

## CHAPTER XXII.

### The Maharani—Regent.

**Some useful measures introduced—Construction of the Marikanave Reservoir—Re-construction of the Palace destroyed by fire—First appearance of Plague—The Kaveri Electric Power Scheme—Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria—Boer War—Military Transport Corps—Census of 1901—Sir Seshadri Iyer's retirement and death in 1901—Sir P. N. Krishna Murthi appointed Dewan.**

Early in the period of the Regency, considerable relief was given to the supari garden-owners of the Malnad by a reduction in the annual assessment imposed on the lands on which the trees stood, the rates in the four taluks of Sorab, Sagar, Nagar and Koppa being assimilated to those of Thirthahalli which had been accepted as equitable. The relief amounted to 22 per cent of the tax which had been imposed. The garden-owners with scarcely an exception when consulted, preferred a reduction in the land-tax to the abolition of the Sayer duty, the incidence of the latter being regulated by the actual production of the year and they did not also look with favour upon a system of tree-tax, though under such a system the land-tax would have been reduced to the ordinary rice rates and the Sayer abolished altogether.

A number of other useful measures introduced during the Regency may also be referred to. A Department of Geology had been established during the late reign in October 1894 and R. Bruce Foote, retired Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, placed in charge of it. Shortly after, the geological survey was undertaken and it brought to light the great iron ores forming the upper part of the Dharwar system in the Bababudan hills west of Kadur. In the year 1897-98 a Mining Regulation was passed and rules were framed more or less similar to those in force in England, New South Wales, the Transval and other countries. There was a remarkable development of the Gold Mining industry during this period. The population of the Kolar Gold Fields which

in 1891 was only 7085 rose to 38,204 in 1901. The value of gold extracted from the commencement of the industry was over £16 millions, out of which the value of the quantity produced during the period of the Regency was a little over £12½ millions. The Royalty received during the eight years of the Regency was more than Rs. 91 lakhs. As more water was required to treat the ore, the Bethamangala tank was improved at a cost of Rs. 11 lakhs and its water was allowed to be used for gold mining purposes. In December 1901 the Hon'ble Mark Napier was deputed by Messrs. Taylor & Sons, London, as a delegate on behalf of the Kolar Mining Companies and the long-pending question of the renewal of the leases was settled. An agreement was arrived at between the Mysore Government and the leading Companies, allowing the latter to renew the leases for a further period of 30 years from 1910 on condition of their paying 5 per cent Royalty on the gross output, together with 2½ per cent on all dividends declared by the Companies.

In 1898-99 a beginning was made for the establishment of an Agricultural Department by the appointment of an Agricultural Chemist for the purpose of a systematic examination of soils in all parts of the State, the ascertainment of the appropriate manures required for particular soils, the adoption of measures for the removal of insects and other pests, the introduction of improved methods of cultivation generally, the revival of decaying industries and other allied purposes.

Two important changes under Excise were introduced in 1897. The first was the increase of the retail price of arrack per gallon from Rs. 5-5-0 to Rs. 6-6-0. This increase was expected to exercise a moderating, salutary effect upon the consumer without inflicting any undue hardship. The other change introduced was the system of licences for tapping trees for toddy and the allotment of specific groves for specific shops which led to the augmentation of the toddy revenue without any increase in consumption.

With regard to educational improvements, the First in Arts classes affiliated to the Madras University were opened in the

Maharani's Girls' School in 1897. In 1900 a regular college department was formed and the name of the school was altered to that of the Maharani's College in 1901. Spacious and well-ventilated buildings were constructed for hostels for students both at Bangalore and Mysore. In other places also homes for students were established in rented or Government buildings. A liberal grant and a large extent of land were offered for the location of the Indian Institute of Science proposed to be established by J. N. Tata in Bangalore. In 1896 a Regulation was enacted for the appointment of a special tribunal to settle the claims of certain descendants of Brijlal Das to whom an award had been made during the days of the British Commission for some money due to him from Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. Brijlal, however, had refused the sum granted in the award claiming a higher amount. The special court however found that none of the applicants were the legal heirs of the deceased creditor entitled to receive the sum awarded, namely, Rs. 5,67,338-15-1. The Maharani-Regent however, true to the traditions of her family decided to allot the amount for charitable purposes under the designation of 'Damodar Das Charities.' The whole of this amount was invested in Government of India  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent securities and it was decided that four-fifths of the income from the investment was to be devoted to the grant of scholarships to enable selected candidates to prosecute post-graduate studies or researches of an advanced scientific or technical character in any university or other institution in India or in any foreign country. The remaining one-fifth of the annual income from the fund was decided to be spent in granting scholarships to the members of the Guzerati community to which Damodar Das belonged.

The Regulation relating to Local Boards which, as we have seen, was first published in 1883 and was pending from that year on account of prolonged discussions between the Government of India and the Government of Mysore was finally passed into law in 1901.

Among the notable public works undertaken or completed during the Regency were the construction of the Marikanave

Reservoir, the re-construction of a part of the Mysore Palace, and the opening in December 1899 of a railway line from Birur to Shimoga connecting the latter place with the Bangalore-Harihar railway line. The construction of the great Marikanave Reservoir in the arid district of Chitaldrug about which there had been controversial opinions from the days of Sir Mark Cubbon, was finally undertaken in the year 1897-98 and was successfully completed in 1906, four years later after Krishnaraja Wodeyar's accession to power and the project cost in all about Rs. 39 lakhs.

The re-construction of a part of the Palace in the Mysore fort became necessary in 1897. In the early part of that year, some days after the celebration of the marriage of the eldest princess Jayalakshmi Ammanni, an accident occurred which caused for the time being some gloom among those who witnessed it. On account of the folly of a maid-servant, the marriage pandal erected in the quadrangle of the Palace caught fire and one-fifth of the old building was destroyed including the Sejje and the three storeys rising above it up to the gold pinnacles, the Sanskrit Library, the armoury, the music-room and the Balakhana. Fortunately the occurrence was turned to advantage and it proved a veritable blessing in disguise, as it tended to some extent to encourage and conserve the declining sculpture of India. A new design prepared by an English architect and following at the special desire of the Maharani-Regent the general outline of the old building as constructed in the days of Purnaiya was adopted. A large number of masons and other workmen were collected from all parts of India. The new building was constructed mostly of stone and iron materials and it came as a revelation at the time that excellent stones of all kinds were procurable in abundance from quarries in the Mysore State itself. The quarry at a place called Turuvekere furnished a unique kind of trap which lent itself to the finest and most elaborate carvings and kept very sharp edges. The masons from Trichnopoly, Madras and other districts from Southern India were at first able to work only with pointed chisels but they learnt from their brethren of Kolhapur, Jeypore and other places in Northern India to work with sharp-edged, wedge-shaped tools and were able to do exquisite carving.

The work was finally completed in the year 1912, ten years after the close of the Regency. The new structure further improved subsequently by the present Maharaja now stands in the midst of clean surroundings and artistically laid out gardens attracting the admiration of visitors.

One sad occurrence which in common with other parts of India beclouded Mysore in this period was the outbreak of the plague which defied all human efforts put forward for its suppression. This fell disease prior to its appearance in the Mysore State had broken out and was increasing in virulence at Hubli in the Dharwar district of the Bombay Presidency, a populous town only 80 miles from the Mysore frontier. It was, therefore, deemed essential that all possible precautions should be taken to prevent its entry into Mysore. The Epidemic Diseases Regulation passed in 1897 armed the Government with extensive powers to this end. Under this enactment, rules were framed from time to time for meeting the special exigencies of the situation as they arose and various precautionary measures were adopted such as the establishment of railway and frontier inspection station and outposts, the examination of passengers by rail and road, and the establishment of temporary plague hospitals and segregation and health camps. Notwithstanding all these precautionary measures, plague first made its appearance in the Bangalore City on the 12th August 1898 and from there it spread with increasing virulence in every direction in the districts of Bangalore, Mysore, Kolar and Tumkur. The severity of the epidemic reached its height in the Bangalore City in the months of October and November, during each of which months more than 1000 persons fell victims to it. Altogether it was calculated that in the first year of this outbreak, there were nearly 15,000 attacks and more than 12,000 deaths. Vigorous measures were adopted by Government to check the spread of the disease by making provision for the treatment of the disease in special hospitals. Accommodation was provided in camps for contacts and persons living in infected houses. Infected persons and houses were subjected to systematic disinfection. Plague corpses were removed at the expense of the State to the burial or

burning grounds allotted for the purpose. Every encouragement was afforded for inoculation. A large number of houses condemned as unfit for habitation were demolished in the Bangalore City after payment of compensation, and congested portions opened out by the removal of many more. Special attention was paid to sanitation both in cities and in villages. Two large extensions Basavangudi and Malleswaram covering an area of 1000 acres and capable of providing accommodation for 50,000 persons were laid out in the Bangalore City. A large number of temporary health camps was also established. Free issues of timber and bamboos were made to the poorer classes to enable them to camp out. Relief works for the indigent people were started wherever necessary. Advances to Government servants of a year's pay was sanctioned in the Bangalore City to enable them to build houses in the new extensions and of three months' pay in certain infected taluks for putting up sheds. Yet this dire disease, as Lord Curzon expressed, baffled all attempts to eradicate it, defying analysis, defeating the utmost efforts of medical skill and administrative energy, inscrutable in its origin, merciless in its ravages, sweeping off very often thousands in a day and tens of thousands in a week. In Mysore it continued its havoc in all parts of the State and in the last four years of the Regency period from the outbreak of the disease 61,000 persons were attacked, of whom nearly 47,000 perished. The magnitude of this calamity is not to be measured by its numbers alone. Its ravages led to the unsettlement of the families of these victims and left numerous young children without proper guardians.

A work which was planned and completed during the period of the Regency was the great Kaveri Electric Power scheme. Prior to 1899 the possibility of generating electric power by the utilisation of the Kaveri Falls at Sivasamudram had been discussed. In 1894 Edmund Carrington, an electrical engineer, had applied for a concession of the water power at the Falls. He was connected with Mr. Holmes of Madras, one of the pioneers of electric lighting in India. These gentlemen and Col. Henderson the then British Resident in Mysore who took a keen interest in the scheme

recognised the possibility of transmitting electric power to long distances. The Mysore Government considered it advisable to investigate the practicability of generating power at the Falls and obtained the loan from the Madras Government of the services of Col. Pennyquick, R.E., then Chief Engineer at Madras, for the purpose. In his report he took a most favourable view of the capabilities of the Falls. In June 1899 Captain A. J. De Lotbiniere, R.E., Deputy Chief Engineer of Mysore, after studying the account of the installation at Niagara Falls conceived the idea of working the machinery at the Kolar Gold Mines with electricity generated by the power of the Kaveri Falls. The scheme received the support of Sir K. Seshadri Iyer and was approved by the Maharani. By August 1900 the agreements with the Mining Companies were formally ratified and signed and contracts were given to the General Electric Company of New York and Messrs. Escher Wyss & Co., Zurich, for the supply and erection of electric and hydraulic plant respectively, all details having been scrutinised by a committee of experts in London. In connection with the preliminary works required at Sivasamudram before the arrival of the machinery, a temporary camp was opened at a place called Rottikatte,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the works, and ground was broken by beginning the excavation on the 10th of August 1900 of the supply channels, a memorable day, it may be said, in the industrial history of the whole of India. All the labour required for the works had necessarily to be imported on account of the thinly populated surroundings of Sivasamudram. During the last quarter of 1900 and the first six months of 1901 the number of labourers did not fall short of 5000. The first party of the General Electric Company's engineers and employees arrived in India in December 1900, the remainder following at intervals during 1901 as their services were required. The first shipment of line material arrived at Marmugao in January 1901 and the final survey of the line, jungle clearing and other preliminary operations through the country to be traversed, in many parts very rugged and difficult, were at once commenced. The whole of the plant for generation, transmission and distribution, together with the buildings required for the purpose, was ready in June 1902 and on the 30th of that

month electric power was for the first time transmitted to the Gold Fields, the switch being operated by Mrs. Robertson, wife of the British Resident. The agreement with the Mining Companies at this time was for a supply of 4000 horse power for a period of ten years. The cost of the scheme was about Rs. 50 lakhs. Thus one of the greatest and most recent developments of modern science was successfully carried out in Mysore and to the Maharani-Regent and her advisers as well as to Captain Lotbiniere belonged the credit of carrying out this bold enterprise.

The Diamond Jubilee of the reign of Queen-Empress Victoria celebrated on the 21st and 22nd June 1897 afforded an occasion for rejoicings throughout the State and an opportunity to the Maharani-Regent to once more give expression to the traditional loyalty and grateful devotion of both the Ruling Family and the people of Mysore to the British throne. The celebration at Bangalore was conducted by Her Highness in person. In commemoration of the event, the Maharani-Regent laid the foundation-stone of a hospital known as the Victoria Hospital on the day of the Jubilee and a building was constructed at a cost of about Rs. 4 lakhs which was opened to the public by Lord Curzon towards the end of 1900. The building is a handsome, two-storied one with abundant accommodation and equipped with the most modern appliances.

In 1901-02 the Boer War was concluded. In this connection, Mysore had the honour and satisfaction of several of its residents joining the famous Lumsden's Horse. More than 100 horses were supplied for mounting this corps and four non-commissioned native officers with some syces accompanied these horses.

Another obligation towards strengthening the bond of Imperial friendship cheerfully undertaken during this period was the formation of a Transport Corps as a complement to the regiment of Imperial Service Lancers which had been organised during the time of Chamaraja Wodeyar for the purpose of Imperial defence. From the days of the treaty of Seringapatam in 1799 about 200 bullocks



of the Amrut Mahal breed used to be supplied yearly for British bullock batteries. But after the Boer War as all batteries were ordered to be horsed, the British Government was no longer in need of the Mysore bullocks. The full strength of the corps now formed was 300 carts and 700 ponies. As regards the cadre of the corps, it was organised as closely as possible on the cadre of the transport trains in the British service.

Queen Victoria died in the beginning of the year 1901 after a long reign of 64 years. The Dewan referred to this occurrence in his speech to the Representative Assembly in 1901 as an event which affected the people of Mysore not merely in common with the teeming millions of the British Empire but with the whole mankind over whose hearts the good queen had firmly established her dominion by her personal virtues as she had done over those of her own subjects by the beneficent exercise of her sovereign power. The accession of the Prince of Wales to the throne as Edward VII was at the same time welcomed.

In 1901 the usual decennial census was taken and it was found that the population had increased notwithstanding the devastations of plague by about 12 per cent, the density per square mile rising from 168 to 188. Of girls less than 10 years old, fewer were found married and fewer widowed than in 1891; the actual figures were—7130 girls under the age of 10 against 18,072 at the census of 1891, due no doubt mostly to the restrictions placed on such marriages by the Infant Marriage Regulation passed some years earlier. Similarly, against 705 married boys below 10 years of age in 1891 there were only 235 such in 1901. As regards education, the census standard of literacy was low being limited only to reading and writing. About 5 per cent of the entire population were found to be literate, consisting of 8.8 per cent of the males and 0.6 per cent of the females.

The area under cultivation increased by more than two and a half lakhs of acres. In June 1900 by which time it was found that out of a total area of the State 1,74,55,539 acres, the extent of

culturable land was 69,60,442 acres. There were 65,03,556 acres under cultivation at the end of the year made up as follows :—

Wet	...	...	7,73,677	acres assessed at Rs.	31,34,825.
Dry	...	...	53,17,508	„ „ „	41,65,900.
Garden	...	...	2,43,611	„ „ „	12,93,232.
Coffee	...	...	1,65,691	„ „ „	1,80,902.
Cinchona and Cardamom	} ...	...	3069	„ „ „	1912.
Total	...	...	65,03,556	acres assessed at Rs.	87,76,771.

The revenues of the State showed a progressive development from 181 lakhs of rupees in the first year to 189 lakhs in 1901-02, the last year of the Regency. Even after paying the increased Subsidy of Rs. 10½ lakhs per annum to the British Government which became payable from July 1896, the State was able to grant larger allotments than before for education, sanitation, medical relief and other objects which directly benefited the people.

Excepting the personal changes which were inevitable, the provisional Government underwent no alteration during the period of the Regency. Abdul Rahaman having retired in 1895, V. P. Madhava Rao, Inspector-General of Police, was nominated to his place. Madhava Rao was a native of Tanjore and had entered the Mysore Service as a clerk in the office of the Guardian to the late Maharaja Chamaraja Wodeyar when the latter was a minor. Madhava Rao rose to the position of a Member of Council after holding various appointments. In March 1901 Sir K. Seshadri Iyer who had been on long leave on account of ill-health retired but did not survive his retirement for any length of time, having died in September of the same year. He possessed a powerful intellect and a strenuous will, though in warmth of heart he was not the equal of Rangacharlu. During his long period of office, he rendered various useful services to the country of his adoption and achieved distinction as a statesman of Indian repute. Later, a statue was raised and a building known

as the Seshadri Iyer Memorial Hall in the Cubbon Park at Bangalore to commemorate his services was constructed. Sir W. W. Hunter of the Indian Civil Service and the first compiler of the Gazetteer of India at one time characterised Sir Seshadri Iyer as a man who gave his head to Herbert Spencer and his heart to Parabrahma. T. R. A. Thumboo Chetty, the Senior Councillor, who was acting as Dewan in place of Sir Seshadri Iyer while the latter was on leave also retired simultaneously with him after a long and honourable career.

P. N. Krishna Murthi (later Sir) was now appointed Dewan and for the two vacant councillorships C. Srinivasa Iyengar one of the Secretaries to Government and Rao Bahadur C. Madiah, Deputy Commissioner of Mysore, were appointed. V. P. Madhava Rao now became the Senior Member of Council.

It was fortunate that there were only a few changes among the British Residents. After Col. Henderson left Mysore in February 1895, his place was taken by Sir William Lee-Warner and by Sir Macworth Young for short periods. In December 1896 Col. Donald Robertson, Governor-General's agent, Central India, became the occupant of the Resident's place during the rest of the period of the Regency.