

CHAPTER IV

KARNATAKA

319. The next area to be considered is what may be called Karnataka.

320. It has been generally recognised that, in the provincial distribution under the British, the Kannadigas suffered most, with their area split up into four units in three of which they were at the tail end and reduced to the position of ineffective minorities. The All-India Congress Committee in 1927, the All-Parties Conference in 1928 and the Indian Statutory Commission in 1930 all recognised the legitimacy of the claim of the Kannadigas to unification. The Dar Commission also expressed the view that the Kannadigas would prosper and be able to manage their affairs much better under their own government, if such a government were possible.¹

321. There was no disagreement until recently about the territorial limits of the proposed Karnataka State. It was assumed that as soon as the question of redistribution of State territories was taken in hand seriously, and hurdles such as the special position of the former princely states were removed, the creation of a united Karnataka State would follow as a matter of course.

322. With the reorganisation of States becoming a live political issue, however, some differences of opinion have recently arisen about the territorial set-up of the proposed Karnataka State. These differences relate principally to two matters, namely, the financial prospects of the Karnataka State and the desirability of integrating, in the proposed Karnataka State, the State of Mysore which claims to have a distinct administrative and cultural tradition. It is no longer assumed, as it was, for instance, assumed in the Nehru Committee's Report, that the Karnataka areas outside Mysore will be financially self-sufficient, or that they will have a surplus of revenue over expenditure. In fact, a committee appointed by the Mysore Government known as the Fact-Finding Committee has arrived at the conclusion that the position is quite the contrary.² Since the Karnataka areas outside Mysore are regarded as undeveloped, and are likely to have a financial deficit, there has grown up in the last two or three years opposition to the unification of Mysore with other Karnataka areas.

¹. Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, para. 150.

². Report of the Fact-Finding-Committee, Mysore, p. 133.

323. This latter view is of such recent origin, and the opinion of its sponsors is still so tentative, that this cannot, perhaps, be taken as a considered solution put forward by the Kannadigas generally. So far as we have been able to assess public opinion in Karnataka, there is a growing opposition to the proposal that two States should be created. While the general consensus of opinion outside Mysore prefers one united State to two, even within Mysore, the majority seems to value the advantages of unification above any temporary dislocation or inconvenience which may result from it.

324. It has been suggested to us that the basic reason why two States have sometimes been demanded instead of one is either political or religious apprehension, or perhaps, a combination of both. It has been estimated that Lingayats or Veerasaivas constitute about 35 to 40 per cent. of the population in the Kannada areas outside Mysore at present. The other important section of the Kannadigas, namely, the Vakkaligas, similarly constitute a little less than 29 per cent. of the population of Mysore. In the united Karnataka, it has been estimated that a little more than 20 per cent. of the population may be Lingayats, between 13 and 14 per cent. Vakkaligas, and about 17 to 18 per cent. Harijans. It is clear that no one community will, therefore, be dominant, and any one section can be reduced to the status of a minority, if other groups combine against it. These estimates of the communal composition of the new State are naturally not firm, because the figures which have been quoted vary considerably.¹ They serve, however, to illustrate the problem.

325. It is not unnatural in these circumstances for those who expect to be reduced in their relative position to view the proposed change with disfavour. It is also, perhaps, not entirely understandable, if some of these minorities fear that one result of the political position which the Lingayats will occupy in the future Karnataka State may be the dominance or extension of Veerasaivism at the cost of other religious faiths. However, in the perspective of the political and economic development of the Karnataka State which we have in view, the importance of narrow communal jealousies should not be exaggerated. There is as much reason to expect that a more balanced communal distribution will be conducive to good government as there is for fears or apprehensions.

326. There will be some obvious difficulties during the period of transition to some of which the Fact-Finding Committee has drawn

¹ According to the 1931 Census the percentage of Lingayats, Vakkaligas and Harijans in the areas proposed to be included in the Karnataka State was 17, 11 and 13 respectively.

attention. But these difficulties will be no greater and the problems of the transition will be no more complex than in other areas. The deficits of Bombay and Hyderabad Karnataka will be sizeable. Indeed our calculations suggest that they may be somewhat in excess of Rs. 1 crore, this deficit being largely explained, as in the case of Bellary, by the cost of servicing the capital outlay on the Tungabhadra project. There should be appreciable savings in overhead costs, however, which can be set off against this deficit and against the cost of revising Mysore scales of pay.

327. Rail communication in northern Karnataka, it has been stated, is now unsatisfactory. It is, however, unsatisfactory also in the Malnad area of the existing Mysore State; and in view of the scale on which railway expansion is now planned, it is hoped that northern Karnataka will soon become more easily accessible from Bangalore than it is at the present time.

328. The problems of the transition, in short, can and should be dealt with over a reasonable period; and the assumption which has sometimes been made that the Karnataka areas outside Mysore are particularly backward seems to us to be quite unwarranted. Bombay Karnataka in particular has enjoyed for a sufficiently long time the benefits of a progressive administration which has provided in this area educational facilities up to the University stage, cheap and adequate transport services run by one of the more important road transport corporations in the country and other amenities for the population. The extra cost, if any, of uniform standards of expenditure on the social services cannot, therefore, in our opinion, be very great; and on the whole, the mere fact that some administrative problems will be created and will need to be tackled in the first few years cannot be used as an argument against unification.

329. For these reasons, we recommend that one Karnataka State should be formed. This state should, in our opinion, comprise the following areas:

- (a) the present Mysore State, excluding the following portions of the Bellary district as now constituted, namely, the Siruguppa taluk, the Bellary taluk, the Hospet taluk and a small area of the Mallapuram sub-taluk in which the dam and headworks of the Tungabhadra project are situated (details of the area to be transferred from the Mallapuram sub-taluk will have to be determined by the Government of India, in consultation with the State governments concerned);

- (b) the four Kannada-speaking districts of the southern division of Bombay, namely, Belgaum except for Chandgad taluk, Bijapur, Dharwar and North Kanara;
- (c) the districts of Raichur and Gulbarga;
- (d) the South Kanara district except the Kasaragod taluk;
- (e) the Kollegal taluk of the Coimbatore district of Madras; and
- (f) Coorg.

The territorial limits of Karnataka, as thus proposed, broadly cover the Kannada-speaking areas, but in the case of one or two small units, linguistic considerations have been subordinated to other compelling reasons. Some explanation of the reasons why particular areas have been included in or excluded from the Karnataka State is, therefore, necessary.

330. One such area is Kolar district, which has a Telugu majority of fifty-four per cent. and a Kannada-speaking population of barely twenty-one per cent. It has intimate ties with Mysore which are of such long standing that they cannot easily be ignored. The major industry in this district is gold-mining. This has been fostered and built up by the Mysore Government, which has a direct interest in the continued existence and prosperity of this industry. The industry for its part gets the benefit of cheap hydro-electric power from Mysore. Other facilities have also been provided by the Mysore Government. The mining town itself has attracted a considerable number of immigrants from the adjoining areas, mostly Tamilians, with the result that Tamil is the largest language group in K.G.F. city today. The district is also much nearer to Bangalore than it is to Kurnool or Hyderabad. In case it is included in Andhra, it will be in the south-western corner of that State and will necessarily be somewhat remote from the main centres of Andhra. Taking into account all these factors as also the fact that the Telugu majority in this district is not large, we feel that it should remain where it is.

331. After very serious consideration we have decided to recommend the exclusion of a portion of the present Bellary district along the course of the Tungabhadra from Karnataka and its transfer to the Andhra State. We are aware that this is not in accord with the findings of an eminent judge like Shri Justice Misra and also with the decision taken by the Government of India in 1953 in respect of certain areas forming part of the present Bellary district. It is only after giving due weight to these important pronouncements and

careful examination of the merits and demerits of the different proposals that we have come to the conclusion that the change proposed is desirable.

332. It should be stated that our approach to the question is somewhat different from that of Shri Justice Misra. It seems to us that Shri Justice Misra was mainly guided by what he described as "linguistic gravity" although he took other considerations also into account. On the other hand, we have to be guided by certain principles which can be generally applied. The retention of Kolar district in the Karnataka State and the addition of the major part of Belgaum district to it will, in our opinion, be more advantageous to the new State than the continuance in it of the eastern portion of the Bellary district.

333. The arguments which have been advanced in favour of maintaining the *status quo* with regard to Bellary are almost similar to those advanced for separating the Kolar district from and not including parts of the Belgaum district in the future Karnataka state. As we have explained elsewhere, the linguistic consideration only should not, in our view, be the decisive factor, especially in settling the future of a border tract which cannot be regarded as predominantly unilingual. What has weighed with us in arriving at the conclusion to which we have referred is the cumulative effect of three main considerations, namely, administrative convenience, economic links and the importance of the Tungabhadra project to the Rayalaseema districts of Andhra.

334. There seems to be a great deal of force in the contention put forward on behalf of the Andhra Government that in view of the communication and other links of Bellary with the rest of Rayalaseema and the dependence of Bellary town on the existing Andhra state rather than Mysore in the matter of trade and commerce, these taluks have a much closer relation with the Andhra state than with Mysore. Bellary was administered as a part of the composite state of Madras for more than one hundred and fifty years, during which it developed into a sort of unofficial capital for the entire Rayalaseema area. The sudden snapping of old associations has resulted in a great deal of hardship to the people of this town. Firstly, there is the fact that many important offices serving the Andhra area were located in this town and the transfer of these offices has naturally affected many of the residents of the town who depended for their livelihood on them. There is also the consideration that the district, and the town of Bellary in particular, had and still continue to have a considerable volume of trade with the

Andhra area. Again, Bellary town continues to be connected with all the district headquarters of the Rayalaseema area by rail and road, and it is nearer to Kurnool than to Bangalore. To reach Bangalore by rail from Bellary, the shortest route lies only through Andhra territory. The importance of the area under dispute to Andhra is also evident from the fact that in the Andhra State Act, 1953, provision had to be made during a transition period for certain facilities being made available to the Andhra Government.

335. Various persons and public bodies in Bellary have claimed, in the course of their representations made to us, that the existing arrangements have caused considerable inconvenience to them. We are not in a position to say how far these grievances are real or permanent; but on a careful review of all the circumstances, we find no reason why arrangements or expedients which are plainly unsatisfactory in certain aspects should be continued, even after an opportunity for the general redistribution of boundaries has presented itself.

336. It has been represented to us that after the creation of the Andhra State, the Tungabhadra Project Board, which was set up in terms of Section 66 of the Andhra State Act, could not function satisfactorily. The complaints were so serious at one stage that it was considered desirable to reconstitute this Board. Although there are reasons to believe that the control and higher direction of the project have been facilitated as a result, it seems to us that, if the area, as proposed by us, is transferred to Andhra, the chances of friction with regard to the Tungabhadra project will be minimised to a very considerable extent.

337. It will be somewhat unsatisfactory if the Andhra Government has, even after the redistribution of States, no access to the headworks of a project in which it is vitally interested. It may be recalled that the project was originally intended, in so far as it relates to the southern side, for the benefit of Rayalaseema as an insurance against recurrent famines in that area.

338. The ayacut of the low level canal on the southern side of this project, already sanctioned, will have to be brought under cultivation as soon as possible; and it has been represented that immigration from the existing Andhra State into the eastern portion of Bellary district, as it is now constituted, is both necessary and desirable for this purpose. If we take into account the ayacut which is likely to be benefited by the proposed high level canal, the case for Andhra is considerably reinforced. The high level canal, we understand, has now been sanctioned in broad outline.

It is likely, when the localisation of the area intended to be benefited by this project has been completed, that Andhra will have a major interest in it. In view of the importance which is attached to this project and the difficulties which have been experienced, there is, in our opinion, a great deal of justification for treating this claim as a very special case.

339. We have indicated elsewhere in this report that claims to areas in which the headworks of irrigation or hydro-electric projects are situated are not necessarily to be accepted in all cases. Any such claim, however, cannot well be ignored, where other considerations are relatively unimportant.

340. It may be noted that the three taluks in question cannot be regarded as unilingual. Besides the Hospet and Bellary urban areas are fast assuming a mixed character. We have not attached any particular importance to the language factor in taking a decision on the future of the Kolar district where the Telugu-speaking people constitute about 54 per cent. of the population. Our assessment of the language factor in the area of Bellary proposed to be transferred to Andhra must be governed by similar considerations.

341. When Shri Justice Misra originally reported, Mysore had to be given a new district town of sufficient importance from which Bellary, which was transferred to it, could be administered. This latter argument is not valid to the same extent today, because it is no longer a restricted redistribution which is being considered, but a large scale redistribution; and Karnataka, which will be able to control areas which are to the north and west of those taluks of Bellary district which would still remain with it, will be able to make satisfactory arrangements for carrying on the district administration, even if Bellary town is taken away.

342. We recommend the retransfer of the areas already mentioned in the present Bellary district and the retention of Kolar in the prospective Karnataka State, on a balance of equities and advantages, in the hope that responsible public opinion, by and large, will, after dispassionately examining it, appreciate the reasonableness of this decision.

343. We trust that the Andhra Government and the leaders of the Andhra State will show vision and broad-mindedness in dealing with the Kannada population of the area in question and will provide for adequate educational facilities for them and also ensure that they are not discriminated against in the matter of recruitment to the services.

344. Coorg has retained its separate administration owing to what the Indian Statutory Commission has described as "historic causes".¹ It is a Part C State. The question of its separate existence has, therefore, to be determined by the general considerations set out in Chapter I of this part. The affiliations of this State are predominantly with Karnataka. Kannada-speaking people form the largest linguistic group in the State accounting for 35 per cent. of its population; Coorgi or Kodagu, which is spoken by about 29 per cent. of its people is akin to Kannada and is regarded by some authorities as a dialect of Kannada. Culturally, Coorg has had more links with the east, which is mainly Karnataka country, than with the west and the south, and geographically the whole of Coorg forms part of Malnad which belongs essentially to Karnataka.

345. Referring to Coorg in connection with the question of the formation of Karnataka, the Dar Commission expressed the view that if a Karnataka province was created, "it would have also solved the problem of the small province of Coorg which has been carrying on a difficult and isolated existence".² The future of this small State, therefore, lies with the adjoining Kannada-speaking areas in which it should merge.

346. While the case for integration of Coorg in the proposed Karnataka State appears to us to be indisputable, we wish to take note of the claim to a distinct individuality which the people of this minor administration have put forward. We suggest that a concession should be made to this sentiment by demarcating it as a separate district of the prospective Karnataka State.

347. The Chandgad taluk of Belgaum district is predominantly Marathi-speaking and it has been established as a result of the re-sorting of Census slips that the Marathi majority in the taluk is as high as 92.4 per cent. It can conveniently be administered by the State of Bombay, and Karnataka should have no objection to this proposal.

348. As regards the remaining ten taluks of Belgaum district, it has been claimed that two of them, Khanapur and Belgaum (including Belgaum town), as well as portions of Chikodi taluk, have closer affiliations with the Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay than with the adjoining areas in the proposed Karnataka State. The Marathi majorities in Khanapur and Belgaum taluks are slight, being 53.9 and 51.4 per cent. respectively. Six out of the remaining seven taluks are predominantly Kannada-speaking, and in the seventh,

¹. Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. I, para. 369

². Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, para. 45.

namely, Chikodi, the Kannadigas constitute the largest single language-group. All the taluks of Belgaum district have economic relations with both the Marathi as well as the Kannada speaking areas. The Belgaum town is the centre of the transit trade in this area, which is chiefly in cotton and oil seeds. Neither the Belgaum town nor the other disputed areas, however, have any particularly marked economic affiliations with the Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay. There is no case, therefore, for detaching either Khanapur or Belgaum or portions of Chikodi from the rest of the Belgaum district.

349. It has been argued that the Belgaum town has an absolute Marathi majority and that due consideration should be given to this factor. Separate mother-tongue figures for this town were not compiled during the last Census. In the past, it has, however, for a variety of reasons, attracted a steady stream of immigrants from many areas. Even if it is admitted that this town has now a Marathi majority, in view of the very slight Marathi majority in the taluk of Belgaum and the fact that economic relations are not particularly marked with any linguistic area, the future both of the taluk as well as of the town should, more properly, be decided on administrative grounds. If as many as nine out of the eleven taluks go to Karnataka (Chandgad going to Bombay and Belgaum being disputed), then, on administrative grounds, the Belgaum town, which is the district headquarters, along with the Belgaum taluk, should also go to Karnataka. We have recommended earlier that the Bellary town, along with the Bellary taluk, should go to Andhra, although the town according to Shri Justice Misra's report did not have a predominantly Andhra complexion; our recommendation in respect of the Belgaum town follows the same principles.

350. In the Kollegal taluk of the Coimbatore district about 77 per cent. of the people are Kannada-speaking. For the reasons already explained in Chapter II of this part, the whole of the taluk should, in our opinion, form part of the Karnataka State.

351. Karnataka with the territorial limits which have been indicated so far will have linguistic and cultural homogeneity and geographical integrity. Barring a few dissentients, all those who have been concerned with the Karnataka problem in some form or other will sooner or later recognise that this is so. It is impossible, however, to anticipate a similar measure of common agreement regarding the transfer to the Karnataka State of some other areas along the borders of the prospective State which have been suggested, namely, the portions claimed in the Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Salem, Chittoor, Anantapur, Kurnool, Kolhapur, South Satara and Sholapur

districts. The administrative dislocation which will be inevitable and the controversies to which any proposal to break up these districts will give rise are so great that painstaking border adjustments will not be worthwhile.

352. We have examined in some detail the economic and financial implications of the proposals which we have made, and find that, on the whole, there is much to recommend them. The proposed Karnataka State will have its own major port, for Malpe in South Kanara has already been selected as a possible site on the recommendations of the West Coast Major Ports Development Committee (1950) and preliminary examination of this project has been taken in hand. This incidentally will meet a long-standing complaint of the Bombay and Mysore Karnataka about the absence of adequate shipping facilities.

353. The prospective financial position of Karnataka as a whole discloses a deficit of the order of one and a half crores of rupees after taking into consideration the immediate possibilities of increasing its revenue and on a realistic assessment of the rate at which public expenditure can be expected to increase. Karnataka, no doubt, will have to bear the fairly heavy burden of servicing the public debt on account of the Tungabhadra and other projects; and as the Upper Krishna, Bhima and Ghataprabha (second stage) projects are taken in hand in the next few years, the burden of the liability on account of interest charges is bound to increase. This, however, is not Karnataka's peculiar problem; and if it proves that the growth of expenditure permanently outstrips the increase in revenue resources, the problem will have to be viewed not as a by-product of reorganisation but as the result of general economic development.

354. From a broader point of view, the formation of Karnataka may go some way towards solving the problem of the development of Malnad. Ever since 1901, when the Census first disclosed a decline in population in these areas, this question has come up for consideration from time to time. But the fact that the area is under the jurisdiction of four governments has, to some extent, impeded the formulation and implementation of economic development plans in a co-ordinated manner. The character of the problem has, no doubt, changed to some extent since the last Malnad Development Committee reported in 1950. More schemes and projects are now being considered and it may be no longer true to say that the area is being depopulated. Nevertheless, the fact that practically the whole of

Malnad will belong in future to one State is not an insignificant gain, and it may be expected that co-ordinated planning for these hilly areas will be easier.

355. Two important multi-purpose projects, namely, the Tungabhadra and the Upper Krishna irrigation-cum-hydro-electric projects are, or are likely to be, border projects as the boundaries of the States stand at present. In both these cases, the unification of Karnataka should facilitate the rapid development of the areas concerned.

356. Northern Karnataka is now on the eve of large-scale and rapid economic development. The Tungabhadra, Upper Krishna, Bhima, Ghataprabha and Malaprabha projects, when they have been completed, will convert a parched and dry area into one of the best irrigated agricultural regions in the country. The increased production of food and other commodities, after irrigation has been extended, will meet the needs of Mysore, which in years of scarcity suffers from a serious deficiency of food supplies. It is not, therefore, only northern Karnataka which may hope to benefit from the unification of the two Kannada-speaking areas north and south of the Tungabhadra.

357. The agricultural, mineral, water and forest resources of Karnataka are considerable. We have no doubt that whichever way one may look at the problem, a united Karnataka will be found to have the essential unity of a culturally homogeneous and balanced economic region; and to a considerable extent, this unity is even independent of the ties of a common language.

358. The Karnataka State so constituted will have a population of about 19 millions and an area of about 72,730 square miles, possessing large forest wealth and a good soil. Also there will be no serious dislocation because the existing Mysore State provides an administrative machinery, a capital and a High Court and all the other appurtenances of a modern government.