

CHAPTER XL.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

Distinguished Visitors to Mysore—Lord Chelmsford, Prince of Wales, the Earl of Reading and the Prince of Connaught.

In the early years of the post-war period there were a number of distinguished visitors to the Mysore State. Lord Chelmsford who was Viceroy of India visited Mysore in December 1919 with Lady Chelmsford and was accorded a grand reception.

H. R. H. the Prince of Wales (now His Majesty King Edward VIII) paid a visit to the State in January 1922. Prior to His Royal Highness' visit to Mysore, the Maharaja had as Chancellor of the Hindu University at Benares met the Prince when the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on him by that University. During his visit to the Mysore State between the 18th and 23rd of that month, the Prince visited Bangalore and Mysore Cities, Seringapatam and the Krishnarajasagara Irrigation Works and witnessed the Khedda operations at the Karapur camp. His Royal Highness was welcomed by all classes of people in Mysore with spontaneous demonstrations of joy and devotion.

At the banquet given on the 19th January 1922, the Maharaja, in proposing the toast of his guest, in the course of his speech said that no one who had followed the events of the Great War could help realising that while it had resulted in overthrowing the three great monarchies of Europe, its effect on the British Empire had been to strengthen the bonds between king and people and to leave the British Throne more deeply seated in the affections of every class of His Imperial Majesty's subjects. Truly, further said the Maharaja, might His Royal Highness be described as England's princely ambassador who won the hearts of the Empire's subjects wherever he went.

In response to the toast, the Prince of Wales referred among other matters, to the military services rendered by Mysore during

the German War:—"In October 1914 Your Highness' Imperial Service Lancers sailed from India for Egypt. They fought in Egypt where I had the pleasure of seeing them in 1916 and subsequently took part in a two years' desert campaign which ended in the capture of Gaza and the fall of Jerusalem. In both the latter engagements they played a brilliant part. They then joined the 15th Cavalry Brigade and were active in the advance in the Jordan valley and the final series of engagements which broke down the Turkish resistance and carried our arms into Syria. They distinguished themselves at Haifa, where they drove the enemy from strong positions on Mount Carmel capturing seven guns and three hundred prisoners. At the final action at Aleppo they were again to the fore with a fine charge against heavy odds in which they suffered severe casualties. They only returned to India in February 1920. The honours and decorations won by the corps and the frequent mention of the officers and men in Despatches bear eloquent testimony to their courage and efficiency and to the excellent spirit and tone that prevailed in the regiment.

"The Imperial Service Transport Corps proceeded to Mesopotamia in 1916 and continued on active service till the end of the war. It won the highest recommendations from the General Officer commanding in Mesopotamia. All praise is due to this gallant corps and to the officers who helped them to deserve and win their high reputation. In addition to keeping those units up to their full strength, 5000 of Your Highness' subjects enlisted in the units of the Indian army.

"When I turn to the more prosaic, but equally important, question of the ways and means for the war, I find that the assistance given by the Mysore State has been of an equally high order. At the outbreak of the war, Your Highness offered Rs. 50 lakhs towards the cost of our Expeditionary Forces. You added a further gift of Rs. 10 lakhs and later another gift of Rs. 13 lakhs. Your State subscribed Rs. 14 lakhs in the war loans. The people of Your State gave Rs. 2 lakhs to the war charities and invested Rs. 113 lakhs in the war loans.

“The contributions from Your Highness’ State and subjects reached a total of nearly Rs. 2 crores. Besides this, the State was prominent in the supply of hides, timber, blankets and other material necessary for the efficiency of our arms.

“The war record of Your Highness’ State is, indeed, a notable one and it is a great privilege to me to be able to offer my thanks and congratulations in person to-night to Your Highness on these achievements.”

On the occasion of his departure, on crossing the State frontier His Royal Highness sent a message to the Maharaja conveying the great pleasure he felt in making His Highness’ acquaintance and his great admiration for the beauties of Mysore and the efficiency of the administration that prevailed.

The Earl of Reading, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, accompanied by H. E. the Countess of Reading paid a visit to the State from the 27th November to the 5th December 1923. At the State Banquet on the 29th November, the Maharaja welcomed the Viceroy not only as the chief representative in India of His Majesty the King-Emperor but also personally as an eminent jurist, diplomatist and statesman with a record of high achievements in the public life of Great Britain. In replying to His Highness’ speech, His Excellency bore testimony to the sound traditions of administration prevailing in Mysore and the past achievements of the State and the development of its resources and the expansion of natural production.

In 1925 His Royal Highness the Prince of Connaught, grandson of Queen Victoria, paid a visit to Mysore with the Princess of Connaught and both were accorded an enthusiastic welcome in the Mysore City.