

## CHAPTER II

### MADRAS

288. Having explained our views on the basic pattern of the component units of the Indian Union, we now proceed with the task of making our recommendations regarding the reorganisation of particular States on the basis of the principles which, we have already indicated, should govern the solution of the problem. We take up first the States in the South where the demand for the redistribution of state territories is of long standing.

289. The separation of Andhra from the composite Madras State has met the most insistent of the demands and has virtually solved the problem for a major area of this region. The residuary Madras State has been left as a fairly compact unit; this State is linguistically homogeneous except mainly for two districts, namely, Malabar and South Kanara, in a distant and outlying corner, which are not Tamil-speaking. So the problem of Madras does not present any serious difficulty.

290. The main claim advanced on behalf of Madras is for the addition of the Tamil-speaking areas of Travancore-Cochin. This claim rests mainly on linguistic considerations and grounds of geographical contiguity and relates to nine taluks, namely, Thovala, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam, Vilavancode and Neyyattinkara in Trivandrum district, Devikulam and Peermede in Kottayam district, Shenkotta in Quilon district and Chittur in Trichur district.

291. In our scheme of reorganisation, we have adopted the district as the basic unit for making territorial readjustments. This is because we feel that districts have developed an organic and administrative unity and an economic life of their own, and any adjustments below the district level, therefore, should normally be avoided. If any such adjustments are considered necessary, they should be made only by mutual agreement. We have departed from this rule only when, for ensuring geographical contiguity or for some other important administrative or economic considerations, detachment of part of a district has become imperative.

292. The demand for Tamil-speaking taluks has a history behind it and has assumed a form that prejudices the political and

administrative stability of this area. We have, therefore, considered it necessary, in the special circumstances of this case, to examine the Tamil claims to these taluks and to make recommendations about their future.

293. As a result of the re-sorting of census slips of the Tamil-speaking taluks of the Travancore-Cochin State, the percentages of people with different mother-tongues in the nine taluks claimed by the Madras Government are now available. These figures show that in the four southern taluks, namely, Agastheeswaram, Thovala, Kalkulam and Vilavancode, situated in what is known as Nanjil Nad, the percentage of Tamil-speaking people is above 79. The wishes of the people of this area have been clearly expressed and there is no particular reason why these wishes should not be respected.

294. The Shenkotta taluk is partly an enclave in Tirunelveli district of Madras State and the percentage of Tamil-speaking people in this taluk is about 93. Physically and geographically it belongs to Tirunelveli district in which it should now merge.

295. The Devikulam and Peermede taluks stand on a somewhat different footing. These are hilly areas which, for various economic and other reasons, are of great importance to the State of Travancore-Cochin. The percentage of Tamil-speaking people in the Devikulam and Peermede taluks is 72 and 44 respectively. It has, however, been stated before us that this fairly large Tamil population of these two taluks is accounted for, in part, by a floating corps of labourers employed by plantations in this area. Recent figures for the Peermede and Devikulam taluks show that the Tamil migrant population constitutes 30 per cent. and 46 per cent., leaving behind 14 per cent. and about 26 per cent. as the non-floating Tamil-speaking population in the two taluks respectively.

296. Considering their area, which is about twelve per cent. of the whole area of Travancore-Cochin State, Devikulam and Peermede taluks have a comparatively meagre population and with the progress of development should be able to relieve some of the burden on the heavily congested littoral areas of the State. The economic importance of this locality will be discussed later, but it may be appropriate to mention here some of the natural advantages of this area, containing the high range of the Anamalais and some of the highest peaks south of the Himalayas. It is the source of the most important river of the State, the Periyar, as also of other rivers. Apart from the question of impounding the

headwaters of the rivers, it is necessary to adopt measures to afford protection to the rice fields in the valley bottoms, and to promote the special economy of the high range relating to forests, plantations and hydro-electricity; these cannot be effectively undertaken if the State is deprived of this area.

297. The Tamil side of the case is that, although much of the population of Devikulam and Peermede may have been originally migrant, it now constitutes a majority and that in the 1954 elections, the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress won both the seats to the Assembly from this area. It is important, however, to note that the Travancore Tamil Nad Congress itself recognise the special interests of the Travancore-Cochin Government in this area and is prepared to exclude from the areas sought to be transferred to Tamil Nad, the Pallivasal pakuthy of the Devikulam taluk, where the hydro-electric works are located and the Peruvanthanadu pakuthy of Peermede taluk, which includes the township of Mundakayam and the rubber estate.

298. This concedes, in effect, a part of the claim of the Government of Travancore-Cochin to these two taluks. As we have observed earlier, we do not regard the linguistic principle as the sole criterion for territorial readjustments, particularly in the areas where the majority commanded by a language group is only marginal. It may also be recalled that, on the basis of the evidence tendered before it, the Dar Commission had come to the conclusion that it would not be proper to describe any area as unilingual unless the majority of one language spoken in that area was at least 70 per cent. and that any area below that should be considered as bilingual or multilingual as the case may be<sup>1</sup>. We are generally in agreement with this view, but in our opinion, the mere fact that a certain language group has a substantial majority in a certain area should not be the sole deciding factor.

299. Neyyattinkara is a predominantly Malayalam-speaking taluk (86 per cent.). As regards Chittur, it was claimed that the Tamil-speaking population was 95 per cent.; the re-sorting, on the other hand, has shown that the Malayalam percentage of the taluk is 59·8. There seems to be no particular reason for separating these taluks. A portion of Chittur is now an enclave in Madras State, but if a Kerala State is constituted on the lines indicated in the next Chapter, this can be conveniently attached to Malabar which will form part of Kerala.

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, para. 63.

300. The non-Tamil areas of Madras are the two districts of Malabar and South Kanara and the Kannada-speaking areas on the borders of Mysore, specially the Kollegal taluk of Coimbatore district. The Madras Government has not raised any objection to the separation of the two districts; as far as the Kollegal taluk is concerned, Madras had agreed earlier to its transfer to the prospective Karnataka State, but subsequently, on reconsideration, has proposed that only a northern portion, which is contiguous to the existing Mysore State, should be transferred. We have considered very carefully the arguments in favour of breaking up this taluk, but find on the whole that they are unconvincing. The entire taluk, according to our proposals, will cease to be a part of Madras.

301. Madras State thus constituted will have a population of about 30 millions, covering an area of about 50,170 sq. miles, a compact and integrated territory and will form one of the important units of the Indian Union with a history of stable administration. Neither its administration nor its plans of economic development will be affected.