraged among them. To begin with, a boot and shoe factory was started and a number of young Eurasians were apprenticed to various trades. A land scheme was also taken in hand which aimed at the formation of agricultural settlements or colonies. The Mysore Government lent ready aid by granting in July 1881 nearly 4000 acres of land selected by the Association to be held free of assessment for the first five years. With the help of Sir James Gordon special sanction was obtained for holding a lottery in order to raise funds for starting the scheme. One lakh was thus obtained, but half of it was allotted for prizes. The original intention was to establish four colonies:—

		ACRES.	
Glen Gordon	...	527	} To the west of Bangalore on the Magadi Road.
Haldwell Green	...	757	
Whitefield	...	542	} 12 miles east of Bangalore.
Sausmond	...	926	

This novel venture however, it may be stated, did not fulfil all the expectations formed of it. There are at present only two settlements Whitefield and Sausmond where some Eurasians and Anglo-Indians reside.

The encouragement given by the Mysore Government to this novel venture on the part of the Eurasian community was however based upon very laudable motives. In 1882 in his address to the

Representative Assembly Rangacharlu explained that the first object of making large grants of land to this community was to enable such of the members as were in need of occupations to find a home and the means of pursuing agricultural industry. It was also hoped at the time that if the experiment succeeded it would have an important bearing on the general agriculture and industry of the country, as agricultural improvements of foreign countries were likely to be readily adopted by them and when tried practically and successfully would be taken up by the people in general.

Rangacharlu however was not destined to live long and carry out his ideas. In the latter part of December 1882 he was taken ill and went to Madras. He was expected to return in about a fortnight. But fate willed it otherwise. He died at Madras on the 20th January 1883 and his death was deeply deplored by all. He was 52 years old at the time. His high talents and unblemished integrity of character won for him the admiration of all who knew him. His simple habits and warmth of heart always attracted to him a large circle of friends. His memory is now perpetuated by a building constructed at Mysore known as the Rangacharlu Memorial Hall where on one of the walls hangs an oil-painting of his likeness.