

CHAPTER VII.

Re-settlement of political relations with the British Government—(continued).

With their Despatch dated 3rd March 1880 to the Secretary of State the Government of India submitted to him for approval the draft of a written Instrument embodying the conditions under which the young Maharaja was to assume possession of his State and also defining authoritatively his future relations with the Paramount Power. As regards the internal administration of the State, the Instrument advisedly avoided entering upon details but reserved to the Governor-General in Council discretionary power of interposition when he considered it necessary. The draft also in the Preamble made no reference to the preceding engagements which existed between the British Government and Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. The Government of India said that there was no necessity to examine in detail the terms of the previous treaties except so far as it was necessary to reconcile the maintenance of an Indian Dynasty on the Throne of Mysore with the good government of the country and the security of British interests. Agreeing with the view contained in Sir Stafford Northcote's Despatch of 1867, the Government of India also said that the present settlement was to supersede all prior engagements and was to constitute a new departure in the relations between the British Government and the Maharaja's Family.

The first question related to the succession to the Throne of Mysore regarding which this important pronouncement is contained in the despatch: "The Government of India now deals with successions in the ruling families of Native States throughout India upon certain general principles which if not formulated in writing are universally recognised in practice. Where there is a natural heir whose title to succeed is beyond dispute according to law and usage, he succeeds as a matter of course unless he is obviously and totally unfit, though in this as in every other case a succession is thoroughly understood to require formal confirmation and recognition by the Paramount Power. Where the succession is disputed,

the Supreme Government steps in and decides authoritatively according to the usages of the race or the family. Where all heirs natural or adopted fail, the Supreme Government will not only recognise such successor to the rulership of a Native State as on general considerations may seem best but may attach to the succession whatever conditions seem fitting and desirable.....

“It appears to us, nevertheless, expedient in the particular case of Mysore that the main conditions under which the throne will become hereditary in the Maharaja’s Family should be distinctly entered upon record. We think this advisable not only for reasons analogous to those which have induced the Government of India to make definite stipulations for the future administration of the country but also because since this Instrument will be in some sense the title-deed of the family, there may be a tendency to regard it as exclusively representing the whole body of rights and liabilities existing between the State and the Supreme Government. The 3rd clause of the Instrument has therefore been so framed as to forestall all controversy regarding the right of the British Government to pass over an heir on the ground of obvious incapacity, or to decide among claimants to the succession, or generally to select a successor among collaterals where no clear pretensions to succeed by inheritance can be established. This last mentioned provision appears very expedient in the case of Mysore where the collateral branches of the Ruling House are remote, while the order of succession among the collaterals is so far as can be ascertained singularly unsettled, obscure and complicated. The form in which the clause has been drawn admits the right of adoption, while it precludes, in our opinion, the possibility of any such difficulty arising as has been produced by doubts as to the right construction of Lord Canning’s Adoption Sannads. It will be noticed that no succession will be valid until it shall have been recognised by the Governor-General in Council and that by the last clause of the Instrument the decision of the Governor-General in Council upon any question regarding the succession is final.”

As regards the annual subsidy and the extra contributions to be paid to the British Government for the protection ensured to the

State by that Government, it will be remembered that the claim had been expressed in very general terms in the Subsidiary Treaty of 1799 and in 1807 these indefinite liabilities were commuted to the maintenance of a body of 4000 effective Horse. It was estimated at the time that of this body 3000 Horse represented the additional force which the State was required to maintain for external defence. During the days of the British Commission large reductions in the body of the Silledar force had been sanctioned from time to time and the number in 1880 stood at one-fourth of the number of 4000 mentioned in the treaty of 1807. These reductions, it is understood, were made with the object of economising the State's revenue by limiting the Silledar Horse only to the strength requisite for the needs of internal administration. It was considered very improbable under the military system of the British Government as it existed that the Maharaja would in the future be required to raise the force upon a military footing to its full obligatory complement or to keep up cavalry ready to accompany British troops on foreign service. The existing body of 1000 horsemen was accepted as sufficient for the internal protection of the State and it was proposed that the cost of maintaining the remaining 3000 horsemen calculated at Rs. 10½ lakhs might be added to the Subsidy of Rs. 24½ lakhs, raising it in all to Rs. 35 lakhs per annum.

As regards the land required for British cantonment or for any other establishments or purposes connected with British interests within Mysore, the Government of India said that they assumed that Bangalore would remain in their possession and under complete jurisdiction, although in demarcating the precise limits it was unnecessary to include the whole town which formed the chief centre of provincial trade. The Maharaja, they said, need not be required to yield in full sovereignty the lands required by the British Government. It was sufficient to reserve such lands in occupation on perpetual assignment securing under the Instrument the British Government's right to hold at pleasure these and any other lands which they might require for similar purposes.

The Government of India also now proposed that the opportunity might be taken to make over the island of Seringapatam

absolutely to the Mysore State which was still regarded as British territory though it had been from 1829 in the possession of the Mysore Government upon an annual rent of Rs. 50,000, this rent being entirely remitted for the future.

The external relations of the Mysore State were proposed to be placed on the same footing as those of all Indian States and the Maharaja was to have no political communications with any other State except through the medium of the Government of India. The employment in his service of Europeans was to be subject to the approval of the British Government and jurisdiction over European British subjects could only be exercised by the British Government. In regard to railways and telegraphs in Mysore, the British Government was to be free to reserve power to retain the working of them in their own hands and to assume jurisdiction over railway lands where necessary as had been done in almost all the other States of India. The draft Instrument also stipulated that the consent of the British Government was requisite for the alteration of any laws in force at the time of the transfer and for any material change in the constituted system of any important branch of the administration and also that no title-deeds granted or settlement of land revenue made under British administration were alterable except by a competent law court.

On the 12th August 1880 Lord Hartington who was then Secretary of State in a despatch to the Marquis of Ripon who had succeeded Lord Lytton as Governor-General conveyed the approval of Her Majesty's Government to the draft Instrument of Transfer. In doing so, Lord Hartington while accepting the proposed total subsidy of Rs. 35 lakhs as fair observed that the recent famine in the State had imposed so heavy a burden on its resources that the British Government instead of being able to hand over the country to the Maharaja with a surplus found the revenues of the State burdened with a debt to the Government of India amounting to Rs. 80 lakhs. In these circumstances Her Majesty's Government influenced by a desire not to place any undue burden on the finances of Mysore in the early stage of the Maharaja's rule expressed willingness to postpone the increased subsidy of Rs. 10½ lakhs for a

period of five years from the date of the Maharaja's accession to power. In this despatch Lord Hartington also added that Her Majesty's Government were glad that steps had been taken to explain fully to the Maharaja the administrative changes which were being made or were contemplated as well as the nature of the political institutions over which His Highness was to preside and that it was intended that his share in the work of Government was to be a substantial one, though no doubt it was right that the Maharaja's advisers and chief ministerial officers should have a voice in all important deliberations affecting State affairs.