

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE - SKETCH OF MAHARAJA SAYAJI RAO GAEKWAD.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE-SKETCH OF MAHARAJA SAYAJI RAO GAEKWAD.

This research work aims to analyse and study Sayaji Rao's ideas in social, economic and political spheres. Therefore, a short biographical sketch highlighted with some notable events and incidents in his life may be attempted here as background. Certain aspects like Sayaji Rao's education, domestic life, foreign travels, his ideas and reforms in social, economic and political spheres and his political relations with the British Government in India, are not treated here because they have been taken up and discussed in relevant chapters.

Adoption

After the deposition and exile of Maharaja Malhar Rao Gaekwad, both the Government of India and the Government of Baroda faced a difficult problem of selecting a new ruler. Sir Lewis Pelly (December 1874-April 1875)⁽¹⁾ in the period of Maharaja Malhar Rao, had stated clearly ~~stated~~ to the Government of India, "If I (am sic.) once thoroughly convinced that His Highness (Malhar Rao) is incorrigible, I will permit no unnecessary delay in submitting to the Viceroy-in-Council a solemn recommendation, that the Gaekwadi State be saved by the deposer of its ruler and the inauguration of a minority or other mode of Government under suitable conditions".⁽²⁾ Later on, he clearly recommended that Malhar Rao be deposed and a minor ruler be placed on the throne of Baroda. And for this very reason, the Government of India, as stated earlier, in their proclamation explicitly debarred the issues of the Maharaja Malhar Rao from all rights, honours and privileges. The Government of India thereby intended to have a minor Maharaja on the throne of Baroda so that he might be brought up and trained according to the requirements of the State and to the expectations of the Government of India.

1. GBS, Vol.I, p.630.

2. Apte, Op.cit., Vol.I, p.120. Quoted.

After suppressing the trouble at Baroda, preparations for the settlement of the succession issue were quickened. Maharani Jannabai, the widow of the late Maharaja Khande Rao, was invited to Baroda from Poona. She came to Baroda on May 2, 1875 and on the next day Madhav Rao Tanjorkar, widely known as Sir T. Madhav Rao, arrived. He assumed the charge of the Dewan and Regent of the State. Previously he had put in sixteen years of service as an efficient Dewan of the Travancore and Indore States. Here he was charged to clean and regulate the administration of the Baroda State which had been disorganised.

Maharani Jannabai was asked to choose, seeking the advice of Sir T. Madhav Rao and the approval of the Government of India, a boy whom she would adopt as her son and he was to become the heir to the throne. The Government of India also appointed a Commission of Colonel Etheridge and Mr. Elliot to decide illegitimacy of rival claimants to the throne in consultation with the Maharani.

After intensive search and by brushing aside the the claims of these who were pressing for their selection, the attention was drawn to the Kavlana branch of the Gaekwads. Sayaji Rao (then Gopal Rao) on whom the choice fell, was the second son of the three sons of Kashi Rao Gaekwad. Kashi Rao descended from Pratap Rao, the younger brother of Damaji Rao II (1732-68), the founder of the Baroda State^①. At the time of adoption, Gopal Rao, was thirteen years old (see Appendix 1). On May 27, 1875, he was formally adopted by Maharani Jannabai as her son and heir of Maharaja Khande Rao and was installed on the gadi of Baroda. He was named as Maharaja Sayaji Rao III.

Sayaji Rao III was hardly literate when he became the Maharaja. He could scarcely read or write properly. Therefore

1. Shree Sayaji Gaurau Granth, Part I (Birthday Celebration Committee, Bombay and Baroda, 1933), p.14. (Hereafter SSGG.)

his actual education began on June 7, 1875 and lasted till December 28, 1881 the particulars of which will be found in the Third Chapter. As Sayaji Rao was minor in 1875, Sir T. Madhav Rao was charged to administer the State till he came of the age.

The period between 1875 and 1881 is marked with three events. The young Maharaja visited Bombay in November 1875 to receive the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VIII of England and entertained him later at Baroda. In 1877, Sayaji Rao attended the Imperial Darbar at Delhi and visited historical places like Agra, Benares and Allahabad on the return journey. At Delhi, he was invested with the title of "Farzand-i-Khas-i-Dowlat-i-Englishia" meaning, the "most favoured son of the English Empire". In 1880, he married to Princess Laxmibai (named after marriage as Chimnabai I) belonging to the Mohite clan of the Tanjore State. The domestic life of Sayaji Rao is also discussed in the Third Chapter.

Though Sayaji Rao's education remained far from completed in the true sense of the term, he was invested with full powers in 1881.

Sir T. Madhav Rao's Administration

The condition of the Baroda State prior to 1875, had become so much disorganised that it urgently called for overhauling the entire administration and putting things in a new and improved manner. During Maharaja Malhar Rao's trial, Madhav Rao had an opportunity to visit the Baroda State and make report to the Government of India on its affairs. So he was well acquainted with the State of affairs.

The Dewan was confronted with many intricate problems that were left by Malhar Rao as his legacy. Fawcett who described Madhav Rao as ^{the} "Turgot of India,"⁽¹⁾ was held by the local people as

1. G.A.Natesan, Indian Statesmen (Madras, 1927), p.203.

"the trusted nominee of the British Government" and "as a representative of an intriguing authority". Whatever might have been said about him, but within a period of six years he remodelled the Baroda State. He reorganised finances and justice; established schools, hospitals and dispensaries; extended railways; laid public gardens; built a college and commenced the construction of the present Laxmi Vilas palace. All the branches of State Administration were over-hauled. He tackled the problems of taxation and adopted measures to lighten its burden on the people. In many respects, he ushered an era of peace, prosperity and progress, which had been largely unknown to Baroda before.

Same
Too general. It is a general statement. Sources

Despite such achievements, he frankly admitted, "We have resisted the temptation to enter upon an ambitious course of action."^① He also did his best to infuse the sense of responsibility in the mind of young Maharaja. At the time of Sayaji Rao's accession to power, he claimed that he had "fulfilled the primary obligations of a civilised Government."^② Though he took satisfaction for what he did as Dewan, he was not in favour of early investiture of powers to Maharaja Sayaji Rao. He felt that the Maharaja should have more proper education and training looking to his future work. In the late years of his life, he expressed his regret over Sayaji Rao's early investiture and charged Elliot, Sayaji Rao's tutor, for strongly impressing upon the mind of the Maharaja, the superiority of the Western reforms and the inferiority of Hindu culture and civilization. Madhav Rao stated that Elliot had made the Maharaja almost an "Anglo-European" for a longer period. It was a mistake to employ an Englishman as the principal teacher for a Hindu King.^③

Probably should have been a different teacher

The investiture of full powers of government took place on

1. BSAR, 1880-81, p.115.

2. Ibid.

3. C.M.Doctor, Shriment Maharaja Sayajiraoji Jivancharitra, Vol.I (Baroda, 1943), pp.70-71. Quoted.

December 28, 1881. Sir T. Madhav Rao continued as Dewan till March 27, 1883¹, when he resigned. The differences that developed between the Maharaja and Sir T. Madhav Rao need some explanation.

Sir T. Madhav Rao as said above felt himself satisfied with what he had done for the State during his tenure as Dewan. After the assumption of full powers, Sayaji Rao began to devote himself fully to the State-Work. He would discuss the matter placed before him with Sir T. Madhav Rao and argue with him. In all cases, Madhav Rao found himself in a position of defender of his own opinions and remarks on the office papers. This irked much the statesman who throughout his life had acted independently and finally in his work. Moreover, for the last six years he had nearly enjoyed the position of a ruler. The attitude of Sayaji Rao was not liked by him. The differences between the two developed slowly and gradually. It was very difficult for Madhav Rao to brooke over in almost all the matters before the Maharaja. One incident which is the last, is worthy of mention.

In 1882, the case that was referred to the Maharaja was of criminal nature and Sayaji Rao was expected to endorse the remark of Sir T. Madhav Rao. A man named Pathaji Lalaji was alleged to have murdered Dungersi, a boy, in a quarrel over ornaments. In the lower court Pathaji was convicted of the offence and was ordered to be hanged. The State High Court on an appeal, concurred with the conviction of Pathaji but changed the death sentence into life imprisonment. This case came to Madhav Rao for sanction before passing it to the Maharaja for final orders. Madhav Rao endorsed the decision of the High Court and recommended it to the Maharaja.

Sayaji Rao disagreed with the decision of the High Court and the recommendation of Sir T. Madhav Rao and upheld the decision of the lower court. The convict was to be hanged. Madhav

1. Apte, Op.Cit., Vol.I, p.285.

Rao felt that his opinion as Dewan had no weight before the Maharaja. So, he decided to go on leave for six months before retiring as Dewan. After six months' leave, he resigned on March 27, 1883.⁽¹⁾

It has been commented that "If Sir T. Madhav Rao had not gone, he would have been forced to leave". Sayaji Rao who early in his manhood "developed as a lion" would not "harbour another member of the same species in the same den with himself".⁽²⁾ It has been also stated that "a band of officials, who had banded themselves together against the man who for six years had been the uncrowned ruler of the Principality, was responsible for his retirement".⁽³⁾

After thirteen years, Sayaji Rao in a letter to V.M. Samarth, the Suba of Baroda, gave out his impression about Madhav Rao. He wrote, "It is not easy for a man who has ruled a State with supreme authority, and stood, in fact, almost in the position of a Raja, to step down to a less commanding level, where his will would not be so entirely absolute."⁽⁴⁾ This reflects how Sayaji Rao understood Sir T. Madhav Rao. Kazi Shihabuddin, an associate of Sir T. Madhav Rao was appointed Dewan after the resignation of Sir T. Madhav Rao.

Y/ The actual rule of Sayaji Rao began from 1882. One of his early acts was to visit the different parts of the Baroda State with a view to getting acquaintance of them. He visited the districts during 1882 and 1887 with certain breaks in between. He studied the district administration, allowed the people to meet him freely,

-
1. Apte, Op.cit., Vol.I, pp.282-85.
 2. G.A.Natesan, H.H. Shri Sayaji Rao Gaekwad (Madras, 1912), pp.16-17.
 3. Ibid., p.16.
 4. G.S.Sardesai, Selected Letters (Compiled) (Hereafter as SL), Vol.I, Letter July 15, 1895 (Baroda, 1923), p.138. No.140 of

Source
discussed with them problems affecting their interests and consulted the State Officers at all levels for their solution.

Summary
The early part of Sayaji Rao's reign is marked with overhauling of the administration and introducing changes and new reforms. A Registration Department was created; fresh impetus was given to well-sinking; surveys of roads were undertaken; a new system of Excise was introduced; the foundation of the State-owned Baroda Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills, was laid and public welfare works like Ajwa Water Works, ① were undertaken.

Summary
Sayaji Rao also toured the far flung areas of India, Europe, Asia and America. He persistently endeavoured to introduce new reforms and to revitalise the administrative machinery of the State in order to make it a model state among the Indian States. The reasons that led him to go to health resorts in India and abroad and the benefit that he derived from his frequent foreign trips have been discussed in the Third Chapter. During the course of his visits, he had unique opportunities to meet the leading statesmen, outstanding personalities and highest dignitaries of the Country. ②

During his tours of European and American countries, he visited many mechanical and technical centres and it led to the establishment of industrial and technical institutions in the State. There are still some institutions in Baroda which owe their inspiration to his European and American travels, for example the Fine Arts Gallery, the Library system and the educational system. He was interested in architecture which he studied with care. The exquisite pieces of art and painting displayed in the halls and corridors of Laxmi Vilas Palace and the furniture with which the Palace was

Source

-
1. At the time of laying foundation Sayaji Rao called it as "... the most costly and most important work of public utility that has been devised since my accession." A.G. Widgery, Speeches And Addresses of His Highness Sayaji Rao III Maharaja of Baroda, 1877-1927 (London, 1928), p.23. (Hereafter as SAMSG).
 2. He met President Theodore Roosevelt of U.S.A. in 1905, Benito Mussolini of Italy in 1923, President F.D. Roosevelt of U.S.A. in 1934 and Chancellor Hitler of Germany in 1936.
- ...

adorned speak of his aesthetic taste and fondness for a refined way of living.

It had been the practice among the Indian Princes in those days to go more than often to European health-resort centres and pleasure sports. The people of the State viewed such living of their rulers with dislike and criticised it.

By 1901, Sayaji Rao had made seven trips abroad, but he did them for better cause. Wherever he moved, he looked for new ideas in different spheres like education, agriculture, industry, co-operation and others. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, issued a circular widely known as 'Curzon Circular' ⁽¹⁾ which required the Indian Princes to obtain the sanction of the Government of India before leaving India for abroad. Sayaji Rao who did not desire his freedom restricted, protested and called the Circular as "the most mischievous and quite unnecessary." ⁽²⁾ This aspect will be discussed in Chapter XI. In spite of such Circular, the Government of India placed no restrictions on the Indian Princes intending to go abroad.

Reforms :

Education

After his first European visit in 1887, Sayaji Rao soon realised that ignorance was the cause of poverty of Indians and education was the only remedy to eradicate them. He regarded education as 'the lever - the only lever - by which this country (i.e. India) can be extricated from that stationary condition in which it has remained through incalculable ages.' ⁽³⁾ In 1891, he evolved a system of State-aided popular education in the districts of State. He selected Amreli District for introducing primary education, both free and compulsory in 1893. ⁽⁴⁾ In 1906, he extended this system to the whole State.

-
1. This Circular was published in the Gazette of India (Supplement), August 25, 1900.
 2. Letter to Sir John Watson of November 14, 1900. Quoted by Philip W. Sergeant, The Ruler of Baroda, An Account of the Life and Work of the Maharaja Gaekwar (London, 1928), p.283.
 3. Widgey, SAMSG, p.25.
 4. G.H.Desai, A Statistical Atlas of the Baroda State, p.25.

Specifying
Summ
Sayaji Rao made special provisions for the education of females, untouchables and the backward people like Kaliparaj, Vaghers, Kolis, Bhils and others in the State. He gave liberal scholarships and granted residential facilities to the backward tribes and untouchables. In 1901, he declared that education was the basis of all reforms and was the only way of salvation from the present condition. ① He set up a number of educational institutions like Arts Science and Commerce Colleges, Technical School (Kala Bhavan), Girls' High School, Training Colleges for both male and female, music schools and Sanskrit Pathshalas.

11
In order to strengthen the public instruction, a Library movement was launched in 1907. Circulating libraries in the Talukas and Peta Mahals of the State were provided with a view to affording opportunities to the people in towns and villages, for reading books, periodicals and newspapers. After his second visit to U.S.A. in 1910, Sayaji Rao engaged the services of Mr. W.A. Borden and appointed him as an organiser and director of a newly created State Library Department. In course of time, a Central Library in the Baroda city, libraries in the district towns, reading-rooms, mobile libraries and a library class, were organised. Sayaji Rao, in this way, attached much importance to library activities in the State besides providing education at all levels.

11
He also believed that along with the wide-spread of education, there should be a freedom of access to the trades and professions which would help in raising the standard of economic efficiency of the whole people and enable a portion of them to achieve outstanding positions. He made physical education compulsory in 1936. ②

Social

(Sayaji Rao distinguished himself as a great social reformer of his time. His achievements in this field were remarkable. He regarded untouchability and caste-system as grave defects of the Hindu society which were undermining its solidarity and happiness. He held that "India is not a nation and cannot be made into a nation while it is split up into religions and castes." ③ The

1. Widgery, SAMSG, p.69.

2. Doctor, op.cit., Vol.II, p. ~~598~~ ⁵⁹⁸.

3. Sergeant, op.cit., p.217. Quoted.

social reforms which he introduced were in consonant with the ideas he cherished. His social ideas have been examined in the Fifth Chapter.

1 Sayaji Rao in the beginning broke down the tyranny of the priestly class. He cared very little about a particular religious ceremony which was performed either with the Vedic rituals or with the Puranic rituals. In 1896, he insisted to follow Vedokta ritual in the Royal House of Baroda. The crossing of ocean i.e. Kala Pani, was regarded a heinous crime by the orthodox Hindus in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Sayaji Rao gave a shock to this Hindu tradition by sending his brother Sampat Rao to England as a student. The persistent nerve trouble and insomnia prompted Sayaji Rao to go to Europe for its cure. For a Hindu Raja to cross the ocean was still more shocking to the orthodox opinion. Disregarding the entreaties of close relatives and the opposition of the priestly class, Sayaji Rao left the shore of India for the first time in 1887 and went to Europe.

Sayaji Rao started Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya in Baroda for training the priests and it was thrown open to all the Hindus, whether Brahmins or non-Brahmins. In 1915, he passed the Purohit Act which aimed at making the priests to qualify for performing the rituals.

✓ He also passed a number of social and religious reform Acts. In 1902 The Religious Freedom Act was passed. It gave liberty of conscience to a man for changing his religion without losing any rights to property or any other lawful rights. The Hindu Widow Re-marriage Act (1901), The Child Marriage Prevention Act (1905), ① The Hindu Marriage Act (1905), The Baroda Special Marriage Act (1908), ② The Hindu Adoption Act (1910), The Hindu Succession Act (1911) and The Hindu Divorce Act (1931) were some of the important legislations of Sayaji Rao, an unique contribution in the legislative history of the Baroda State. In 1934,

-
1. Also known as Age of Consent Act and Infant Marriage Prevention Act.
 2. Also known as Civil Marriage Act.

the Sanyas Deeksha Regulation Act and the Anti-Tyranny Caste Act were passed. Throughout his period, Sayaji Rao aimed to introduce either new legislations or modify those introduced earlier.)

Economic:

From the early part of his reign Sayaji Rao evinced keen interest in the economic development of the Baroda State. He realised that the real welfare of man depended upon his economic stability. In a country where more than ninety percent of the inhabitants were dependent entirely on the soil for their support, no financial freedom could be expected, so, he decided to do everything in his power to improve agricultural and economic conditions and to foster industries in the State. His ideas relating to agriculture and industry have been examined along with his measures in the Chapters VII and VIII.

It would be sufficient here to note that he set up an independent Department of Agriculture in 1909, to follow up many agricultural reforms which had been already implemented. Similarly during the 1885-1908 period, he provided for technical education, started some new industries and provided financial aid to the local industries. A separate Department of Commerce and Industry in the State was organised to encourage commerce and industry in the State. The Bank of Baroda was also founded in 1908 to assist the local industries.

Transport:

Sayaji Rao firmly believed that the State should provide transport facilities in order to encourage trade and commerce in the State.

It has been already stated earlier that Maharaja Ganpat Rao (1847-1856) had ceded some Baroda State lands to the British for the construction of a Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway line. In 1860, the first train ran through Baroda. Later on, the State built its own railways. It was managed by the B.B. and C.I. Railway Company till 1908, when it was taken over by the State itself. In due course, a net-work of railway-lines was laid out in the State linking the important cities and towns of the State.

Side by side, there was also an expansion of good roads but they were developed only after the advent of motor-car. As the land of the State was unsuitable, the water-ways could not be developed. The small and the only port in the State, was the Okha Port.

Banking :

Formerly the management of the State funds was carried out through State bankers i.e. sahukars who lent money on interest to the State and to the military class. It is significant to note that Maharaja Malhar Rao (1871-75) became "an active partner of the bankers and then a State banker lending to and borrowing from himself." ⁽¹⁾ In 1876, Sir T. Madhav Rao acted promptly and organised State treasuries - in the talukas and in the districts-and withdrew the State funds from the sahukars. In course of time, a need for banking institution was keenly felt as a result of which the Baroda Pedhi was organised in 1884 under the patronate of the State. In 1908, with the establishment of the Bank of Baroda Ltd., the Pedhi was no longer required and was sent into voluntary liquidation. The Bank of Baroda Ltd. played a significant role in meeting the financial needs both of the State and the industry.

Local Self-Government:

Village Panchayats etc.

Sayaji Rao believed in preserving as much as the ancient form of self-government in the villages, as possible. At the time of commencement of the land settlement operation in 1884, a clear directive was given to the officers concerned to report on this issue. As a result, an elective system - half elected and half nominated - was decided by the Maharaja for the introduction in the village Panchayats in 1901. He conceived an idea of building an elaborate system of representation from the village to the taluka level, from the taluka to the district level and from the district to the State Legislative Council level. In 1902, the Rules for the organisation of gram or village Panchayats were laid down. In course of time, a number of amendments and modifications

1. Doctor, op.cit., Vol.I, p.385.

were made. In 1920, The New Village Panchayat Act was passed and it provided the base for the whole edifice of self-government in the State. The Village Panchayats were given important functions like the sanitation, the water-supply, drainage, the trial of civil and criminal cases within certain specified limits.

After framing the rules for the organisation of the village Panchayats in 1902, Sayaji Rao passed the Local Self-Government Act in 1904. It provided that all the villages in a taluka were to be divided into a number of groups and from each group, a member was to go to the Taluka Board. The members of the Taluka Board in the District were to elect one or more members for the District Board. Similarly the Municipalities with a population of over ten thousand in the District were also to send up the members. These Boards were assigned many duties like the construction of the roads, tanks, wells, the management of the dispensaries and rest-houses and the undertaking of relief works on a small scale in times of famine.

Municipalities:

With the passing of Municipal Act for Baroda in 1892, elective principle was provided for the first time. Financial independence was given to the Baroda Municipality by an Act in 1905 and various responsibilities, duties and powers were entrusted to it. In most of the taluka towns of the State, the municipalities had been established in 1877 and were entirely managed by the Vahivatdars - government officials - of the talukas. In fact, such municipalities functioned as the branches of the government. After the creation of the Panchayats and the Local Boards, Maharaja Sayaji Rao decided to introduce self-government in some of the towns which seemed to be progressive or advanced in their working, so a Municipal Act was passed in 1905.

The Municipalities were divided into two categories namely 'A' and 'B'. The municipalities which were not competent enough for self-government were placed in 'A' category and were to be managed by the Vahivatdars of the concerned talukas as before. Those municipalities which were competent enough for having self-government were put in 'B' category. They were

given wider powers and functions.

By the end of 1938, the Baroda Municipality and other such municipalities were given the right of electing their Presidents.

Constitutionalism:

A State Executive Council presided over by the Dewan existed from 1887. In 1904, Sayaji Rao conceived a scheme and ordered for the formation of a regular Legislative Assembly or Dhara Sabha with some seats reserved for members elected by the people. In 1907 the formation of the Dhara Sabha was sanctioned and its constitution was framed. In 1908 the Dhara Sabha took a definite shape. The Minister i.e. the Dewan, became its President. Maharaja Sayaji Rao desired that the Council should discuss those questions which various departments of the Government could not deal. It was in fact an advisory body to the Maharaja which rendered help in passing the laws and in whatever work referred to it by the Maharaja. The proceedings of the Dhara Sabha were to be done in Gujarati.

In the beginning the number of the Councillors was fixed at seventeen but later on it was raised to twenty six. At the time of Sayaji Rao's death it consisted of thirty one members including the Dewan.^①

In 1912, the proportion of elected members was increased and the following year a member was nominated to represent the

1. BSAR, 1938-39, p.26. Apart from these 31 members, the Karma Sachiv, the Mantra Sachiv, the Nyaya-mantri, the Sar Suba and the Government pleader of the Varishta (High) Court were ex-officio members of the Council. Besides these, there were fifteen nominated members - one from the Ruling family, six officials and eight non-officials.

depressed classes. The Council were given the rights of interpellation and division on resolutions, but it were not binding to the Government. All the new laws were not necessarily referred to the Council. Some of the important laws were passed by the Maharaja without referring it to the Council.

Under Sayaji Rao's orders in 1922, a Committee of Dewan Sir Manubhai Mehta and S.V. Mukherjea, prepared a detailed scheme of the formation with two Houses of Legislature and the enlargement of its powers. The scheme was published in 1924. ⁽¹⁾ The people of Baroda looked forward to the announcement by Sayaji Rao in conceding constitutional reforms at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations which were to take place from 11th ~~and~~^{to} 14th January of 1926. But they were disillusioned. Sayaji Rao made no such announcement. Therefore there was a general demand of constitutional reforms. The Legislative Council also passed resolutions over it.

Sometime after the Golden Jubilee Celebrations, Sayaji Rao, in a private conversation uttered, " If my people are really progressive, they have now in Baroda all the facilities necessary for progress. But they must themselves prove that they are progressive." ⁽²⁾ In another conversation sometime later, he amplified his views. He said that the day had not yet come for further extension of democratic principles to Baroda. The people were not educated up to such a point. Those who talked so much about the necessity of having popular government were not the people, but a small class of literates. They did that because the masses took no interest in the matter. ⁽³⁾ It is interesting to observe here that this demand was strongly put forward by the Vadodara Rajya Prajamandal a political association founded in 1916. The Prajamandal in its annual sessions adopted resolutions demanding popular government in the State. ⁽⁴⁾ The remarks of

-
1. Sergeant, op.cit., p.255.
 2. Ibid., p.195. Quoted.
 3. Ibid., p.256.
 4. Vadodara Rajya Prajamandal, Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume (Baroda, 1942), p.4.

Sayaji Rao seem to have been made keeping Prajamandal's activities in view.

During 1924 and 1926 when Sir Manubhai Mehta was Dewan, Sayaji Rao accorded the right to the Council to discuss the annual budget. As interpreted by official circles this experiment did not yield good results. So the right was withdrawn by the Maharaja. ①

Sayaji Rao did not change his attitude and granted more constitutional rights to the people. In 1937-38, a Committee for the Enlargement of Powers of the Council was appointed afresh. The Committee drafted its report unanimously but it could not be submitted to the Maharaja who was extremely sick and uneasy. Before any step could be taken, he passed away on February 6, 1939. However his successor Maharaja Pratapsingh Rao after his accession, in a message of February 26, 1939, to the people of Baroda, granted a scheme of constitutional reforms based on the recommendations of the Committee. ②

Public Works, Literature and Fine Arts:

The services rendered by Sayaji Rao to his State, were all pervading. He hardly left untouched the field that came to his notice. He either made improvement or introduced marked new changes in it.

Public Works:

Sayaji Rao was a great builder. Before 1875, there was no Public Works Department in the State. Sir T. Madhav Rao organised this Department during 1875 and 1881. Sayaji Rao, after 1881, effected changes in order to increase its efficiency and kept a close watch on it.

Sayaji Rao's first public gift was the Sayaji Sarovar Scheme ③ which was completed between 1885 and 1890. The serious problem of supplying water to the inhabitants of Baroda, was solved by implementing this scheme. During his entire reign, many

-
1. Doctor, op.cit., p.p.365-366. 2. BSAR, 1938-39, p.8.
 3. Widgery, SAMSG, p.p.22-23.

Sayaji Rao
works of public utility like irrigation works through water-tanks were undertaken. Gardens at the Laxmi Vilas and Makarpura Palaces and at Umrat (South Gujarat), Maharaja's residence as well as at the Public Park in Baroda were laid out. The services of Mr. Goldring from England were specially requisitioned in 1888 for this purpose.

Rest-houses and dharmashalas both for public and for travelling officers were built in almost all the important places in the State. The two beautiful monuments, Baroda College designed by State architect R.F. Chisholm and the Laxmi Vilas Palace designed by Major Mant, were built in Indo-Saracenic style. The other notable works were the Lal Bag Palace, Nyaya Mandir, Kala Bhavan, Secretariat Building, State General Hospital, the Countess of Dufferine Hospital, the Baroda High School and the Khande Rao Market in the city. At Mehsana and Amreli also the Public Offices were built. These public works testify to the refined taste and fondness of Sayaji Rao.

Literature:

Sayaji Rao recognised the need to encourage Vernacular language namely Gujarati, in the State. Writing to his brother Sampat Rao in January 1889, he emphasised on the necessity of translating the Marathi books in Gujarati with the Devnagiri Script.⁽¹⁾ In order to promote vernacular language and writing, he employed some notable scholars⁽²⁾ in 1888. A Translation Branch was created under the supervision of the Director of the Education Department. The objective of this Branch was to publish books on the "Literature of Knowledge" and "Literature of Power."

For the cultural advancement of the people, Sayaji Rao liberally provided the temples of learning in the State. As shown earlier, he introduced an elaborate system of libraries throughout the State from 1910 onwards. A Sanskrit Library containing printed as well as invaluable and rare manuscripts was organised. In order to preserve the valuable Sanskrit works

1. Apte, op.cit., Vol.II, p.663.

2. Shanker Moro Ranade, R.B. Govindrao H. Desai, Tribhuvandas Gajjar, Manilal Dwivedi were some of the pioneer writers and translators employed.

and render them accessible to scholars in the field, Sayaji Rao envisaged a scheme of their publication under The Gaekwad's Oriental Series.

An Oriental Library attached to the Central Library, was started in 1915. In course of time, hundreds of Sanskrit books as well as manuscripts were added to it. In 1927, this institution was separated from the Central Library and was named as The Oriental Institute. By 1939, the Institute had no less than fourteen thousand printed books in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Ardhamagadhi.^① The Institute undertook the work of publishing the most rare books and the unpublished manuscripts in quick succession.

A Translation Department attached to the Oriental Institute was also started with a view to publishing original as well as translated books on different subjects written by different writers in Marathi, Gujarati, Sanskrit (with translation), Hindi and Urdu. The books began to be published under the captions "Shree Sayaji Sahityamala" and "Shree Sayaji Balgannamala". This work is still being continued by the Oriental Institute, which is under the management of the M.S. University of Baroda.

Fine Arts:

Sayaji Rao evinced keen interest in Fine Arts which further developed with the increase on his trips abroad. He observed and purchased many exquisite pieces of sculpture, images and paintings during the course of his visits. A number of them were duly exhibited in the Laxmi Vilas Palace and in the Museum. Signor Felici, a Venetian Sculptor, who was especially invited to Baroda in 1893, made beautiful pieces of statues of royal personages, Arab soldiers, dancers, bhists (Water-carriers) etc.^②

The Maharaja encouraged Indian painting by inviting Ravi Verma, the most outstanding artist of the period in India, to Baroda. Ravi Verma reduced the Pauranic incidents in paintings. Sayaji Rao also provided an instruction in this art at Kalabhavan

1. Doctor, op.cit., Vol. I, p.p.343-344.

2. Apte, op.cit., Vol. II, p.p.670-671.

and sent a few students to Europe to learn the Western methods in this sphere. ①

Music: Sayaji Rao also patronised Indian music by setting up a special School named The Baroda Music School in Baroda. It was well-equipped and prominent musicians were appointed as teachers. This School under the M.S. University of Baroda has developed into a full fledged College (Faculty) of Music, Dance and Drama.

Museum:

Sayaji Rao's tastes were varied in Fine Arts. In Europe he had seen many exquisite articles but among them the museums struck him the most. True to his inclination, he planned and founded a museum for Baroda in 1894 to be situated in the Public Park (Kamathi Bag). On his frequent visits to European and other countries including India, he was inspired to collect various types of specimen for the Museum. Besides different objects of European local industries, Indian old arms, old coins, old inscriptions and old sculptures also found their way to this Museum.

Medical Relief and Sanitation:

Sayaji Rao did not neglect to provide medical relief to the people who were then served by the ill-qualified quacks, Vaidyas and Hakims. Though Medical Department was organised in 1876, Sayaji Rao put it on a sound basis, giving it a prominent place in the programme of reforms that he had launched. New dispensaries and hospitals were opened and the existing were extended. ② They were well equipped and had qualified doctors and nurses. A school for the training of nurses, both male and female, was started at Baroda. The district and the taluka towns were provided with first class hospitals. The smaller villages were also served by a net-work of dispensaries in the State.

Sayaji Rao showed to his people how their lives could become better and happier by more sanitary surroundings. For this purpose

1. Ibid., p.673.

2. The State General Hospital at Baroda had new additions in 1886, 1898, 1899, 1907, 1914 and 1918.

W he made provisions for public parks, pipe-water supply and drainage and laid down municipal rules for house buildings. A Leper Home at Anasuya ¹ (1890) and a Lunatic Asylum (1898) at Baroda Central Jail were set up by the State. In order to root out the evil of ignorance and negligence of the dais (midwives), at the time of child-birth, the Dais Act was passed in 1919. A Sanitary Commissioner was appointed for the whole State in 1891. In 1901, Rules for the Regulation of Public Health were passed and were applied to the villages and the towns in the State.

Sport and Exercise:

Sayaji Rao was very good at sports and exercise, a taste which he developed during his training in 1875-1881. ² Philips Sergeant in 1928 observed that Sayaji Rao's "...insistence on regular exercise has enabled him to carry out the rest of his heavy daily programme in comparatively good health." ³ Besides being a notable rider, he developed a keen zest for hunting and shooting.

Sum He patronised various physical culture institutions in Baroda. Of these, the Vyayam Mandir of Raj Ratna Prof. Manikrao, the Majumdar's Akhada of Abasaheb, the Vyayamshala of Laxminath, were famous.

Some Important Events and Incidents:

The long reign of Sayaji Rao is full of many remarkable experiences, events and incidents. It is very difficult to narrate them all here. But some of them which reveal and reflect his position in political, social, religious and other spheres both in India and abroad, are outlined here.

-
1. A village on the bank of Narmada in the Sinor Taluka of Baroda District.
 2. Sir T. Madhav Rao in his Memorandum in the Annual Report on the Administration of the Baroda State for 1875-76 stated that "...enough care is being taken for the physical education" of the Maharaja. (P.17).
 3. The Ruler of Baroda, p.62.

The Imperial Durbar of 1903:

After taking over the administration of India in 1858, the British Government made it a practice to hold Imperial Durbars in India, perhaps to demonstrate the imperial power and awe before the people and the Princes of India. The three Imperial Durbars held in 1877, 1903 and 1911 can be viewed as marking the relations between the Government of India and the Indian Princes.

The first Imperial Durbar held in 1877, was presided over by Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy at Delhi. Sayaji Rao then only of fifteen years in age, attended it as the Maharaja of Baroda. He was invested there with the title of "Farzand-i-Khas-i-Daulat-i-Inglishia" (meaning 'own favoured son of the British Empire') Sir T. Madhav Rao, the Dewan, was also awarded with the title of 'Raja'. This reflected the relations between the Baroda State and the Government of India were cordial and smooth.

The second Imperial Durbar, a creation of the Viceroy Lord Curzon,^① was held at Delhi to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII who succeeded to throne after the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. Lord Curzon who acquitted himself as a staunch imperialist, wanted to make the Durbar not only a complete success but also surpass even the Durbar of 1877. He was "...most anxious to provide that the Indian Princes should not be merely spectators at the ceremony (Durbar) as they were in 1877, but actors in it."^②

He issued letters to the Indian Princes to acknowledge their loyalty towards King-Emperor, by attending the Durbar. He also expressed his desire to arrange an elephant procession which the Princes were to join and he was to be the central figure in it.

Sayaji Rao conscious of his dignity and position expressed his displeasure about the contents of the letter before Captain Carnegie, Resident at Baroda, and then communicated his views to his own Minister regarding the elephant procession.^③ Lord Curzon became indignant with the Maharaja at his attitude and interpreted it as a mark of disrespect to the King-Emperor.

-
1. Rice, op.cit., Vol.II, p.109.
 2. Sergeant, op.cit., p.110. Quoted.
 3. SL, Vol.II, Letter No.653, dated 13-8-1902, p.469.

Source The relations between Sayaji Rao and Lord Curzon were estranged owing to the 'Curzon Circular' which had aimed to impose restrictions on the free movements of the Indian Princes who intended to go abroad. Sayaji Rao bitterly protested against the Circular and entered into a 'pen-battle' with the authorities but nothing came out of it.

In spite of Lord Curzon's derogatory attitude towards the Indian Princes, Sayaji Rao attended the Delhi Durbar of 1903 and "... asked the Viceroy to convey to His Majesty the King-Emperor his hearty and loyal congratulations on his Coronation, and his good wishes for the New Year.." ⁽¹⁾ This meant that Sayaji Rao was ready to pay homage to the sovereign king but not to Lord Curzon. However, the Durbar went off without a hitch.

Silver-Jubilee Celebrations:

On December 28, 1906, Sayaji Rao completed twenty five years of his administration. Therefore, the Silver Jubilee of his administration was celebrated throughout the State with great pomp and rejoicings. The Celebration was delayed because Sayaji Rao was committed to open an Industrial Exhibition which was attached to the Second Industrial Conference to be held at Calcutta in December 1906. The Celebrations commenced on March 5, 1907 as scheduled and lasted for five days.

At the Birthday Durbar on March 5th, addresses outlining the achievements of Sayaji Rao since 1875, were presented by different delegates from the State. Sayaji Rao thanking the people for the addresses said in Marathi, "I look upon your well-being as my duty and salvation. I do not think I have yet been able to do my whole duty towards you, and it is only then that I shall feel satisfied." ⁽²⁾ Soon after this, as was customary, the concessions granted by the Maharaja were announced to commemorate the event.

The year of 1907 marked the zenith in the reputation of Sayaji Rao as a reformer and as an enlightened ruler among the

-
1. Stephen Wheeler, The History of Delhi Durbar (London, 1904).
 2. GBS, Vol.I, p.618. Cited.

Indian Princes. He had become widely popular both in India and in the foreign countries.

The Universal Races Congress:

Sayaji Rao had been a Vice-President of the Universal Races Congress from its inception. He was requested to preside over the Fifth Session of the Congress which he did on July 28, 1911. The Session was held in the Hall of the London University. Though he was a ruler - administrator and a 'Native Prince' as was the custom to call the Indian Princes, he dealt the subject with comfortable ease. He termed the problems of humanity not too difficult of solution, as they were common to all races and to all people so it was necessary to have a reconciliation of the world of thought and the world of feelings. He appealed the gathering to think of humanity at large, to overcome our prejudices, to meet our fellows on some common good ground and to see our differences without discord and learn co-operation by understanding, and understanding by sympathy. ①

The Delhi Durbar of 1911:

After the death of King Edward VII in 1910, his second son succeeded to the throne as George V. His coronation ceremony was held on June 22, 1911. It was attended by Sayaji Rao and he was treated there with due honour.

At a time when political atmosphere was boiling with nationalistic feelings and crimes leading to murders, the Delhi Durbar was held on December 12, 1911. As usual the Indian Princes were invited to attend the Durbar. King George V and Queen Mary specially came to Delhi for the occasion. At the Durbar, Sayaji Rao was the second Indian Prince to pay homage to the King-Emperor. The first was the Nizam of Hyderabad. ② Next day, Gopal Krishna Gokhale then a Member of the Imperial Legislative Council, informed Sayaji Rao that he had committed an act of insult to the King-Emperor by turning his back towards him after making obeisance and he had become a target of bitter criticism in the official circles. An apology was expected from him by the Government,

1. Widgey, SAMSG, p.306.

2. B.F.Karbhari, The Coronation Durbar at Delhi 1911 (Gujarati) (Bombay, 1912), p.142.

failing which he hinted Sayaji Rao's deportation without inquiry. ①

This news surprised Sayaji Rao greatly. He felt deeply sorry for it and upon Gokhale's insistence ② clarified his behaviour at the Durbar and tendered a written apology in the mildest terms. ③ It was sent to the Viceroy who published it openly. The official attitude and the antagonistic Press hit hard on Sayaji Rao's behaviour. Sayaji Rao in his explanations through Press and personal letters to his friends, complained that the whole affair had been grossly exaggerated and entirely misunderstood. He explained that it was due to his nervousness and indisposed health.

G. S. Sardesai, who served Maharaja Sayaji Rao from 1889 to 1925 as a reader and became famous as a historian through his works on Maratha history, revealed dysentery as the real cause of Sayaji Rao's indisposed health and nervousness at that time. It seemed that official attitude in this affair remained highly antagonist on this issue. But in the War of 1914-18, Sayaji Rao found an opportunity to show his loyalty and co-operation with the British by contributing both in men and money.

War Conference, Delhi:

As the fate of First World War hung in balance in the beginning of 1918, the King-Emperor George V sent a message to the Indian Princes for soliciting their co-operation and loyalty in the crisis through which the British Empire was passing. In the Conference held for the purpose on April 29, 1918, Sayaji Rao gave an assurance of "unswerving loyalty and abiding attachment to His Majesty's person and throne, in this hour of the Empire's need." ④ Sayaji Rao spoke on "on behalf of all my brother princes and the people of India."

-
1. Apte, op.cit., Vol.III (Baroda, 1936), p.798.
 2. G. S. Sardesai, Shree Sayajirao Gaekwad Yancha Sahavasanta (Marathi) (Poona, 1956), pp. 60-61.
 3. Confidential File No.457, "Papers Regarding The Delhi Durbar Incident of 1911." Confidential Section, Baroda Record Office.
 4. Widgery, SAMSG, pp. 456-57.

Sayaji Rao's Mistaken Death:

Sayaji Rao had perhaps the most difficult fortune to remain alive and mark how the world viewed him, thought about him and valued him as a man, reformer, ruler, patriot and nationalist.

His elder son Jaisingh Rao who was travelling by train from Berlin to Paris died on August 27, 1923, before the train reached at the Flushing Station. The Reuter's Agency from London flashed this news to the world but did not specify the name of the deceased and simply reported that "H.H. the Gaekwar of Baroda" had died. As was the practice of the day, this title was applied only to a prince of the ruling position. The sons of the ruling Maharaja were known as the Princes. The Reuter's Agency failed to observe this difference at that time but when their attention was drawn, the news was immediately corrected and begged apology from Maharaja Sayaji Rao.

At that time Sayaji Rao was resting at St. Morritz. On hearing the news, he immediately rushed to Flushing and accompanied the corpse of his son to Paris.

In between the first news and the corrected news, almost all the leading newspapers both in Europe and in India including Baroda, came out with obituary notes paying glorious tributes to the 'departed' Maharaja. ~~They also tendered apology to the Maharaja after receiving the correct news.~~ They also tendered apology to the Maharaja after receiving the correct news. Sayaji Rao was so amused with what had occurred that he ordered to collect the cuttings from such newspapers which had paid tributes to him. The cuttings were kept in the Central Library of Baroda.

Award of LL.D. Degree:

Sayaji Rao had a broadminded interest in everything that was concerned especially with the educational advancement of India and her people. From the very beginning he showed his sympathy and promised support to the Banaras Hindu University, then known as Hindu University of Benares. Throughout his life his interest in the institution never lessened and he repeatedly came to its aid with donations for its buildings and for its other works. In 1924 he was the Chancellor of this University. He delivered the

Convocation Address on January 19, 1924 as Chancellor^① stressing on the need of education.

Nine days after this convocation Sayaji Rao was awarded with an Honorary Degree of LL.D. of the University at the hands of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, a learned scholar and one of the pioneers of the University.

Golden Jubilee Celebrations, 1925:

On May 27, 1925, Sayaji Rao completed fifty years of his rule. At that time, he was away in Paris and was planning to return to Baroda. Under the circumstances the Celebrations were postponed till January 11, 1926. Four days were fixed for the Celebrations. On the first day, Sayaji Rao was presented with congratulatory Addresses by different communities of the State. These Addresses reflected Maharaja's achievements and the progress of the State under him. Gujarati, Marathi, English Hindustani, Arabic and Persian were used in these Addresses. The striking feature of the Celebrations was the participation of the Antyajias (untouchables) who also presented Addresses to the Maharaja.

In a reply to the Addresses, Sayaji Rao exhorted the people to understand the larger conception of Indian nationhood, to look forward and not backward, to live for the future and not in the past, to do away with all that was hindering social progress and to accept all that was good in foreign culture. He also appealed to them to march boldly along with unflinching courage and utilize all opportunities for the good of humanity and progress.^② As it was customary on such occasions, Sayaji Rao announced some concessions, tax-relief and some other facilities.

Foundation of Kirti Mandir - The Temple of Fame:

After the close of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations, two Ceremonies as if an appendage to them, were performed by Sayaji Rao. The first was the laying of the foundation stone of Kirti

1. Widgery, SAMSG, pp.479-89.

2. BSAR, 1925-26, p.280.

Mandir on January 15, 1926. The second was the opening of a "Poor House", a home for the aged poor on March 10, 1926.

At the time of laying foundation stone of Kirti Mandir, Sayaji Rao clarified his aim regarding the monument and said that, "It is.... our special duty to recognise our personal debt to those of our own State who have in particular contributed to its progress."^① Therefore Kirti Mandir would ever keep fresh the memory of the distinguished persons and benefactors of the State. He also gave a hint that he would start a Golden Jubilee Memorial Lecture in the memory of some great personality and the lecture would be delivered annually in honour of the illustrious dead.^② As an act of organised charity, Sayaji Rao established Poor House in Baroda.^③

Indian Philosophical Congress:

As Prof. A.G. Widgery stated, Sayaji Rao did not concern himself so much with ultimate metaphysical problems, but had a persistent interest both of reading and of thinking in ethics.^④ He maintained that Sayaji Rao was ".....deeply interested in religion, both in the development of a modern conception of it and in finding a satisfactory answer to the question how traditional practical forms of religion should be regarded."^⑤ Keeping this in view, it will not surprise anyone when he learns that Sayaji Rao was invited to inaugurate the Indian Philosophical Congress at Bombay on December 19, 1927. With considerable ease, he discussed philosophy in general and the Indian Philosophy and

-
1. Widgery, SAMSG, p.492.
 2. The M. S. University of Baroda still holds Golden Jubilee Memorial Lectures annually.
 3. Widgery, SAMSG, pp.503-506.
 4. SSGG, Part III, p.9. Prof. Widgery worked as a Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Religion at Baroda College from 1925 to 1931.
 5. SSGG, Part III, p.11.

their relation with social advancement.^①

The Seventy-first Birthday Celebrations, 1933

The Seventy-first birthday of Sayaji Rao which fell on March 17, 1933 became a grand occasion to congratulate him not only in the Baroda State but also at several places like Bombay, Poona, Ahmednagar, Satara and Vai in India. A Celebration Committee formed for the purpose brought out a souvenir entitled Shree Sayaji Gaurav Granth on March 18, 1933 and was presented to Sayaji Rao in Bombay.

After attending the Celebrations at Baroda on March 17, Sayaji Rao went to Bombay. Many institutions and leaders of repute presented Addresses to him. The souvenir that was presented to him contained articles on his life and work and achievements in different spheres. The articles were written in Gujarati, Marathi and English. Sayaji Rao gave no new direction to the people but simply emphasized on what he had done for them and advised them to develop a spirit of co-operation in various fields for the good of the country.^②

Second World-Parliament of Religions, 1933

Sayaji Rao had the honour to preside over the Second World-Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago on August 27, 1933.^③ This incident was extraordinary in the sense that an Indian Prince found himself among an association of missionaries of different religions of the world and facing an audience of about 26,000.^④

Speaking on "Religion in a Changing World" as was the topic of his lecture, Sayaji Rao made observations on the role of science. "Science has united the world," said he, "but it is divided socially, economically and politically."^⑤ He questioned

-
1. K. Saunders, SAMSG, Vol.III, 1927-34, (ed.) (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 521-22.
 2. Saunders, SAMSG, p.645.
 3. BSAR, 1933-34, p.10.
 4. Apte, op. cit., Vol.III, p.1031.
 5. Saunders, SAMSG, p.665.

the missionaries whether religion could accomplish its spiritual and therefore, its cultural unification. Expressing his belief that "man is incurably religious," Sayaji Rao enumerated the tasks of religion. As he put it, religion "...is a cry for life, a yearning for reality, a demand for loyalty" and therefore man "...needs a simple, strong, sincere and serene faith" as well as a "rousing call to forget self, and to triumph over sense."^①

Concluding his Presidential Address, he appealed to the missionaries to combine humbly and in the spirit of partnership "...against the common enemies - Ignorance, Selfishness and Materialism" for the sake of human progress and peace.^②

Seventh Oriental Conference, Baroda, 1933

Sayaji Rao opened the Seventh Oriental Conference held at Baroda on December 27, 1933, under the Presidentship of K.P.Jayswal, an eminent orientalist of the period. In his speech he enumerated what he had done for encouraging oriental studies and research in his State. He also explained the necessity of doing original research work.

Diamond Jubilee, 1935

Sayaji Rao completed sixty years of rule on May 27, 1935. The Celebration of Diamond Jubilee was the most memorable and the last event in his life.

The Celebrations took place between January 1st and January 11, 1936.^③ After the customary procedure of presenting the Addresses by the people was over, Sayaji Rao in a message to the people, announced a personal gift of one crore of rupees to be known as the Diamond Jubilee Trust. The funds of this Trust were to be utilized for improving the conditions of life

1. Ibid., p.668.

2. Ibid., p.671.

3. A detailed account has been given in the BSAR, 1935-36 in Chapter II, pp.4-21.

of the rural population, especially those of the poor and depressed classes of the State.⁽¹⁾ He summarized his work in different fields, but did not claim that all his measures had full effect and produced all the results that he had expected. He considered inertia of centuries and the age old superstitions responsible for it.

The Celebrations were marked with certain notable features. The Diamond Jubilee was also celebrated at many places in India. Lord Willingdon accompanied by his wife, came to Baroda specially to congratulate the Maharaja personally. He had brought a congratulatory message from King George V, too.

The Association of World Fellowship of Faiths to which Sayaji Rao was connected, also celebrated his Diamond Jubilee in New York on March 9. The high ranking personalities like Sir Ronald Lindsay, the British Consul in U.S.A., Mrs. Andrew Carnegie, Mrs. Roosevelt, wife of President Roosevelt and many people associated themselves with the Celebrations.⁽²⁾

It is no wonder that both the Indian and the English Press should pay glorious tributes to the work and achievements of Sayaji Rao on that occasion. Some tributes deserve mention here.

"The Times" (Bombay) which had been critical of Sayaji Rao's conduct at the Delhi Durbar, of 1911, had by now changed its attitude and wrote: " While promoting the lot of his subjects, the Gaekwar has on occasions spiritedly defended his position from encroachments by the Political Department of the Government of India. Some of his differences with the Delhi authorities were due to misunderstandings and proof that no bitterness was left behind is to be found in the tributes which successive Viceroys have paid him."⁽³⁾

-
1. Diamond Jubilee Trust still functions very efficiently and renders help to the old Baroda State residents for educational purposes.
 2. Apte, op. cit., Vol.III, pp.1146-47.
 3. Ibid., p.1147.

"The Times" (London) wrote, "He has always been tenacious of his rights and it is largely owing to this that he was more than once brought into collision with the Government of India. At the time when he was an acknowledged leader of Indian opinion, he gained the reputation of being difficult, though he was then only urging his fellow-countrymen to self-help, toleration and federation, of which he was an early advocate." ①

"The Bombay Chronicle" while paying tribute welcomed the demand of Rao Sayaji for autonomy to the Indian States, ^{and stated that} he would be justified in his demand only when the Indian States were inclined to give freedom to their subjects. Otherwise, such autonomy would mean more freedom to their rulers for oppressing them. ②

On this occasion the Prajamandal, an organ of the Vadodara Rajya Prajamandal, criticised the attitude of Sayaji Rao in unequivocal terms. The paper compared his gifts comprising one crore of rupees for the village uplift and some other concessions with a basket of beautiful sweets from a sixty-year old father like Sayaji Rao as a reward to a mature generation which had been aspiring to share in the administration of the State. ③ This criticism refers to the failure and passiveness of Sayaji Rao in expanding the Legislative Assembly and giving more constitutional rights to the people.

World Olympic Games

Sayaji Rao was invited to attend the opening of the 11th World Olympic Games in Berlin. In spite of his advanced age and suffering from repeated attacks of gout and cold, he did not let go any opportunity to travel in foreignland and see the new things for himself. He would often take rest periodically between the two trips. He flew to Berlin from London on July 31, and stayed there till August 25. During his stay, he met Hitler

1. Ibid., p.1149.

2. Ibid., p.1150.

3. Ibid., p.1150.

for fifteen minutes. It was from here that he caught up an idea of introducing compulsory physical education in the Baroda State. It was introduced in 1936.

The Imperial Conference, London, 1937

Sayaji Rao was invited by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Linlithgow, to represent India at the Imperial Conference to be held in London, after the Coronation Ceremony of King-Emperor Edward VIII.^① By that time the Ruler of Patiala had requested Sayaji Rao to become a patron of the Cricket Club of India. He was also invited to become the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in India. But he accepted the first two invitations and declined the third. It is likely that he was not willing to undertake annual tours for the work of the Chamber of Princes, due to his old age. It is also likely that his dissatisfaction about the formation, constitution and rights of the Chamber of Princes, was also responsible for the refusal.

Before reaching London on the May 1, 1937, Sayaji Rao at the age of 73, toured Egypt, Sudan, Uganda, Belgian Congo and Kenya. On May 12, he attended the Coronation of King George VI, the younger brother of Edward VIII. He was accompanied by Maharani Chimmabai. They were treated with honour and given the nearest seat to the place of ceremony in the Westminster Abbey.

On May 14 at the Imperial Conference, he made an important speech on behalf of India. He said that during his sixty-years close association with the public and the national affairs, he watched the events and interpreted them with detachment. He recognised the fact that the unseen currents of ideas, emotions and aspirations ultimately determine the course of history and these forces flowed more strongly in India than elsewhere. He expressed the belief that India had awakened from her long quiescence and was demanding politically her "full stature as an autonomous unit of the British Commonwealth of Nations." He very aptly predicted: "If India has received and will continue to receive much from the Commonwealth, she has equally much to give."^②

-
1. King George V had died in 1936. As is well-known, the coronation of Edward VIII did not take place because he had renounced the throne on the issue of his marriage with Mrs. Simpson.
 2. C.E.Newham, SAMSG, Vol.IV 1934-1938, (ed.), (Cambridge, 1938), p.858.

After eight days Sayaji Rao spoke at the Oxford University Raleigh Club on the subject of the British Commonwealth and advocated for India's rightful place in it.

LL.D. Degree, Cambridge University

On June 10, 1937, Sayaji Rao was awarded an Honorary LL.D. Degree by the Cambridge University. This was indeed a unique mark of appreciation of his contribution in various fields. It was undoubtedly an honour to India by the foremost educational institution of England.

Degree of 'Bhupati Chakravarti'

Sayaji Rao was honoured by the Calcutta Sanskrit College by awarding him a degree of 'Bhupati Chakravarti' on December 23, 1937. In a reply to the Address, Sayaji Rao stressed the importance of studying Sanskrit. He also emphasised the learning of English as a language. He urged the Pundits to teach the fundamental principles of the Hindu religion as a part of their duty.^①

Last Trip and Last Oration

Sayaji Rao owing to his ill-disposed health and the weakening health of his younger son Dhairyashil Rao who was convalescing in Roussells (England), went to England on March 14, 1938. It was destined to be his last trip to Europe.

While in London, he attended a talk on 'India and the Far Eastern Crisis' given by Edwin Havard on August 11, 1938. The talk was arranged by the East India Association in London. On being requested to speak, Sayaji Rao in a brief speech touched the Indian problems and spoke in outright terms. He told the gathering that if opportunity was given "India will be able to carry on her government even better than she is doing at present."

1. G.M.Shah, Shri Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad Aoshrina Vyakhyano Tatha Bhashano, (ed.), Vol.III in Gujarati, (Ahmedabad, 1938), pp. 103-104. (Hereafter as MSGVB).

Criticising the British policy in India, he said that though the administration was in the hands of the educated classes, the masses were hardly touched by the new ideas. He pleaded for India's case for freedom and appealed to the British to do for India what they had done for Canada and Australia. He emphasised on the urgent need of granting freedom to India, which should be given "wisely, properly and quickly."^①

The speech of Sayaji Rao is significant in the sense that the clouds of ensuing World War Second were gathering and he ventured to speak on the issue of Indian freedom challenging the bona fides of the British authorities.

Though Sayaji Rao was losing his health at the age of seventy-five, he desired to study the development of modern Russia and planned a visit to Russia. But the British Foreign Office under the pretext of mounting situation of war pleaded against his such visit. Therefore, Sayaji Rao had to postpone his visit. On the return journey to India, he went to Geneva and visited the Secretariat of the League of Nations. He reached Bombay on October 31, 1938.

Departure

The return journey by sea proved dangerous to his declining health. After reaching Bombay, he confined himself to bed in his Jayamaharal Palace where after a prolonged illness he breathed his last on February 6, 1939. The next day his corpse was brought to Baroda and was cremated in the evening at the Royal Cemetery - Kedareshwar - near Kirti Mandir.

On February 7, 1939, the Crown Prince Pratapsingh Rao, the grandson of Sayaji Rao, was declared to succeed Maharaja Sayaji Rao as the ruler of the Baroda State.

Estimate

It is a difficult task to form a critical estimate of the life, work and achievements of Maharaja Sayaji Rao. In the foregoing pages, an earnest effort has been made to unfold his

career and character in brief outlining some notable events of his reign.

The demise of one of the greatest personalities of India was mourned all over India and in foreign countries where he was well-known and had been a patron of many institutions.

It can be observed that with his departure came the end of a glorious period, an epoch, in the history of the Baroda State.
