

CHAPTER XXXII.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

Economic and other improvements—1913—1918.

Economic Conference.

The Economic Conference which began in 1911 had achieved some beneficial results in the shape of training the people through its committees and associating them in public work with Government officers. In May 1913 the conference was strengthened by election to it by ballot of eight members from the Representative Assembly. In his address to the Representative Assembly in September 1914 the Dewan Sir M. Visvesvaraya used these earnest words to rouse the people to greater activity: "The recent growth of communications has been bringing us closer to the populations of the world. It is an advantage to come into contact with people more civilised than ourselves, if we can profit by their example. But this close association has also brought us increased responsibilities. It has brought us into the vortex of the struggle for existence. Where formerly the economic effects of local enterprises were determined by local conditions, we are called upon without adequate training or skill and with our primitive implements to take our place in international competition. In the face of the increasing severity of the struggle, our spirit of content, our indifference to science and material progress are a growing peril."

To stimulate interest in the work connected with public measures in rural areas, it was arranged to hold district and taluk conferences commencing from July 1916. At these conferences, questions connected with economic subjects, village improvement and co-operative societies and the wants of the people generally were discussed. These conferences had an educative value and they helped the district officers to ascertain and catalogue local wants and to focus the activities of the people on specific measures of improvement. In his address to the Representative Assembly held during the Dasara of 1917 Sir M. Visvesvaraya

who was from the beginning the inspirer of the idea of the Economic Conference summed up its objects in these words: "All the activities hitherto attempted, though appearing fragmentary, should be taken as forming a connected scheme of progress. A determined effort is necessary to raise the level of education and working power of the masses, including the backward and depressed classes. With the spread of primary education at one end and the university with its rapidly developing modern side on the other, our education will help to create greater homogeneity and social unity among our population. The end and aim of our activities should be to increase production and wealth, to strengthen and encourage habits and practices among our people which are already found to be good, to correct wrong popular beliefs and to place before them sound ideals based on the experience of progressive nations; in other words, to prepare a prosperous, energetic, alert and enterprising population. All activities of the State may be classed under one or other of the three main heads—administration, economic progress, and civic and social progress. Those which fall under administration are attended to by His Highness' Government, assisted by the representations and advice of the Representative Assembly or other public bodies. The economic activities are controlled by a semi-official organisation which is becoming more and more effective and in which a large number of Government officers and non-official gentlemen are taking part. The civic and social activities have been recently begun and a considerable amount of propoganda work is needed before the activities assume their rightful importance in the public eye."

In 1918 the Maharaja decided that the Economic Conference organisation was to remain permanent. With the Legislative Council, the Representative Assembly and the Economic Conference, it was believed that there would be more or less a complete organisation for the political and economic training of the people.

Establishment of the Mysore Bank.

We have seen that in 1912 the Industries and Commerce Committee of the Economic Conference recommended the

establishment of a financing Bank for the encouragement of industries and commerce. The scheme subsequently took shape and a Bank of the kind proposed was established under the patronage of the State and commenced work from 2nd October 1913.

Sandal Oil Factory.

Various special economic activities were also undertaken during this period. Prior to 1916, sandalwood was being sold by public auction by the Forest Department which brought a fairly good revenue to the State. Soon after the outbreak of the war, the auction sales of sandalwood held in November and December 1914 proved unfavourable, and on the recommendation of Sir Alfred Chatterton the idea of converting sandalwood into oil and placing the oil on the market was then seriously considered by Government, with the result that a small sandalwood distillation factory was established at Bangalore which commenced work in May 1916. As the undertaking proved successful through the energy and resourcefulness of Sir Alfred Chatterton, a factory on a larger scale was established at Mysore and work commenced in August 1917.

Soap Factory.

It was found that very good soap was being made on a small experimental scale in the Indian Institute of Science. To develop the industry on a commercial scale, the Government established a soap factory at Bangalore and placed it under the supervision of Mr. S. G. Sastry (now Director of Industries) who had been specially deputed to England to acquaint himself with the methods of manufacturing soap in that country. The factory commenced working in February 1918.

Commercial and Industrial activities.

In the year 1918 the Department of Industries was reorganised by the addition of a commercial section. A Central Industrial and Commercial Museum was started and a scheme for granting loans for cottage and minor industries also came into operation. A small party of merchants and officers was deputed to Japan to study industries and trade there.

Chamber of Commerce.

In his speech on the 26th June 1915 to the Economic Conference, Sir M. Visvesvaraya threw out a suggestion for the establishment of a Chamber of Commerce for the whole State. The question of starting this Chamber received special attention at the hands of the Industries and Commerce Committee for 18 months, prominent among the members of this Committee being Sir Alfred Chatterton, W. C. Rose, Mr. B. K. Garudachar, Vardhamaniah and Mr. Ranganatha Rao Sahib. The committee found that the bulk of the trade in the State was carried on in a very primitive fashion. The outlook of the merchants was narrow, their power of co-operation feeble and their business methods out of date. They were ignorant of trade statistics and on account of lack of training they were unable to adapt themselves to the rapidly changing conditions of the world trade. One of the means to broaden the outlook of the merchants was no doubt the establishment of an association like the Chamber of Commerce which would give them opportunities of personal service and of joint deliberation and action on large questions connected with industries and trade generally. The object of the Chamber was to bring the wants and grievances of the men engaged in industry and trade to the notice of the Government and of public service corporations like the railway companies, municipal and other local bodies, bank, post and telegraph or other authorities whose operations affected them. In the second place, the Chamber was to maintain a continuous study of large commercial questions of local interest and constantly strive to strengthen the conditions under which trade and industries were carried on at the time. The Chamber was also intended to focus and consolidate commercial opinion on current topics and to publish the united judgment of representative merchants and businessmen regarding such topics for the information of the public.

A Chamber with these objects was inaugurated on 8th May 1916 in the hall of the Government High School, Bangalore, at a meeting at which over 500 merchants were present. The Chamber began work in 1917 under the chairmanship of W. C. Rose its first president and sub-committees of the Chamber were formed at

Tumkur, Davangere, Chickmagalur and Tiptur. The Chamber now possesses a building of its own due to the munificence of Sir Haji Ismail Sait and others.

The Iron Works at Bhadravathi.

The valuable deposits of iron ore on the Bababudan hills which had been discovered and reported upon by the Geological Department of the State now engaged attention as to whether these deposits could be worked on a commercial scale. The lack of coal in the State however stood in the way of working them. But now the question of manufacturing pig iron on a small scale with the aid of charcoal fuel was investigated by Mr. C. P. Perin of the firm of Messrs. Perin & Marshall of New York who were Consulting Engineers to the Tata Iron and Steel Company, Ltd., of Sakchi, and on his advice the Government installed a wood distillation plant to manufacture charcoal and a blast furnace for smelting iron. The scheme was financed by Government and the Tata Iron and Steel Company was appointed in 1918 to manage the technical portion of the concern under the general supervision of a Board of Management.

Sericulture.

Measured by its outturn, sericulture next to agriculture was the most important industry carried on in the State. But owing to the spread of disease amongst the worms, the industry began to show signs of decline and in 1913 experiments were started in the Tata Silk Farm at Bangalore which was then under the control of a member of the Salvation Army to ascertain what improvements could be effected in the reeling of silk for the local market and a silk filature also was established at Chennapatna.

Under the direction of Signor Mari whose services were engaged in 1914, a rearing school at Chennapatna was established where there existed a Central Farm—the gift of a local merchant Mr. Abdul Quddus—for supplying disease-free eggs on a large scale. A Central School was opened at Mysore for the training of the staff of the department and for purposes of demonstration and instruction to the ryots. A number of other schools were also

opened in some of the important centres of the State. Later, a reeling school was started at Santemarhalli and in the school at Chennapatna special arrangements were made to train a large number of gosha women in re-reeling and twisting.

Agricultural Experiments.

In 1913 an Agricultural School was opened in Bangalore and the curriculum of studies in the school was made as practical as possible. The major portion of the students' time was given to practical farm-work, only the principles of elementary sciences being taught to enable the students to understand agricultural processes. In the same year the Agricultural Department was strengthened by the appointment of a Director as its head. In 1914 the department was re-organised and a large amount of new work was inaugurated, particularly demonstration work which was extended to every district in the State.

In December 1914 the Government sanctioned a scheme for the creation of some large landed estates and blocks of land available for the purpose in each district were published for general information. At Nagenhalli in the Mysore District a Government farm was opened to investigate questions connected with sugarcane and to study the agricultural needs of the area commanded by the Kaveri channels.

Rural and Malnad Improvements.

Increased attention began to be paid during this period to rural improvements. In 1913 in his address to the Representative Assembly Sir M. Visvesvaraya drew attention pointedly to the condition of the villages in the State and to the vast possibilities of improvement that existed if only organised efforts were made for the purpose. One of the measures proposed for village improvement was the formulation of a scheme for the establishment of Village Improvement Committees. The system of devoting half-a-day's labour every week for improving village sites and carrying out works of communal benefit was begun in 1915. For the formation of roads, wells and other improvements, Government grants were supplemented by the villagers with contributions either in the shape

of cash or labour. The improvement of village cart-tracks and tree planting received special attention. To ensure progress under the rural water-supply scheme, the purchase of a set of boring tools and the employment of a special staff were sanctioned for each district.

A special scheme for Malnad improvement was introduced in February 1914 and in a period of a little over two years, rank vegetation was cleared in 570 villages. Fifty-four wells were completed, some village roads were opened and greater facilities were afforded to the people for building houses for themselves. Propaganda work included the distribution of leaflets on sanitation and hygiene and the exhibitions of lantern slides depicting the health conditions in the Malnad and the precautions to be taken by the people residing in the area. A disease survey was also commenced on a small scale in the Sagar taluk.

Educational Improvements.

In the year 1913 a comprehensive scheme of elementary and advanced technical and commercial education was introduced by the Government and it consisted in the main of the establishment of the Chamarajendra Technical Institute at Mysore and a Commercial and a Mechanical Engineering School at Bangalore. The Engineering School and the Industrial School which existed at Mysore were combined to form the nucleus of the new Chamarajendra Technical Institute. The institute consisted of five sections, *viz.*, the Engineering Section, the Industries and Crafts Section, the Fine Arts Section, the Commercial School Section and the Workshop. The Commercial School at Bangalore provided for an elementary course in commercial subjects in English and Kannda for one year and a secondary course in English for two years. The Mechanical Engineering School undertook to teach the management and care of oil and steam engines, erection of machinery, working of mills, electric work, driving motor cars and other subjects. The main object of Government in starting these institutions was to create an incentive for manual work in the younger generation and to enable them to earn their subsistence by following an independent profession in after life.

In 1913 a Regulation for introducing compulsory primary education was passed into law and in the following year, sanction was given to the opening of 1000 elementary schools on a revised grant-in-aid basis. The principle followed was that the villagers were to supplement the grant given by Government by contributions in money or kind, so that no teacher was required to serve on less than Rs. 10 a month. The scheme of compulsory education was introduced in 15 selected centres to start with. In the same year the Widows' Home at Mysore was taken over by Government and was attached to the Maharani's College as a hostel. Provision was also made for imparting English instruction in a large number of Girls' Schools. The re-organisation of women's education provided also for instruction in industrial and domestic arts in addition to education of a literary character.

In 1915 a new scheme for opening more village elementary schools was brought into operation under a grant-in-aid basis by offering a Government contribution of half the cost of each school. The scale of pay of village schoolmasters was revised at a cost of nearly half a lakh of rupees annually. To encourage the study of English in rural areas, the rate of contribution payable by the villagers concerned for village English Schools was reduced and many night schools for adults were also opened. A provision of Rs. 7000 in the budget was made for the grant of scholarships in foreign countries for the study of various technical subjects such as Paper Manufacture, Banking, systems of Education, Organic Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering and Actuarial Science. One of the most hopeful features of the situation was that the people were fully alive to the advantages of education and readily came forward with liberal contributions for maintaining teachers and constructing school buildings.

A University for Mysore.

It was felt at this time that without a separate university for Mysore the educational system would be seriously defective and accordingly a university was started and began work from July 1916. The University Bill as introduced in the Legislative Council provided for a new type of university of which the colleges

formed an integral part. His Highness the Maharaja was the Chancellor of the University and the late H. V. Nanjundaiya who had rendered distinguished service both as a Judge of the High Court of Mysore and also as a Member of the State Council was the first Vice-Chancellor. On the 12th October 1916 on the memorable occasion when the first meeting of the Senate of the new Mysore University took place, the Maharaja as Chancellor made a speech from which the following are extracts:—

“I think we all realise the solemnity and importance of to-day’s ceremony. It marks an epoch in the development of education in the Mysore State; for, what could be more significant in our history than the creation at the express desire of the people of a national university. It is the first university in this country to be founded outside the limits of British India and is an institution which meets the special needs of Mysore and which will in time have far-reaching effects on the intellectual progress and the material development of the State. I feel that on this occasion I should publicly state how great is the debt of gratitude we owe to the University of Madras under whose fostering care the constituent colleges of our university have attained their present state of high efficiency. Nearly all our distinguished Mysoreans owe their education to the same university and are justly proud of the connection..... The ideal of university life which the constitution of the older universities in India has hitherto favoured no longer remains the same and the creation of local teaching universities is the inevitable outcome of the circumstances of the present time. Our university is in reality one of the first fruits of the benevolent policy inaugurated by the Government of India of the encouragement of smaller and more compact universities approximating to the unitary type. The university derives an advantage by the appointment of a full-time Vice-Chancellor who can devote all his energy to administrative work and establish intimate relations with the professors and lecturers. This feature of our university is so far unique in India..... Another advantage is that we have a special guarantee of harmony and efficiency in the fact that the principals of the colleges and representative professors have a place on the Council and therefore

a direct voice in prescribing courses of study, in directing examinations and, in fact, in every detail of administration. This intimate connection between the teaching staff and the university is still further strengthened by the fact that all the professors without exception are constituted members of the university and have a seat on the Senate. Another very important feature in a small university is the stricter control which it can exercise over the social life of the students. The Unions which are to be built at Mysore and Bangalore will encourage the best form of club life among both professors and students. The hostels which we intend to extend and amplify will develop the residential feature in university life. Supervision will be exercised also over non-residential students who are not living with their parents or relations. I need hardly point out how great a stimulus will be given to the important branch of athletics by the development of residential life, the erection of gymnastic and cricket pavilions and the direct influence of the professors who will in time be provided with residences in the university areas. I feel that I ought to say a few words as to what I think should be the aim of our university. In the first place, we should spare no effort to gain for the Mysore University the respect of the educational world. This end can only be achieved by maintaining a really high standard of teaching and examination and also by never allowing that standard to be lowered, however strongly you may be tempted by the lure of numerical results. It should be the aim, too, of the university to turn out graduates who are not merely learned but who are of high character and refinement which are the distinguishing marks of every true gentleman." The first convocation of the university for conferring degrees was held on the 19th October 1918, when His Highness the Maharaja as Chancellor presided and Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Judge of the Calcutta High Court and Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, delivered the convocation address.

In this year a donation of Rs. 2 lakhs and an annual recurring grant of Rs. 12,000 were sanctioned for the Hindu University at Benares, of which the Maharaja was the Chancellor.

In the year 1917 a sum of Rs. 1 lakh was provided in the budget for the grant of scholarships to pupils belonging to the backward and depressed communities, chiefly to encourage them to take to higher education.