

Views on States Reorganisation - I

# Karnataka and Mysore

K N Subrahmanya

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 Karoatala 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 the motives behind these vain outbursts is worthwhile. In the course of this article, an attempt is made to interpret the under-currents of opinion in Karnataka against the background of the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission has recommended the formation of a Karnataka State consisting of the following areas;

1 The present Mysore State excluding the following portions of Bellary district as now constituted, namely, the Sraguppa 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.

2 the four Kannada-speaking districts of the southern division of Bombay, namely, Belgaum except Chandgad taluk, Bijapur, Dharwar and North Kanara;

3 the districts of Raichur and Gulbarga;

4 the South Kanara district except Kasaragod taluk;

5 the Kollegal taluk of the Coimbatore district of Madras;

6 Coorg.

The State thus formed will have a population of 19 million and an area of 72,730 square miles.

Criticism of the recommendations of the Commission, so far as it relates to Karnataka State, falls into two categories. Firstly, there are those who welcome the suggestion to form a Karnataka State but complain that the Commission has excluded certain areas, which on a purely linguistic basis, should be included in the proposed Karnataka State. And secondly there are those who, for some inexplicable reason, oppose the formation of a single State comprising all the major Kannada-speaking areas. They put forth the plea that the merger of a progressive area like Mysore with the rest of the Kannada-speaking areas, which, they argue, is backward, would place an unnecessary strain on the resources of Mysore. Loyalty to their Rajpramukh is also put forward as an argument against effacing Mysore State from the future map of India. For sentimental reasons, some of them, at any rate, do not view with favour the suggestion to abolish the institution of Rajpramukh.

The Commission's recommendation on the Bellary district and Kasaragod taluk has caused disappointment among Kannadigas. So far as Bellary is concerned, it was already a closed issue, having been joined to Mysore State on the basis of Shri Justice Misra's award. Indeed, the process of integration with the neighbouring Kannada-speaking area of Mysore was so smooth that the recommendation of the States Reorganisation Commission to transfer the entire area back again to Andhra came as a rude shock to Kannadigas there. The interests of Kannadigas in Bellary would be gravely affected if it was appended to Andhra State and it would be a prolific source of perpetual conflict between Karnataka and Andhra. That the Commission is keenly aware of it will be evident from its advice to the Andhras: "We trust that the Andhra Government and the leaders of the Andhra State

will show vision and broadmindedness 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 services." How far this paternal advice will be heeded remains to be seen. In this connection, one fails to appreciate the attempt of the Commission to link up the Kolar question with that of Bellary. In treating Kolar as a bargaining counter, the Commission has thrown to winds the principles that they had set before them. The Commission easily dismisses the question by saying: "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." There is a growing feeling among Kannadigas in Bellary that the Commission has succumbed to the pressure tactics of a handful of business tycoons of Andhra who have 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 Vldarbha. 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."

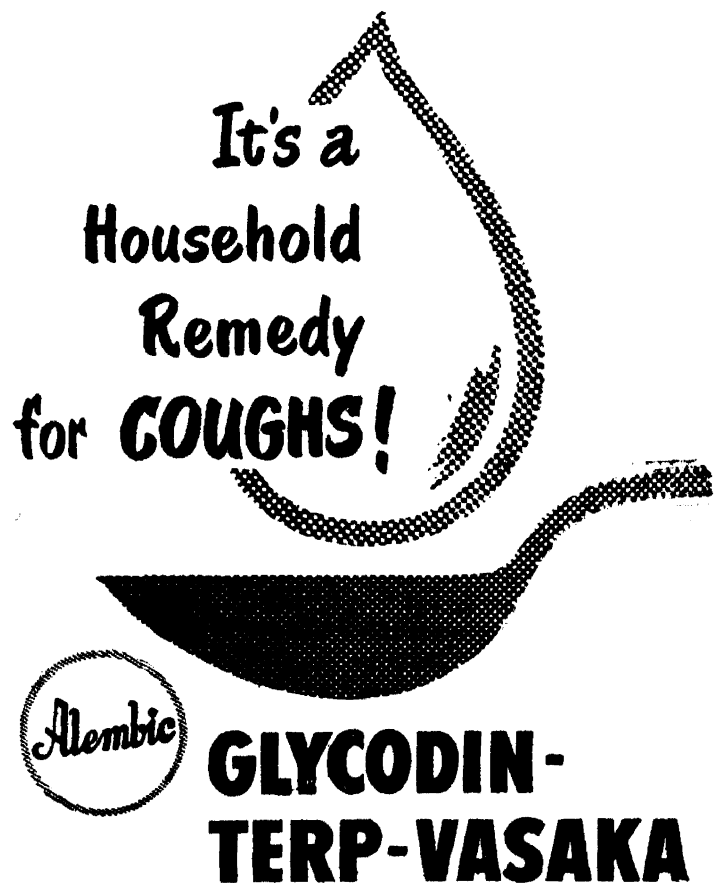
It is difficult to establish a direct casual connection between this new movement in favour of two Karnatakas and the fear of some of the major communities in Mysore State that in the future set-up, they would be reduced to pitiful minorities. Nevertheless, the motive force behind this reactionary movement 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 future Karnataka State. The Commission has referred to this problem in its report. It states that "there has grown up in the last two or three years opposition to the unification of Mysore with other Karnataka areas." Quite apart from the fear that the inclusion of relatively under-developed areas in the financially stable Mysore would lead to huge budget deficits, there is the fear among the Vokkaliga community that they would lose their importance in the Karnataka State. Considering that the movement is of very recent origin, it does not seem to have any sizable following in the countryside. It is argued, however, on their behalf, that the Vokkaligas who now constitute about 29 per cent in Mysore State, would be reduced to about 14 per cent in the proposed Karnataka State. On the other hand, the Lingayats, who form a predominant section of the Bombay Karnataka, will, in the future set-up, constitute about 20 per cent of the total population, thus tilting the

scales against the Vokkaligas. Over and above this is the fear of the political leaders of Mysore that they would suffer a political eclipse in the new State. The Commission has dismissed these arguments by stating that in the perspective of the political and economic development of the Karnataka State, the importance of narrow communal jealousies should not be exaggerated.

As public opinion in favour of a United Karnataka is overwhelmingly strong and persistent, it seems likely that the reactionary pseudo-royalist movement will fizzle out in course of time. 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 dismiss-

ed 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. Far 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, Ghataprabha 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.



**It's a  
Household  
Remedy  
for COUGHS!**

**Alembic**

**GLYCODIN-  
TERP-VASAKA**

ALEMBIC CHEMICAL WORKS CO. LTD., BARODA-3

YOU CAN PUT YOUR CONFIDENCE IN ALEMBIC

EVERETT G.T.V. 54-J