

CHAPTER XXIV.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

Form of the New Government in Mysore.

The investiture of the young Maharaja with ruling powers came at a time and in circumstances more fortunate than existed in the days of His Highness' grand-father or of his father. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III had by the prudent management of Purnaiya no financial embarrassment when he started his career as actual ruler. But the Paramount Power allowed him to assume the government merely imposing on him a vague obligation to rule the country to the benefit of his subjects, without making any proper provision to give His Highness adequate training to do so according to the standard expected by that Power. Chamaraja Wodeyar no doubt succeeded to the government of a peaceful country with all the advantages of a good education and proper political training for the great position he was to fill. But it must at the same time be said that the country had been devastated by a severe famine and had been left burdened with a debt of Rs. 80 lakhs with all branches of administration crippled. On the other hand, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV was fortunate to assume the country in more favourable circumstances inasmuch as he had received not only a good training fitting him for his position but also whose parents had by wise management left him a surplus of more than Rs. 44 lakhs in the treasury, with a reconstructed Government consisting of efficiently administered departments.

The first official act of the Maharaja was the issue of a proclamation to the people of the State in which His Highness announced that he had assumed on the termination of his minority the government of the country from the hands of his revered mother. All judges and magistrates and other officers of the civil and military departments were continued in their respective posts and were allowed to exercise the respective functions belonging to them, subject to such alterations as might be made in the future for the good of the State. His Highness also declared that it would

be his earnest endeavour to promote the advancement of the State as well as the welfare of his subjects following in the footsteps of his illustrious father of blessed memory and of his revered and beloved mother. P. N. Krishna Murthi (afterwards Sir) was continued as Dewan, but the number of Members of the State Council which was three during the period of the Regency was reduced by one and V. P. Madhava Rao and C. Srinivasa Iyengar were confirmed in their places.

On the accession of the Maharaja to power, the exigencies which existed during the time of the Regency to have a Council more or less of an executive character ceased to operate. To the British Government the Maharaja was solely responsible for maintaining amicable relations with that Power and for the efficient administration of his State. The Council, therefore, resumed its old character of being a Consultative Council. But at the same time care was taken to maintain it as an efficient body with real power, acting not only in co-operation with the Dewan but also serving as a sort of check on his actions and opinions. The work of the State was distributed as during the Regency period between the Dewan and the Councillors according to a prescribed list and a schedule was drawn up in which all cases which needed the orders of His Highness the Maharaja were specified. Cases falling under this schedule were, in the first instance, to be submitted by the Secretary concerned to the Councillor in charge of the department on whom rested the initiative entailing where necessary the preparation of a note for the consideration of the Council. The matter was then to be placed before the Council and submitted with the opinions of the Dewan and the Councillors for the orders of the Maharaja. Cases not falling under this schedule were to be dealt with by the Dewan as the senior executive officer of the State. In such matters the Secretary was to draft the necessary orders and forward the papers to the Dewan through the Member of Council concerned. If any material difference of opinion became perceptible between a member of Council and the Dewan, it was left to the discretion of the Dewan to treat the subject as a Council matter or to submit the same for the orders of the Maharaja. If in any matter connected with a department not directly under his own charge the Dewan

considered that immediate action was necessary, he was free to issue orders on his own authority, a copy of the order issued being at once sent to the Councillor concerned and a report being also made to the Maharaja for the necessity of such an order. A Revenue Commissioner was also appointed for the State with the powers specified in the Land Revenue Code and V. P. Madhava Rao was appointed to the place, in addition to his being a member of the Council.

Evan Machonochie (afterwards Sir) of the Bombay Civil Service was appointed Private Secretary to the Maharaja. It was considered at the time that an undue share of authority had passed into the hands of the Dewans during the period of the Regency and in Lord Curzon's opinion such a state of things did not betoken a healthy future. The Maharaja, he regarded, ought to be the actual ruler of his people and master in his own house. It was therefore thought that a Private Secretary drawn from the Indian Civil Service and who was equipped with the requisite experience would be able to relieve His Highness of drudgery, show him something of the method of disposing of work in British Government offices, and while suppressing his own personality exercise some influence in the direction desired. Mr. S. M. Fraser (afterwards Sir), Tutor and Governor of the Maharaja during his minority, left Mysore after the investiture ceremony was completed and his parting assurance to Machonochie was that in any contingency His Highness could be trusted to 'go four annas better' than could be reasonably expected,—an assurance that was to be most amply fulfilled in the succeeding years.

Sir Evan Machonochie has recorded the following sketch of the Maharaja in his book 'Life in the Indian Civil Service' which he published in 1926 after his retirement.—“Happily, His Highness is to-day ruling wisely a contented people and it is sufficient to say that I found in him a kind and considerate Chief and a loyal friend. On young shoulders he carried a head of extraordinary maturity which was, however, no bar to a boyish and whole-hearted enjoyment of manly sports as well as of the simple pleasures of life. He rode straight to the hounds, played polo with the best, and a first class

game of racquets. He was devoted to animals, particularly his horses and the terrier that would be his constant companion, and he never failed to attend stables of a morning to watch the training, supervise the care and gratify the taste for lucerne and carrots of a stable of carriage horses, hunters and polo ponies that ran well into the second hundred. It was at such times or on a morning ride that confidential matters could be most easily discussed and so we did much business out of office. He had the taste and knowledge to appreciate Western music as well as his own. So my violin came out of its case after many years and we would have musical evenings at my house, with quartets and the like, in which His Highness would take the part of first violin."

Regarding the Maharani-Regent, Machonochie has recorded in the same book this estimate of her character.—“A word of tribute is due to Her Highness the Maharani, late Regent. A certain clinging to power would have been more than excusable in a lady of character and education who during the eight years of her son's minority had ruled the State. But I can say that never during the seven years that I spent in Mysore was I aware of the faintest indication on her part of a desire to intrude, even in minor personal matters, upon her son's domain. Dignity and good sense could no further go.”

Scarcely had the Maharaja been in power for a week, when he summoned an extraordinary meeting of his Council at Mysore on the 14th August 1902 and addressed the members in these words:—“Dewan Sahib and Councillors—, Our business to-day is purely formal and will not detain us long. My object in calling this extraordinary meeting is two-fold. In the first place, I desire that no time should be lost by the new administration in giving tangible evidence of its existence and, in the second place, I wish to take the earliest opportunity of meeting my Dewan and Councillors personally in their corporate capacity. We are once again at the beginning of a new experiment in Mysore. Whether that experiment will be a success or the reverse will depend greatly on you. Of your devotion to myself personally, I am well aware. In your devotion to the interests of the State, I have full confidence. No

human institution can be perfect and the new scheme of administration will, no doubt, disclose one kind of defect or another. As the fruit of the labours of my Dewan, aided by my good friend the Resident Colonel Robertson, I myself hope and expect much. This object can only be attained however by single-hearted and unselfish co-operation between the members of Council of the State. It cannot be expected that you will always agree with one another or that I shall always agree with you. It may be that at times you will feel soreness individually and collectively at being overruled. At such times I ask you to give credit to those who disagree with you for being actuated by the same sense of public duty as yourselves and to reflect that in giving your honest opinion and urging it to the utmost of your power you have done your duty and retained your self-respect. I ask you to banish all sense of resentment and to address yourselves to the next question before you with undiminished courage and goodwill. If this is the spirit that animates our labours, I can, relying on your mature experience and proved abilities, look forward with confidence to the future. In conclusion, I desire to assure you collectively of my loyal support and individually of my unfailing sympathy and consideration. May Heaven always guide us to the lasting good of my dear people."

Some rooms were allotted in the Palace for the Private Secretary's office and His Highness lost no time in getting to work. He also attended the office with unfailing regularity at any time after eleven and usually remained there till the business of the day was completed. Apart from private correspondence and disposal of matters relating to the Palace, a large number of papers relating to Government were placed before the Maharaja daily for his orders and the number of such papers exceeded 900 even in the first year of his rule. Judged by even a quantitative standard, said the Dewan Sir P. N. Krishna Murthi in his address to the Representative Assembly of 1903, it must be acknowledged that the new scheme was not behind its predecessor and that His Highness had borne a considerable share of the work of the State. The subjects dealt with by His Highness were, as might be expected, of considerable variety and range embracing all the important cases in all the

branches of the administration. The Dewan also said that His Highness with the shining examples of his two illustrious parents before him had shown the same earnest devotion to duty and given the same unfailing support to his ministers as had been received at the hands of His Highness' father and his mother.