Karnataka and Mysore

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THE recommendation of the States Reorganisation Commission to form a Karnataka State bringing together predominantly Kannada-speaking areas presently scattered over five States has been generally welcomed by a large section of Kannadigas who had a genuine, long-standing complaint that their economic and cultural progress was hampered owing to their numerical inferiority in the States dominated by other linguistic groups. There is a feeling of satisfaction among the Kannadigas over the Commission's approach to the question of the formation of a Karnataka State, although there is room for differences of opinion on question of minor detail. Barring these minor differences, it must be said to the credit of the Commission that it was moved by a genuine desire to help the creation of a homogeneous, viable State having vast potentialities for expansion.

Nevertheless, to an outsider unfamiliar with the currents and cross-currents of opinion inside the Kannada-speaking areas, the discordant voices now being heard in responsible quarters give the impression that there is no unanimity of opinion among Kannadigas even on the major issue of a United Karnataka. Puerile and inconsequential as these hallucinations are, an appreciation of them is keenly aware of it will be evident in the States Reorganisation of Mysore and the leaders of the Andhra State who had stakes in the town. In view of the fact that even some of the outstanding recommendations of the Commission are going to be changed, in all likelihood, to satisfy the interests affected, one hopes even now that suitable readjustments along the Andhra-Karnataka border will be made before the reorganisation of the States finally takes place.

Another recommendation which has aroused Kannadigas' protest is the inclusion of Kasaragod taluk in the proposed Kerala State. Kannadigas concede the claim of Kerala up to the Chandragiri river, but oppose the proposal to exclude the entire taluk from the proposed Karnataka State.

Two Karnatakas

Since the publication of the report of the Commission, a section of the people in Mysore State have voiced their opinion against the formation of a single State of Karnataka. Fissiparous tendencies have become apparent even inside the Mysore Cabinet, which so far, had maintained a sphinx-like silence behind a facade of unity. The facade has now been pulled down and three ministers have come out with a categorical state-
ment opposing the formation of a single State of Karnataka by join­ing the Mysore State with the other areas. Curiously enough, the Chief Minister, who had consistently taken a favourable stand on the formation of a United Karnataka, now seems to be vacillating on the brink of a cabinet crisis. The dissident ministers, in their statement, said:

"The States Reorganisation Commission's proposals for Mysore deny to Mysore what has been conceded by them to Hyderabad and Vldar-bha. These two new States with lesser population than Mysore have emerged and taken shape in the picture of future India. But Mysore, which has been assiduously built by its great rulers for decades, has been effaced from the all-India map ... The people of Mysore are demanding that the Kannada area should be divided into two States: 1. Mysore with Kannada areas lying in the east and west of It; and 2. the kannada areas lying to the north of Mysore."

It is difficult to establish a direct casual connection between this new movement in favour of two Karnatakas and the fear of some of the major communities in Mysore State that in the future set-up, they would be reduced to pitiful minorities. Nevertheless, the motive force behind this reactionary movement seems to be the communal groups who have now a major voice in the political affairs of the Mysore State but are likely to lose their importance in the Karnataka State. As for the economic prospects of the Karnataka State, the Commission has estimated that in the initial stages, it will have to run a deficit of over one and a half crores of rupees. This is accounted for by the heavy burden of servicing the public debt the new Government has to bear on account of the Tungabhadra and other projects. When the projects are completed and when the initial period of transition is gone through, this deficit is expected to decrease to manageable proportions. The Commission has rightly dismissed this as an argument against the formation of a Karnataka State. Further, the creation of a Karnataka State will enable the speedy development of the Malnad area now distributed over many States. When the entire Malnad area, so rich in natural resources, comes under one administration, it is reasonable to expect that there would be greater scope for development through proper, comprehensive planning. For from being a drag on the resources of the area now comprising Mysore State northern Karnataka will contribute in a large measure, to the balanced growth of the Karnataka State. With the completion of the Tungabhadra, Upper Krishna, Bhima, Ghatarbha and Malaprabha projects, the Karnataka State will have increased irrigational facilities and the recurrent food deficits in the area now constituting Mysore State will be eliminated.

Of course, the new State will have to bear the additional burden of levelling up the pay scales but this will indirectly foster contentment and a better standard of administration in the long run.