

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

Administrative and other Improvements—1919-25.

In the year 1921 a long-standing grievance received solution to some extent which was to the advantage of the land-holders. The holders of lands under tanks had been placed under obligation under the rules of the Survey Settlement to pay the wet assessment on their holdings whether the tank received a sufficient supply of water or not. At the meetings of the Representative Assembly this subject was being repeatedly pressed and now Government came to a decision that whenever in any tract not less than half the total cultivable area or atchkat was left uncultivated in any year, or if cultivated, did not yield more than a quarter of the normal yield, the collection of half the assessment was to be postponed for a year and if similar conditions prevailed during the following year also, the suspended assessment was to be remitted. This measure was to some extent a departure from the established principles of Survey and Settlement as introduced in Mysore. In Mysore the Bombay system of Settlement was, as we have seen, followed under which wet lands were classed with reference to the capacity of the tanks to supply them with water for irrigation and the assessment on them was fixed with reference to the average of a series of years good and bad, making sufficient allowance for occasional deficiencies of rainfall and other vicissitudes. A system of assessment however under which a soil assessment and a water assessment are separately imposed on wet lands and the water assessment is remitted when no water is given for irrigation is regarded as more equitable on account of its simplicity and elasticity, though in practice some difficulties may be encountered.

Encouragement to Coffee Industry.

In 1924 a Bill to impose a cess on coffee grown in the State was introduced in the Legislative Council. Coffee, as we have seen, was in the beginning used to be cultivated in the State on Waram or produce-sharing system. Subsequently a halat or a cash levy

was introduced which varied from four annas to one rupee per maund of produce. On account of the great fluctuations in prices subsequently, a system of acreage assessment of Re. 1 per acre for temporary and Rs. 1-8-0 per acre for permanent tenures was next substituted. The Bill referred to was now introduced not as a money bill to add to the general revenues of the State but was intended to give special assistance to an important industry which was in need of special attention. But the terms on which the coffee lands were given were not the same as those applying to the agricultural lands in general. It was regarded that when Government gave lands on concession terms, it was not to be expected that the whole cost of special investigations or of special facilities leading to an increase in the outturn of the industry concerned should be defrayed from the general revenues of the State. The industry however had passed through a series of vicissitudes for the past some years and deserved some encouragement, and the main object of this legislation was to establish a principle of mutual co-operation between the Government and the people where special circumstances warranted a generous treatment. This Bill was passed into law in the year 1926. In this connection, it may be mentioned that the supari or areca cess as a separate cess was abolished in this period as the industry enjoyed no special concessions and as it was also felt that it was the duty of the Department of Agriculture to help the supari growers with advice and to suggest the necessary remedies against causes that interfered with supari cultivation.

The Bhadravathi Iron Works.

After the difficulties due to the war for obtaining the requisite machinery from foreign countries had been overcome, the Bhadravathi Iron Works were started. Messrs. Tata & Sons were appointed agents and a Board of Management was also appointed. The construction of the plant in the Iron Works was for the most part completed by December 1922 and the blast furnace started working from the 18th January 1923. In June 1924 the agreement concluded with the Tata Iron and Steel Company was terminated by mutual consent.

Krishnarajasagara Hydro-Electric Works.

By 1921 the first stage of the Krishnarajasagara Reservoir as the Kannambadi tank was now named was nearly completed. The power generated at Sivasamudram with the first three installations which were in existence when the dam was commenced was 13,000 H.P. With the finishing of the first stage of the dam, the power generated increased from 13,000 H.P. to 32,000 H.P. On the completion of the sixth installation, the storage in the reservoir was expected to enable the Government to develop irrigation to the extent of about 70,000 acres.

With regard to the further raising of the storage capacity of the Krishnarajasagara reservoir, there arose a dispute between the Mysore Government and the Government of Madras as to the extent of their respective rights to share the waters of the river. A conference took place at Mysore on the 13th November 1923 at which Lord Willingdon then Governor of Madras was present and Sir Albion Banerji the Dewan represented Mysore. After full discussion lasting for some period, an agreement was arrived at between the two Governments in February 1924 and this agreement was subsequently ratified by the Secretary of State for India. By this agreement it became possible for the Mysore Government to bring under cultivation more than 2½ lakhs of acres of land.

The Co-operative Committee.

In the year 1920 the Government appointed a committee of 10 members consisting of officials and non-officials, with the Hon'ble Sir Lallubhai Samaldas Mehta of Bombay as chairman to examine the progress of co-operation in the State and to suggest lines of further development. The Committee toured in all the districts and submitted their report to Government in 1923. As proposed in the report of the Committee, an Apex Bank was established in the year 1925.

Tank Restoration.

Notwithstanding the extreme solicitude shown by Government for the proper restoration of all the irrigation tanks in the State, the progress was found to be extremely slow. The ryots profiting by a

tank were expected to contribute all the earthwork required, while the Government's share consisted in completing the stonework. Next, it was made optional for the ryot to pay a money value for his share of the work. After some time, this optional commutation of labour into money was made a compulsory levy and the total contribution was made recoverable in five equal instalments. These changes however brought no increased efficiency in the work of restoration and in agreement with the views expressed both in the Representative Assembly as well as in the Legislative Council a new amended Tank Regulation was brought into force by Government from September 1923. By the change effected by this Regulation the voluntary contribution was converted into a compulsory levy of one-fourth the estimated cost of the work. The duty of executing the repairs was taken out of the hands of the Revenue Department and entrusted to those of the Public Works. The latter were also directed to proceed with the work without waiting for the recovery of the contribution as in the past, once the estimate was sanctioned.

The Public Service and the Backward Communities.

In the year 1920-21 the Government passed orders to increase the representation of the backward communities in the service of the State. So long ago as 1892, in considering the question of recruitment to the civil service Sir K. Seshadri Iyer referring to the question of maintaining a fair proportion of all classes in the service of the State had remarked of the Brahmin community that it was already too well represented. During the tenure of Sir. M. Visvesvaraya's office as Dewan, several measures were adopted for securing the increased representation of non-Brahmin communities in the Public Service. In 1914 a somewhat lower scale of qualification for appointments of Amildars was prescribed for non-Brahmin candidates. In 1915 this principle was extended to the class of Shekdars or Revenue Inspectors. In 1916 it was directed that 25 per cent of the appointments was to be given to qualified members of the non-Brahmin communities. In August 1918 the Government in appointing a committee of six non-official gentlemen presided over by Sir Leslie Miller, Chief Judge of the Chief Court,

wished that as there was at the time a large preponderance of the Brahmin community in the Public Service, measures should be devised for the adequate representation of all communities. The committee submitted their report in August 1919 and in May 1921 the Government decided that, provided qualified candidates were available, the proportion of the members of the backward communities in all departments of the State Service was to be gradually raised to 50 per cent of the total strength in 7 years, exclusive of those in inferior service. To achieve this end the Government directed that during this period of seven years candidates belonging to the backward communities were to be given preference in respect of initial appointments so long as they possessed the prescribed qualifications. A Central Recruitment Board was also instituted with one of the members of the State Council as chairman to register all applications for appointments and to put applicants in touch with offices where vacancies existed and also to serve as a vigilance committee for watching the administration of the rules.

The Problem of Unemployment.

By 1923 it came to be felt that a very large number of graduates and under-graduates were being annually turned out of the University who could not find employment. Some attempt was made as proposed by the University to equip it for teaching not merely the arts and humanities and the pure sciences but also the application of science to agricultural, technological and vocational subjects, thereby opening fresh fields of employment. Sir Albion Banerji in September 1925 in his speech at the Dasara Session of the Representative Assembly summed up the results of the extension of collegiate and secondary education in these words: "Since the Mysore University was started, it has turned out 85 M.A.'s, 963 B.A.'s and 197 B.Sc.'s. According to the statistics of the Central Recruitment Board, no less than 405 graduates and 517 candidates with under-graduate qualifications and 2708 Secondary School Certificate holders applied for Government Service but failed to secure any post. The total number of appointments in all grades in the State Service is about 20,000, of which appointments

those on a pay of above Rs. 100 are one thousand and the rest are those carrying a salary of Rs. 15 and above up to Rs. 100. The percentage of school-going population who now come up for higher grades of education is increasing gradually from year to year. All our high schools are over-crowded and split up into innumerable sections. The middle schools are filled to overflowing and as regards primary schools, Government cannot open them as fast as is necessary to meet the demands of the people. As circumstances stand at present, general education is only a passport to Government Service. The inevitable result is that all those who are qualified according to certain prescribed standards knock at the door of Government for employment and the majority of them cannot be absorbed as the scope is limited. That is the problem of unemployment..... In the course of the past 4½ years the total number of appointments made by Government through the Recruitment Board came only to 2410. When we compare these with the total number of applications which came to 28,000, it is pitiful to imagine the distress, the disappointment and the hardship that these poor, unfortunate candidates may now be labouring under, if during the period of their whole educational career their one object was to seek a Government appointment.....”

Railways.

The metre-gauge line from Chikjajur to Chitaldrug 21 miles was opened for traffic in May 1921. The State had now over 400 miles of open lines owned by it under its management, including the Nanjangud-Bangalore and Birur-Shimoga sections, a total length of nearly 140 miles which were resumed from the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Company on 1st October 1919, besides 275½ miles worked for it by the same Company and they constituted a valuable asset worth about Rs. 5 crores.

Owing to various urgent demands on the finances of Government, the chief of them being the Krishnarajasagara and the Iron Works schemes, sufficient allotments could not be made for railway construction and proposals were now made to some of the District Boards to ascertain whether they could raise any capital in the districts to complete the construction of the unfinished

lines, so that they might be part-proprietors with the Government of such railways. The Mysore District Board accordingly came forward to make the Nanjangud-Chamarajanagar line their own concern and the Board was authorised to float a loan with Government guarantee to resume the construction of this railway.

Unprecedented Floods.

In July 1924 there were unprecedented floods in five of the districts of the State, rising to a height of 30 feet in some of the rivers. In the Mysore district the valleys of the Kaveri, Kapini, Hemavathi and minor tributaries like the Taraka were seriously affected. One hundred and two villages, besides the towns of Nanjangud, Yedatore (Krishnarajanagara as it is now called), Seringapatam and T-Narsipur suffered the heaviest and nearly 4000 houses collapsed in this area and property to the extent of nearly Rs. 3½ lakhs was destroyed. Public roads, tanks, channels and anekats were breached in several places and traffic was interrupted. The Nanjangud road and railway bridge and also the Wellesley Bridge at Seringapatam were seriously threatened and suffered considerable damage. Nearly 8000 acres of land were damaged and portions entirely washed away. In the Shimoga district besides the town of Shimoga which was inundated, fifteen important villages on the banks of the Thunga and the Bhadra suffered badly. In Shimoga 735 houses were under water, of which 250 collapsed. In other places the total number of houses lost was estimated at about 1000. Agricultural lands also suffered as in the Mysore district. In the Kadur district there happened no serious damage to the villages, but paddy lands suffered severely and caused considerable loss to the agriculturists. In the Hassan district the damage was slight except that nearly 100 houses were lost, Ramnathpur being the worst sufferer. The damages to the roads, channels and anekats also contributed to the agricultural distress. In the Chitaldrug district Harihar suffered much.

Various relief parties were sent to the affected parts with funds and provisions to help the villagers who had been rendered homeless and destitute by this unprecedented visitation and to re-settle them by providing them with suitable sites higher up and nearby.

On account of the promptness of the official aid and help from the people in general, no lives were lost and much of the property that otherwise would have been lost was saved.

A public meeting was held at Mysore on the 2nd August 1924 in the Rangacharlu Memorial Hall to express sympathy with those who suffered from the floods and to organise relief measures for them. A meeting was also held at Bangalore on the 8th of the same month to organise a Central Flood Relief Committee with His Highness the Yuvaraja as chairman. The Government of India sent a message expressing their deep concern at the loss and the suffering caused by the floods and H. E. the Viceroy also conveyed to His Highness the Maharaja his personal sympathy with those who had suffered. The Servants of India Society collected subscriptions and materially helped in affording relief. The Kolar Gold Field Mining Board also did the same and the Maharaja contributed Rs. 15,000 from the privy purse.