

CHAPTER XVIII

ORISSA

733. The last of the territorial units in respect of which proposals for reorganisation have to be considered is Orissa. The province of Orissa was created in 1936 in terms of the Government of India (Constitution of Orissa) Order, but an elaborate enquiry which covered in particular the question of its boundaries preceded this Order and was spread over a period of about thirty years, that is to say, from 1903, when the circular which dealt with the regrouping of provinces was first addressed to the provincial governments, right up to the time when the Order in Council was issued.

734. The question was also considered by three important committees in very considerable detail; the Philip-Duff Committee reported in 1924, the Attlee Committee, which was constituted by the Simon Commission, about six years later, and the O'Donnell Committee in 1932. The reports of these committees formed the subject-matter of prolonged and detailed correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State, in the course of which every important argument was considered and reconsidered from all points of view.

735. Orissa, in short, was carved out of the neighbouring areas, after a review of its boundaries which was more elaborate than was possible in the case of any other State. This has considerably simplified the task of the re-determination of the boundaries of the Orissa State.

736. The major claims made on Orissa are as follows:

- (i) the three northern districts of Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh and Keonjhar have been claimed by Bihar on the ground that the people of these areas desire to be associated with Chota Nagpur; and
- (ii) the Andhra State has claimed the whole of the Koraput district, the Parlakimedi estate and the Parlakimedi Maliahs of the Ganjam district, and a portion of the Chatarpur and Berhampur taluks of Ganjam constituting a coastal belt in this district extending from the present Andhra boundary up to the Rushikulya river.

737. The principal claims made for or on behalf of Orissa on the other hand are:

- (i) a coastal belt and agency tracts consisting of predominantly Oriya and aboriginal areas in Srikakulam district right up to the Vamsadhara river;
- (ii) the Phuljhar and Bindra-Nawagarh ex-zamindari areas of the Raipur district, a portion of ex-zamindari areas of Chandrapur now in the Bilaspur district and a portion of the Bastar district;
- (iii) the Singhbhum district of Bihar, particularly Seraikella and Kharsawan; and
- (iv) a portion in south-west Midnapore district of West Bengal.

738. In Chapter XIV of this part we have already dealt with the Bihar Government's claims on Orissa as also the Orissa claim to Singhbhum or to Seraikella and Kharsawan. We deal here with the other claims.

739. The Andhra claim to Koraput rests on a number of arguments, the most important and relevant of which at the present time is that the trading affiliations of the district with Parvatipuram and the rest of Srikakulam district as well as with Vishakapatnam district are fairly close. The basis of the demand for the other territories which have been claimed is mainly linguistic, Parlakimedi estate and Berhampur town in particular being claimed as outlying Telugu pockets in Orissa.

740. Koraput, however, is a district in which the Oriya majority is absolute; and since Kondh and Paraja in addition are spoken by a little less than one quarter of the population, there is no case for regrading it as an Andhra area. The trading affiliations of this district which have been mentioned are not also such as to justify the disturbance of the existing position. The preponderance of tribes in this district is considerable; and some of the arguments advanced by Andhra, for example, that riots or *fitthuries* in the tribal area can be much better dealt with by a government which controls Vishakapatnam, are no longer valid. There is, therefore, no case in our opinion for the transfer of Koraput to Andhra.

741. The Parlakimedi pocket was considered together with the Parlakimedi hill areas at the time that this portion was transferred to Orissa; and although the main ground for this transfer was that

the preference of the Raja of Parlakimedi for Orissa deserved to be considered with sympathy, the transfer was also justified on linguistic grounds. The Berhampur tract was likewise established at that time to be clearly within the area of Oriya influence. There is little reason to upset these decisions now.

742. In the entire district of Ganjam of which these two claimed areas form part, Oriya is the predominant language and Telugu is spoken only by about 15 per cent. of the people. It is quite unnecessary in these circumstances to detach an important coastal belt from the rest of the district.

743. While there is no case in view of what has been said so far for subtracting any territory from Orissa, there is also no case for adding any territory to it.

744. The Telugu majority in Srikakulam district from which portions have been claimed for Orissa is as high as 89 per cent. This majority is likewise pronounced even in the Ichapuram, Sompeta and Tekkali taluks. There is no reason for disturbing these areas or the tribal areas of the west.

745. In the case of the Phuljhar and Bindra-Nawagarh areas of the Raipur district, the O'Donnell Committee found overwhelming public support for their retention in the present Madhya Pradesh. These areas form part of a district in which Hindi is the predominant language and even Chattisgarhi is more important than Oriya. According to the latest Census, the Oriya-speaking population is not in a majority even in Mahasamund, and no other convincing reasons have been advanced in favour of the claim. We see no reason, therefore, to reopen the decision of the O'Donnell Committee regarding this area.

746. These arguments are applicable more or less with the same force also in the case of the Chandrapur claim.

747. We have already dealt with the claims on Bastar in Chapter IX of this part dealing with the new Madhya Pradesh.

748. The area in south-west Midnapore which Orissa has claimed belongs culturally to West Bengal and there has been a progressive increase in Bengali influence. The Oriya population in the claimed areas is negligible at the present time. The Orissa case rests in part on the claim that the historical association of these areas with the

ancient Orissa kingdoms should be respected. The argument is debatable and in accordance with the principles set out in Chapter VIII of Part II cannot be accepted. Moreover, the association in this case is not quite clearly established.

749. This disposes of all the claims by or on Orissa. The area and population of the existing State of Orissa accordingly remain unaffected.