

## **CHAPTER XXXIX.**

### **Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.**

#### **Inauguration by the Maharaja of the Reformed Legislative Council and the Representative Assembly.**

On the 17th March 1924 His Highness the Maharaja inaugurated the new Legislative Council and the Representative Assembly at a joint session held at Mysore. His Highness in welcoming the members who had been elected by an enlarged electorate under a wider franchise, complimented them on their now being regarded as truer representatives of their constituencies than ever before and on their having larger opportunities of influencing the decisions of Government in accordance with popular demands. "I recall to mind on this occasion," said His Highness, "the words which I spoke nearly 21 years ago when I opened the Representative Assembly in person for the first time after I assumed the reins of Government. The hopes I then expressed of the value of the yearly gatherings of the Assembly in contributing to the well-being and contentment of my subjects have been amply fulfilled. The Legislative Council, too, which came into existence in 1907 with certain important functions bearing on legislation, finance and administration generally has fully justified expectations. Yet you will realise that the changes which I am inaugurating to-day are fundamental, providing as they do for a far closer association of the people with the administration and affording a freer outlet for their natural and legitimate aspirations than seemed possible a few years ago.

"I am aware that a section of my people are in favour of further radical changes, including a wider franchise and increased powers. While fully sympathising with their ideals, I may state that our decision was made after prolonged consultation. Each State must evolve its own constitution suited to its own needs and conditions and to the genius of its people. Without departing from the fundamental principles of development common to all forms of polity, it has been deemed necessary to maintain the

character of the Representative Assembly as essentially a body for consultation and reference as well as representation, directly voicing the needs of the people and with a constitution sufficiently flexible to expand with the expanding consciousness of the people, leaving to the Legislative Council the more formal work of legislation and other functions usually associated with such bodies.

“ I have no doubt that you will use your new powers to strengthen all the beneficent activities in the country to spread education, to diffuse knowledge, to further industrial enterprise both public and private, and to foster the civic virtues and the spirit of social service..... The Standing Committees of the Legislature will, I hope, bring the popular representatives into closer association with the principal departments of Government. When the projected extension of Local Self-Government comes about and the powers of the District and Taluk Boards, Municipalities and Village Panchayets are enlarged, there will be many opportunities for men of ability to take part in public work and for the local management of local interests.

“ There is a certain self-discipline which lies at the root of success, and which I feel you must observe for the serious treatment of public issues. I trust that, although party conflicts will be inevitable, your discussions will be conducted with mutual tolerance and respect and will be consistent with the decorum and the dignity of a State Legislature. A wise restraint is necessary in expressing your views. Exaggeration and violence of speech defeat their own purpose. I would urge you also to make a thorough study of the subjects before you speak on them and in all your pleadings, to place the interests of the State as a whole before those of any section or class. A third point which I would emphasise is that you must keep in close touch with the Government and the people and interpret the one to the other. In this way may we hope that the long silence of the depressed and the humble will be broken and full responsibility for their well-being shouldered by the educated and well-to-do classes.

“ It is the ambition of my life to see the people of my State develop self-sustaining qualities, exhibit initiative and enterprise

and take a front rank in all progressive movements and activities in the country. In making our plans for the future, we have got to take note of the tremendous changes of the recent past. India under the beneficent guidance of the British nation is shaping into a federation of Provinces and States. We, in Mysore, form as it were a nation within a nation. While co-operating with both the Government of India and the rest of the Indian public in measures which lead to the prosperity of the country as a whole, we in our local sphere should promote education and economic growth to the fullest extent permitted by our resources, so that our people may not fall behind other Provinces and States in the race of progress.

“That the history of Mysore in the recent past has run smoothly is a good omen for the future. We have known neither stagnation nor precipitate change. We have been advancing steadily, adapting our constitution and administrative machinery to new times, needs and aspirations. All constitutional progress relates to the enlightenment of the people and the quickening and utilising of their energies in the business of the State. Progress of this kind has been the constant aim of the Government of Mysore. The ceremony which I am performing to-day is thus a step in a continuous and well-ordered process of development which has been going on for over forty years and it is my hope that the process will continue with the same adaptability in the future.

“You will find yourselves exercising a considerable, frequently a decisive, influence upon the policy of Government. Not merely your resolutions, but all that you urge in debate will be of high importance. I would have you apprehend with mind and heart this vital fact that the interests of Government and people are identical. The happiness of the people is both the happiness and the vindication of Government. Any difference of opinion between the executive and yourselves—and such differences naturally occur in all lands and all along the road of progress—can refer only to the means, never to the end. You can count upon responsiveness and goodwill in Government, as they certainly count upon them in you.

“This day, therefore, marks the dawning of a new era in the history of Mysore. My faith in the power and willingness of my

people to render patriotic service is firmly rooted in experience and you may rely on my abiding sympathy with your aspirations. If every act of yours is guided by common sense, goodwill and useful study of facts and of experience, if your powers are used only for the promotion of the common good, you cannot fail to rise in power and influence. You will help to build up the prosperity and reputation of our State and will become custodians with me of its permanent interests.....”

At the Dasara Session of the Representative Assembly in 1925 Sir Albion Banerji, the Dewan, reviewed the work done by both the Legislative Council and the Representative Assembly since their inauguration on a reformed basis by the Maharaja. Taking the Representative Assembly first, it was found that Government had consulted it in respect of 14 Bills, most important of which were the Coffee Cess Bill, the Mysore Village Panchayet Bill, the Mysore District Boards Bill, the Bill to amend the Mysore Municipal Regulation, the amendment of the Press Law, the Ancient Monuments Preservation Bill and the amendment of the Mysore Muzrai Regulation. On their own initiative Government took the opinion of the Assembly on certain matters under their consideration, and among the most important of these were the question of reciprocity between the Hindus and Mahomedans regarding the stoppage of music in front of mosques and temples and the question of prohibiting cow-slaughter. The privilege of interpellating Government was fully exercised by the Assembly and the number of questions asked by the members on matters of various kinds came to 140. In respect of resolutions also on matters of general importance, the members had shown great keenness in the exercise of their privilege. The total number of resolutions moved during the three previous sessions amounted to nearly 50. All these items of work were in addition to the discussion of over 360 subjects of a general character. Most of the matters which were dealt with by the House were of a highly useful and interesting nature and included such important matters as trade conditions in Mysore, technical education in the lower schools, promotion of temperance, encouragement of indigenus

system of medicine, extension of medical relief, improvement of sanitation, restoration of minor tanks, promotion of education among all classes of His Highness' subjects, promotion of industries, grant of relief on occasions of floods and drought, extension of Sanskrit education, re-organisation of the Civil Service, Panchama education, working of the Recruitment Rules, rural education, education in the Malnad, town and village improvements. Speaking generally, there was not a single Department of Government the work of which did not come in for review before the House.

The Assembly had two opportunities of exercising the privilege of discussing the general principles involved in the annual State budget and in moving resolutions in respect of it. In the course of the general discussions, the Dewan acknowledged that the Government had received most useful suggestions and the discussion of resolutions had given the Government an opportunity of explaining their principles and policy.

Turning to the Legislative Council, the work transacted by it was equally heavy and varied. The Council considered 21 Bills, of which 14 were passed and the others were in various stages of consideration. The number of resolutions on general matters moved in the Council was nearly 50 and the number of interpellations asked was over 160. The Council also passed the budgets for two years and in connection with them moved no less than 177 motions for reduction or omission of grants.

In closing the review, the Dewan bore whole-hearted testimony to the work done by the two Houses in these weighty words:—"It will be clear from the facts and figures given by me that the representatives of the people in both the Houses have taken the fullest advantage of the opportunities afforded to them by the reforms. The keenness of the members to obtain information and help Government with useful advice has been a pleasing and prominent feature of the working of the two Houses. On behalf of Government I can assure this House that the Government have given their most earnest attention to the suggestions of the peoples' representatives and in all possible cases have already given or will

soon be giving effect to them. I may mention in passing that the average attendance of members of both the Houses was never so high in the pre-reform days as it is now and the sessions of both the Houses are also longer. This is a clear indication of the interest, earnestness and public spirit displayed by the members in the discharge of their duties, responsibilities and privileges."