

GAZETTER OF

MADRAS

MADRAS

Vol. I



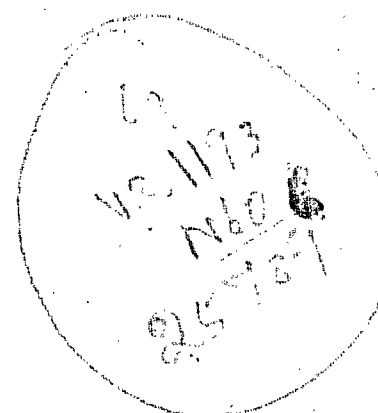
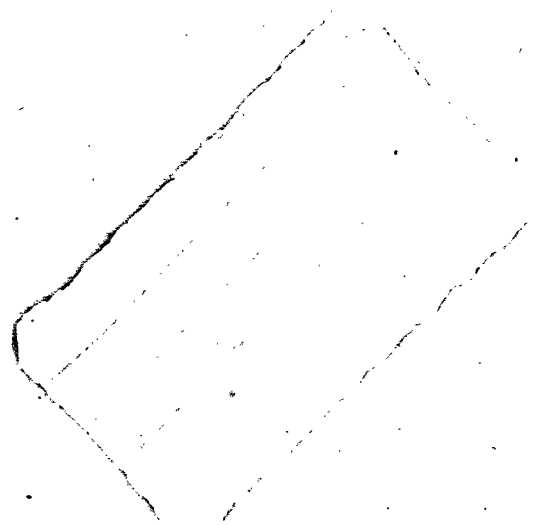
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GAZETTEER OF INDIA : MADRAS

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MADRAS DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



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MADURAI

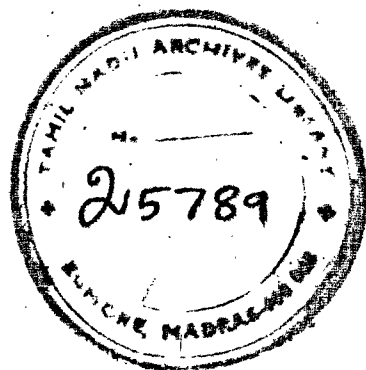
BY
 DR. B. S. BALIGA, B.A. (Hons.), Ph.D. (Lond.)
 Late Curator, Madras Record Office.

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 GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS
 1960

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PREFACE.

The need for bringing out a volume containing the history and administration of each district for the use of the administrators as well as the general public has more than once been recognized during the last hundred years. In the sixties, seventies and eighties of the last century, a Manual was prepared for almost every district, containing much interesting information. Subsequently, in the opening years of this century, Gazetteers were prepared for several districts at the instance of the Government of India. They too contained a good deal of useful information. They were accompanied by separate volumes containing statistics. Between 1928 and 1935, when the statistical volumes were revised, some supplemental information collected for the main volumes was incorporated in them. In 1954 the question of completely re-writing the Gazetteers and bringing them up to date was taken up. Shri Sri Prakasa, the Governor, evinced a keen interest in the work, and stressed its need; and the Government decided to prepare fresh Gazetteers for all the districts and to call them 'District Handbooks'. It was, however, considered unnecessary to publish statistical volumes, as the statistics in such volumes speedily become out of date and they can always be gathered, when required, from the Census Handbooks, Administration Reports, etc.

The old Gazetteers were written mostly with the help of the materials that could be readily collected in the districts. They were not written with the help of the records of the Government, with the result that

they failed to trace the growth of district administration in all its branches against the background of the general policies pursued from time to time by the Government. This defect, it was thought, should be rectified by making full use of the records of the Government centralized in the Madras Record Office and accordingly the work of preparing the Handbooks was entrusted to me.

The Madurai District Handbook is the second of the Handbooks written under the new scheme, the first being that of Tanjore. In writing this book full use has been made of the Manual of the Madurai District published in 1868, the Gazetteer of the Madurai District published in 1906 and the Supplementary Gazetteer published in 1930. Use has also been made of the records, reports and the latest books available. The old Gazetteer contained fifteen chapters. Some of these chapters have been clubbed together and some new chapters have been added bringing the number of chapters in the Handbook to seventeen. To indicate in essence the contents of these chapters, Chapter I contains not only the physical description of the district and its flora and fauna but also an account of its climate, its seasons, floods, cyclones, etc. Chapters II and III review in a rapid manner the political, administrative, social and economic history of the district from the early times down to the nineteenth century. Based as it is on all recent work of research and on the records available in this office, it differs widely from the account given in the old District Gazetteer and the Manual. Chapter IV is an entirely new chapter which traces in sufficient detail the history of the rise of nationalism and the achievement of independence. Here are described in the background of All-India and Madras movements all

the political events that took place in the district. The whole chapter is based on hitherto unpublished materials, on records—non-confidential, confidential as well as secret—and has been written in as dispassionate a manner as possible. Chapter V deals with 'The Peoples', their caste, religions, manners, customs, superstitions, etc. It contains much material not to be found in the old Gazetteer. The remaining chapters deal with administration as it developed since about 1800. Chapter VI describes the development of Agriculture and Irrigation and stresses the great attention paid to these in recent times. Chapter VII on Forests and Chapter VIII on Industries and Trade contain a great deal of new material. Chapter IX on Co-operation, a subject of growing importance in these days, is an entirely new chapter. Chapter X on Welfare Schemes is equally new, dealing as it does with new subjects like Rural Welfare, Prohibition, Harijan Welfare, Labour Welfare, Women's Welfare, Electricity, Rural Broadcasting and Community Listening and the administration of Hindu Religious Endowments. Chapter XI on Communications contains an account of the growth of the means of communications like roads, railways, canals, etc.; much fresh material has been traced and incorporated in this chapter. Chapter XII dealing with Public Health (preventive and curative), Chapter XIII dealing with Education, Chapter XIV dealing with Local Administration and Chapter XV dealing with Law and Order, have been completely re-written incorporating in them a great deal of fresh material. Chapter XVI relating to Land Revenue, as well as other revenues like Commercial Taxes, Income-tax, Customs, etc., also contains much fresh material. Land Revenue had been the forte of the writers of

the old Gazetteers, but even here new information has been traced and incorporated. The last chapter, Chapter XVII, relating to the Gazetteer portion, does not, however, contain much that is new, dealing as it does with places of antiquarian or historical interest about which most of the information available has already been made use of by the writers of the old Gazetteer and the Supplementary Gazetteer. All unessential details like the number of schools, hospitals, dispensaries, Government officers. etc., have, however, been omitted and the whole chapter has been made as interesting as possible. The Sthalapurana of Madhura has been added as an Appendix. The entire book has been brought down to 1951 the year up to which the records were available in this office at the time of writing except the chapter on "Revenue Administration" which has been brought down to 1956 at the instance of the Board of Revenue.

As and when the several chapters were written they were sent to the Collector or the Head of the Department concerned for scrutiny and the suggestions made by them were incorporated as far as possible. My thanks are due to them for the care with which the chapters were scrutinized by them. My thanks are also due to Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastri and Dr. N. Venkataramanayya, the well-known historians, who were kind enough to go through the chapters on the Earlier History and Later History and to Rev. Fr. J. Vincent, S.J. of the Sacred Heart College, Shenbaganur and to Sri R. Kunchithapadam, the then Collector of Madurai, who were kind enough to go through the chapter on "Physical Description" and to make valuable suggestions. They are likewise due to Sri M. C. Subramanian, M.A., Assistant Curator, Madras Record Office, who has helped me in various

ways in the preparation of this book. I am also indebted to Sri P. S. Ramachandra Ayyar, Sri G. Jeyapalsamy and Sri V. Kunhikannan Nair, my assistants, for having patiently traced and collected all the relevant records for my study and to Kumari V. Lalitha for having prepared the Index.

EGMORE, MADRAS, B. S. BALIGA,
12th March 1958. Curator, Madras Record Office.

NOTE.

Dr. B. S. Baliga, who prepared this volume, died suddenly in September 1958 when it was in print. The work of issuing this publication has therefore devolved upon me.

As stated in the preface, the work of revising or preparing afresh Gazetteers for the districts in the Madras State and of issuing them under the title of District Handbooks was taken up by the State Government as long ago as 1954. But subsequently the Government of India came to sponsor a scheme for the revision of the District Gazetteers in all States. Under this scheme a general pattern was laid down to be followed by all State Governments in the revision of the District Gazetteers and a Central Gazetteer Unit was set up to supervise and co-ordinate the work of the preparation of the series in all States. The Government of India have also extended their aid to the State Governments by way of grants to meet a part of the expenditure on the revision of the District Gazetteers. The Government of Madras having accepted this scheme, the work of revising the District Gazetteers in the State has become a part of it and is under the general supervision of the Editor, Indian Gazetteers, New Delhi.

This volume was prepared long before the Government of India came to sponsor their scheme and hence it does not conform to the general pattern prescribed by them. Nevertheless it has been approved by the Government of India, as it has been found to fulfil, on the whole, the objectives and purposes in view. A similar *post facto* approval has also been accorded by them to the Tanjore volume which was issued in 1957 under the title of "Tanjore District Handbook". It may be mentioned here that for the sake of uniformity in all States it has

been decided to change the title of these publications from "District Handbook" to "District Gazetteer", the full title being "Madras District Gazetteers" followed by the name of the District to which the particular volume relates in the general series known as the "Gazetteer of India". This volume originally intended to be published as Madurai District Handbook, therefore, issues with the title of "Madurai District Gazetteer," the change having been introduced at the final stage of printing.

EGMORE, MADRAS,

25th July 1959.

M. NATESAN,

Assistant Curator-in-Charge.

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MADURAI DISTRICT GAZETTEER

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

The Madurai district lies between 9° 30' and 10° 50' of the north latitude and 77° 10' and 78° 30' of the east longitude¹. It is bounded on the north by the Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli districts, on the east by the Tiruchirappalli and Ramanathapuram districts, on the south by the Kerala State and Ramanathapuram district and on the west again by the same State and the Coimbatore district. It is made up of the eight taluks of Dindigul, Palni, Kodaikanal, Nilakkottai, Madurai, Melur, Tirumangalam and Periyakulam. It has an area of 4,869 square miles² and forms part of the vast plain which stretches eastwards from the Western Ghats to the sea.

Nestling as the district does at the foot of the Western Ghats it is diversified by several ranges of hills, crags and rapids which give it on the whole a picturesque appearance. A range of hills running parallel to the Western Ghats and nearly north to south separates the district from the Kerala State. The spurs of this range in the north are called the Palni hills, and those in the south "the High Way mountain" and the Varushanad and Andipatti hills. The Palni hills, or as they are sometimes called the, Varahagiri hills, meaning in Sanskrit 'boar hills', are apparently so named after the town of Palni situated just north of them. They are said to have derived their appellation 'boar hills' from a legend which says that twelve naughty children who scoffed at a devout rishi dwelling on the hills were by him transformed into boars and were eventually rescued by God Siva and promoted to high office under the Pandyan Kings. The hills are really an off-shoot of the Western Ghats to which they are connected at their northern extremity and from which they run east-north-east to a distance of 40 miles with a maximum width of 25 miles and a mean width of about 15 miles.

It is usual to divide these hills into two portions, the Upper Palnis and the Lower Palnis. The Western or the Upper Palnis form at the top a plateau of some 105 square miles of an average height of 7,500 feet. They comprise three valleys, the Parappar-Devankarai valley, the Gundar valley and the Upper Amaravati valley and contain several peaks, Perumal Hill (7,328 feet), Observatory Hill (7,668 feet), the Karumankadu Hill (8,002 feet), Vembadi Hill (8,222 feet) and the Vandaravu Hill (8,380 feet).

¹ 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai District, 1953, page 1.

² *Ibid.*, page 1.

On the southern edge of the Vambadi Hill stands Kodaikanal which with Ootacamund shares the distinction of being one of the best sanatoria of Southern India. The Upper Palnis differ from the Lower Palnis in that they possess fewer ravines, much less forest, a colder and more salubrious climate and a more barren soil. They consist largely of plateaus made up of rolling downs covered with coarse grasses; and hidden away in their sheltered valleys are isolated woods called sholas. They are well supplied with water throughout the year and from their higher ranges no less than thirty large streams take their course which, uniting as they come down, form eleven respectable rivers. The general fall of the hills is to the north but on the south they terminate abruptly in precipitous cliffs. These cliffs overhanging the Kambam Valley appear as veritable walls of rock and present a scenery at once bold and wild. On the north two great valleys pierce the hills and penetrate southwards as far as the villages of Vilpatti and Pumbarai. Of these the Pumbarai Valley is the most striking with its almost parallel sides up which cultivation climbs amidst wood and broken ground and precipitous crags. The crops in the Upper Palnis include paddy, varieties of wheat and barley, excellent varieties of garlic, potatoes and several kinds of vegetables and fruits of temperate climates like beans, beetroots, cabbages, pears, peaches and apples.

The Lower Palnis consist of a confused jumble of peaks from 3,000 to 5,000 feet high separated from one another by steep wooded valleys of exceptional beauty. These hills are sometimes designated as Tandikkudi and Virupakshi hills. Their valleys are studded with several small villages picturesquely surrounded with groves of tamarind, jack, mango, orange, lime, citron and other trees. Their climate, however, is malarial. The cultivation here chiefly consists of turmeric, ginger, cardamoms, plantains, vendium, castor oil seeds, rice, varagu, ragi and cumbu. Coffee was first planted on these hills in 1846, and is now grown over considerable areas.

Running almost parallel to the Palnis and the Cardamom hills which face it from the opposite side of the Kambam Valley there are the Varushanad and Andipatti hills with the Varushanad Valley at their southern end and the village of Andipatti at their northern end. The great Varushanad (rain country) Valley takes its name from the village of Varushanad standing on the right bank of a fine bend of the river Vaigai. The western side of the head of this valley is flanked by the highest portion of the Varushanad and Andipatti range, known as the "High Wavy mountain," or merely the "High Wavy" whose peaks attain heights of 5,000 to 6,000 feet, Periya Raja Bodu (6,190 feet), Chinna Raja Bodu (6,025 feet), Kavarmalai (5,200 feet), Kuruk-kurmalai (5,808 feet) and Melamalai (5,333 feet); on the top of this mountain is a plateau covered with evergreen forest. The jungle runs down on both sides of it in great continuous masses

a belt of more barren land consisting of rock and rough grass. Below this again, at the foot of the hill, there is a fairly thick line of deciduous forest. The eastern side of the Varushanad Valley is formed by a lower and more broken line of hills, the most prominent peaks of which are the holy Sadugiri or the Chaturagiri 'the four square' hill and the Kudiraimalai, 'the horse hill'. The former which is 4,122 feet high and which is believed to be the abode of celestial sages, is a place of pilgrimage, while the latter which is 4,367 feet high and which is rugged, gaunt and inhospitable, is rarely visited by any but the herdsmen and their flocks. From the extreme northern end of these rugged heights the Nagamalai (snake hill) range strikes off east and then south and runs to within a couple of miles of Madurai town. The Nagamalai is so named because it is a long straight ridge of barren rock of more or less uniform height resembling a serpent. Local legends say that it is the remains of a huge serpent brought into existence by the magic arts of the Jains and that it was, by the grace of God Siva, prevented from devouring Madurai, his stronghold.

On the eastern side of the district, there are the Sirumalais, the Karandamalais, the Alagarmalais and the Nattam and the Ailur hills. The Sirumalais, "little mountains," which are situated some sixteen miles north of Madurai consist of a compact block, almost 12 miles across with their highest peaks a little over 4,400 feet above the sea. On the top of them is a basin-shaped plateau some 3,000 feet high in which there are a few villages. Their climate is malarial but their fertility was, in olden days, considered excellent. The earliest Tamil poems are said to speak of the many varieties of fruits which they produced in abundance. They are, however, now well-known only for a special variety of plantains. Coffee introduced here in 1838-1840 is now extensively grown as also cardamoms in some quantity. An experiment made to grow mulberry proved unsuccessful. The Karandamalais which stand some eight miles north-east of the Sirumalais measure about six miles across and are covered by a little plateau with a few villages. From the sides of these hills run down low ridges enclosing steep valleys each of which give rise to a small rivulet. The Alagarmalais so called from the famous Kalla Alagar temple which is situated below them are some twelve miles from Madurai and consist of a ridge about ten miles in length and 1,000 to 2,637 feet in height from which lesser ridges branch off in all directions forming fertile valleys. The Nattam and the Ailur hills are nothing more than little strong ridges and hummocks with steep sides covered with shrubs¹.

¹ Madurai District Manual by J.H. NeFen, 1868, pages 6-9.
Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Purvis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 8-9.
Working Plans for the Forests of the Madurai District, 1911, pages 1-2.
A Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1949, Madurai District, page 12.

Besides these hills, the district contains a large number of isolated peaks which belong to no regular range. The most celebrated of these is the great rock of Dindigul. Rising from the midst of a low-lying plain to a height of 280 feet, it stands completely isolated. Lofly, precipitous and inaccessible from all sides, it was formerly fortified by the Nayaka Kings, by Hyder Ali and even by the British till about 1815, and regarded as the key of the Madurai Country from its northern side. Another and much larger rock is the Rangamalai which stands on a vast plain 20 miles north of Dindigul and which has a circumference of seven miles and a height of 3,099 feet. Though not far off from the Karandamalais it stands apart from them with its sides and ridges well clothed with wood. On one of its sides is a temple and a sacred pool and on its top is a cauldron which is filled with ghee and lighted during Kartikai and Deepavali. A remarkable rock is the Anaimalai, "the elephant rock," situated some five miles north of Madurai. It resembles the colossal figure of a couchant elephant. It is a solid rock two miles in length, one-fourth of a mile in breadth and about 250 feet in height. On one side of it, a porch and a temple have been hewn out. Karumalai, "black hill", which is 2,527 feet high, and which is situated five miles to the south of the Rangamalais, is also a sacred hill. People visit it on Saturdays to take a bath at the spring issuing from beneath two big boulders leaning towards each other. Kandrigimalai lying ten miles away on the northern frontier of Palni and having a height of 2,701 feet is even more striking in appearance. Its feet are clothed with jungle, and out of this jungle rises a steep, tapering sugar-loaf peak of sheer rock on the top of which is a tiny temple and round which cling the morning mists long after they have risen from the neighbouring peaks. There is also the Puramalai situated east of Kottampatti, which was formerly used as a place of military observation; the Skandamalai, the holy hill, four miles south of Madurai, well-known for its famous temple; and Pasumalai (Cow hill), a little nearer Madurai, which was supposed to have been a demon let loose by magic by the Jains in the shape of a cow to avenge the death of the serpent 'naga' and transformed into rock by the sacred bull of God Siva. Amidst all this wilderness of rocks and hills, there are surprisingly few tors. Perhaps the most remarkable among them is that on Somagiri, a hill four miles east of the eastern edge of the Alagarmalais. This consists of a huge stone balanced on a much slender pedestal, the whole being about 80 feet high. It is visible for miles around and has been likened in its appearance to the head and neck of a beautiful child¹.

The river system of the district is somewhat complicated by the several hills and valleys. The "High Wavy mountain"

¹Madura District Manual by J.H. Nelson, 1868, pages 9-10.

Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 9-10.

Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XX, 1883, page 15.

runs out a considerable distance into the main valley between the Palnis and the Varushanad and Andipatti range and divides it into two valleys of which the western is called the Kambam Valley and the eastern, the Varushanad Valley. The drainage of these two valleys is carried off by numerous streamlets into two main streams called the Vaigai and the Suruli or the Suruliar. The Suruli rises partly on the western slopes of "the High Wavy mountain" and partly on the Travancore side of the Western Ghats. The Vaigai rises partly on the eastern slopes of "the High Wavy mountain" and partly on the Travancore side of the Western Ghats. The head waters of the Suruli fling themselves down the lower spurs of "the High Wavy mountain" in a beautiful fall; and near this are sacred caves (the chief of which is the Kailasa pudavu) which are annually visited by pilgrims who bathe in the river. After meandering some 30 miles down the valley in almost parallel curves the Suruli and the Vaigai meet a little south of Allinagaram just after the former has received a tributary called the Theni river which drains the Bodinayakanur Valley. The Vaigai now becomes a deep and rapid stream and changes its northern direction and runs east-north-eastwards under the northern slopes of the Andipatti hills and the Nagamalais. In this part of its course, it is joined by the Varahanadi (boar river) and the Manjalar (yellow river). The Varahanadi runs down the Upper Palnis through Periyakulam town where it unites with the Pambar, the falls of which are a prominent object from the path leading to Kodaikanal. The Manjalar (sometimes also called the Vattilagundu river) dashes down the side of the Palnis just above Devadanapatti in a magnificent cataract 200 feet high and after running past Vattilagundu and joining the Ayyampalayam river from the Lower Palnis, flows into the Vaigai. The Vaigai thereafter begins its south-eastern course until it goes past the boundary of the district and reaches the sea².

The characteristics of the Suruli and the Vaigai have been radically altered by the Periyar System initiated in 1896. Formerly uncertain, liable to floods for a week or two and dry for almost all the rest of the year, the flow of water in them is now more constant and regular on account of the supply of the Periyar water that they receive. A full description of the Periyar System is given in the chapter on Agriculture and Irrigation. A brief account of it may, however, be given here to show how it has affected the river system in Madurai. The Periyar river rises on the Western Ghats in the territory of the Kerala State and runs down through Travancore to Cochin and empties itself in the Arabian Sea. A few miles from the south-western limits of the Madurai district this river has been dammed and its water is collected in an artificial lake in the heart of the jungle and from there by means of a tunnel cut under the watershed this

²Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, pages 16-18.

Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 11-12.

water is directed eastward down the Kambam valley where it flows along the bed of the Vairavan and joins the Suruli near Surulipatti. Near the boundary of the Periyakulam and Nilakkottai taluks the Suruli, after joining the Theni, discharges its water into the Vaigai and down the Vaigai the Periyar water is carried as far as the Peranai dam where it is taken out of the river into the main canal. This canal runs upwards of 35 miles through the taluks of Nilakkottai, Madurai and Melur and from it the water is led into innumerable tanks and field channels through twelve branch channels, several smaller tributaries and many sluices in the main canal itself¹.

So much about the Vaigai. Of the other rivers, the Gundar and the Kamandalanadi rising in the Varushanad and the Andipatti range drain the Tirumangalam taluk and flow in a south-easterly direction into the Ramanathapuram district and there unite together. The northern portion of the Melur taluk drains eastward into the Tirumanimuthar and the Palar, which flow into the Ramanathapuram and the Tiruchirappalli districts, respectively. The plains of Dindigul and Palni in the north of the district drain north-eastwards into four almost parallel rivers rising in the Palnis. From west to east they are the Shanmuganadi, the Nellathangi, the Nanganji and the Kodaganar (Kodaganur). They eventually flow into the Amaravathi, a tributary of the Cauvery. All these rivers are very uncertain, being often in floods one day and trickling streamlets on the next. As may be expected with such uncertain rivers, people, especially in olden days before the Periyar irrigation system was completed, depended mostly on tanks into which river water when available could be diverted and stored. Even now there are many such tanks. The importance of tanks and wells, however, will be dealt with later.

The geological survey of the district was conducted by Bruce Foote in the early eighties of the last century; since then the district has received little attention from geologists². Bruce Foote says that the gneissic rocks, with which the district abounds, may be divided into six groups; the upper granular quartz rock (the Allagiri group); the upper granitoid gneiss (the Melur group); the middle granular quartz rock (the Nagamalai group); the middle granitoid gneiss (Skandamalai group); the lower granular quartz rock (Kokulam group); and the lower granitoid gneiss (Tirumangalam group).

The lower granitoid gneiss, the lowest of the series, is set in the beds of the great plains of the Tirumangalam taluk, which is bounded on the east by the laterite and alluvial formations. The northern part of the Tirumangalam plain is largely covered with

¹ G.O. No. 785, Revenue, dated 2nd February 1918—See Mr. Bong's report.

² Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, pages 18-22.

³ Gazetteer of the Madurai district by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 10-11.

⁴ A Manual of the Geology of India and Burma by H. B. Medlicott, 1950 page 99.

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red soil but, south of Tirumangalam town, black soil is to be met with everywhere and allows but little of the sub-rock to be seen. The important outcrops of this series of rocks are seen to the north of Tirumangalam at Karadikal and at Nelayur to the north-east and along the valley of the Gundar and to the south of the Chevvur Kotai hill. The lower granular quartz rock group forms a low rocky ridge about two miles southward of the Nagamalai ridge near the village of Kokulam. This band, though of no great thickness, forms a very well-marked ridge traceable for many miles. At a point about two miles north-west of Skandamalai the ridge bends southwards and then eastwards again and passes southwards of the hill, and after tending south-west, gets lost under the alluvium of the Vaigai, four miles due south of Madurai. The middle granitoid gneiss group overlies the lowest granular quartz series and is specially well seen in the Skandamalai. It shows also well in a picturesque rocky hill north of Ambalathadi, a village four miles west of Madurai and again in some rocky hills six miles further to the north-west. It is largely quarried in the Skandamalai, the pinkish grey well banded rock yielding a very handsome and durable building stone.

The middle granular quartz rock group forms the Nagamalai but dies down under the alluvium, four miles west-north of Madurai. The beds of this make a great curve south-eastwards under the alluvium and re-appear in the Pasumalai only to disappear again under the alluvium a little further on. To the south-east of Madurai similar beds appear on the north bank of the Vaigai and are traceable for several miles up to Tiruvadur where they contain much felspar. The upper granitoid gneiss group occupies the plain north-west of Tiruvadur in the Melur taluk and stretches away south-westwards down to the alluvium of the Vaigai and north eastwards under the alluvium of the Palar and its tributaries. The Somagiri hill, the enormous tor standing on it and the Anaimalai show the great beauty of form and colour of these granitoid rocks. The upper granular quartz rock group appears prominently in the bold scarp of the south-east side of the Alagarmalai. It appears also at Ammayanayakanur and at Ramarajapuram¹.

In the west of the district charnockite is found and the Palnis consist largely of this rock. The charnockite mass of these hills may be a continuation of that of the Anaimalais of Coimbatore and has an outcrop 54 miles long from east to west and 15 miles broad². Accompanying the intrusion of a tongue of charnockite from the Palni hills into the biotite gneiss of the district is a development of cordierite, sillimanite and garnet, the cordierite in some cases forming from 25 to 30 per cent of the rock. Besides this, Dr. Krishnan records the occurrence of a limestone with

¹ Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XX, 1893, pages 10-19.

² A Manual of the Geology of India and Burma by H. B. Medlicott, 1950, page 128.

scapolite, forsterite diopside, garnet, sphene and apatite in some places in the district. In the Varushanad hills there are hornblende shists and granulites penetrated by veins of mica-bearing pegmatite¹.

Minerals are rare. Iron (haematite) ore is found near Kottampatti in the Melur taluk as also in some other parts in the laterite rocks. Several blast furnaces were extracting the metal in 1855, but now no smelting is done here. Gold has long been washed from the alluvium and sand of the reddish coloured ground at the foot on both sides of the hill near the Palakkanuttu (Palaganut) Travellers' Bungalow in the former Kannivadi Estate, but the quantity obtainable is so small that the gold-washers hardly make any profit². Building stones and limestones for making cements and mortars are found in abundance in the gneissic regions and laterite tracts. At Tirumal, a village in Tirumangalam taluk, there is a broad band of white crystalline limestone running nearly two miles to the eastwards; and a little to the westwards of Kokulam, two miles from Tirumal, there are two similar limestone beds interspersed with termolite. Limestones are also scattered through other parts of the district. Red and white fragments of quartz are to be found in the Gopalaswami hill situated in the extreme south of Tirumangalam, and small quartz veins also occur on the western slope of the Sirumalais east and north-east of Ammayanayakanur. But the best building-stone in the district is to be found at Tiruparankundram at the base of the Skandamalai. It was this stone that was used in building the famous Minakshi temple of Madurai. It may also be of some interest to mention here that the Geologies¹ Survey of India acquired in 1899 an interesting meteorite found near Kodai-kanal weighing about 35 lbs. and composed almost entirely of nickeliferous iron³.

As to the soils, more than 85 per cent of the soil in the district is classified as red soil (red ferruginous). The black soil (the regar) predominates only in the Tirumangalam taluk and parts of Periyakulam and Palni taluks. The red soil can be divided into two classes, the red loams and the red sands; and the black soil can be divided into three classes, the black clays, the black loams and the black sands. For wet lands, the black loam is considered superior to the black clay; but, for dry lands, the black clay is considered the best soil. The soil on the top of the Kodaikanal hills and the Upper Palnis is usually a thick layer of black peaty earth over yellow clay. But on the lower hills, it is generally shallow, stony and dry, except in the Kambam Valley where it

¹ A Manual of the Geology of India and Burma by H. B. Medlicott, 1950, pages 120, 113, 139.

² Working Plan for the Forests of the Madurai Division, 1938, page 2.

³ Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XX, pages 18-22.

Gazetteer of the Madurai district by W. Francis, 1906, page 15.

is a deep sandy loam of reddish hue. The distribution of soils in each of the taluks on a percentage basis is as follows¹:-

Taluk.	Black clay loam and sand.	Red loam and sand.
Kodaikanal	36.0	64.0
Palni	6.5	93.5
Dindigul	2.8	97.2
Nilakkottai	6.4	93.6
Melur	0.4	99.6
Periyakulam	9.8	90.2
Tirumangalam	60.8	39.2
Madurai	17.4	82.6

The forests of the district are dealt with in detail in a separate chapter. They fall under three main formations, the mixed deciduous, the evergreen and the grassland formations, and may be classified under six main types, namely, the timber forests, the low level sholas (the evergreen type), gallnut type, the grassland type including the high level sholas, the fuel forests and the plantations.

The district also contains the trees usually found in the southern districts. Among these may be mentioned *Acacia arabica* (karuvelum), *Agathi grandiflora* (agathi), *Strychnos nux vomica* (etti), the coconut, the arecanut, the palmyra, the jack, the mango, the guava, the m' rungai, the neem, the mohwa, *Bassia longifolia* (iluppai), the silk cotton, the banian, the peepul and *Ficus religiosa* (arasu maram)².

The flora of the district is rich and varied. The Palni hills, including Kodaikanal, are said to exhibit a variety of plants ranging from "one-half to four-fifths" of the flora of the whole Indian Peninsula, besides "a vast number of species peculiar to themselves"³. This rich variety of flowering plants is ascribed to the relics which remain on the hills of a vegetation which in the distant past grew on the plains, when the climate of the tropics was not so hot⁴. Colonel Beddome is stated to have found here over 700 species of plants⁵. Dr. Wight says that among the European forms observed by him were two species of *Ranunculus* (buttercup), two of *Anemone*, three of *Clematis* (traveller's joy), two of *Berberis* (barberry), a new *Parnassia* (grass of Parnassus); two of *Drosera* (sundew), one *Stellaria* (chickweed), one *Cerastium* (another kind of chickweed), a rose, three or four kinds of rasps or brambles, one *Potentilla* (straw-berry-like herb), one *Circœa*

¹ G.O. No. 53, Revenue, dated 9th January 1916—See Mr. Boag's report.

² A Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1949, Madurai district, pages 13-14.

³ 1951 Census Handbook, 1953, pages 3-4.

⁴ Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, pages 131-145.

⁵ Gazetteer of the Madurai district by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 16.

⁶ Flora of the Nilgiri and Palni Hill-Top by P. F. Fyfe, Vol. I, 1916, page XVII.

⁷ Gazetteer of the Madurai district by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 16.

(enchanter's nightshade), a tree allied to the Bilberry, one *Anagallis* (a pimperl-like herb), two kinds of *Lysimachia* (pink loose strife), the common dock and three kinds of rushes. Among the truly tropical forms, he mentions a species of *Magnolia* (*Michelia champaka*), the *Rhododendrons*, a very large and handsome *Hex* (holy), but without the thorny leaves of the European plant, a species of *Gordonia*, a tree resembling in its flowers the *Camellia* and tea plant and a very remarkable species of fig. He observes that four species of palms are met with on the higher regions, namely, the sago palm, the wild areca palm, the *Bentinckia condupana* and an alpine species of date. The grasses, he says, are very numerous, but the predominant tribe is *Andropogineæ*, a coarse grass of highly aromatic quality. Among the ferns, mosses and lichens which abound, he mentions, as being conspicuous a branching variety of *Alsophila* found commonly in thick jungles on the moist banks of streams¹.

Dr. A. G. Bourne speaking of the Palnis draws attention to certain species. Among these are *Cyanotis arachnoidea* (white spider legs), *Kalanchoe* (one of the species of which is known as giant cabbage flower), *Osbeckia wightiana* (a kind of shrub) and *Andropogon contortus* and *Andropogon lividus* which give the hill tops their purplish tinge. Among these, there are also *Pollinia quadrinervis* var, *Wightii* (a kind of grass) which has fascicles of rich brown spikes of stems generally several feet in height, of *Ischamum ciliare* (purple grass) which has a pair of thick rich purple spikes, *Arundinella villosa* (a coarse grass), which has solitary untidy looking spikes and of *Andropogon zeylanicus* and *Andropogon wightiana* (two kinds of grasses), which have their long graceful panicles. Amidst these tall grasses are to be found, he says, *Brunella vulgaris* (self heal), *Vahlenbergia gracilis* (harebell), *Leucas helianthemifolia* (a shrub of deadnettle family), *Indigofera pedicellata* (a kind of Indigo plant), *Cyanotis wightii* (a kind of herb), *Polygala siberica* (common milkwort) and *Crotalaria albida* (a kind of shrub with pods). The species that commonly occur according to him are two varieties of *Crotalaria* (pod bearing species); two of *Valerians*, *V. Hookeriana*, and *V. Beddomet*, *Striga lutea* (*Scrophulariaceæ*) a small herb, *Gentiana quadrifaria* (orange blue flowers), *Maromermia biflora*, *Labiatae* (lemon-scented thyme), *Curculigo orchitoides*, *Amaryllidaceæ* (a small herb with yellow flowers), *Anaphalis oblonga* and *brevifolia*, *Composita* (small plants with all the leaves silver-white and small white flowers of the daisy family). Going down the slopes to the bottom of the valleys, he remarks, one constantly passes through masses of *Strobilanthes Kunthianus* (the common strobilanth with blue flowers blossoming once in 7 or 12 years), *Strobilanthes*, *Acanthaceæ* to *Dipsacus leschenaultii* (the Teasel, a large herb with spiny fruits) and huge thistles and ferns. In large damp areas one finds the ground, he says, covered with white flowers amidst

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura district by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 16.

which grow *Lysimachia leschenaultii* (pink loose strife), *Pedicularis Zeylancia* (pink rattle), *Impatiens tenella* (a kind of balsam), *Osbeckia cupularis* (small woody plant), *Satyrium nepalense* (pink twin spur), *Anaphalis wightiana* (green everlasting), *Ranunculus reiniformis* (a kind of buttercup), *Commelina clavata* (a kind of herb), *Xyris* (another kind of herb), and *Drosera* (sundew). Among the commonest plants on the roadside hedges, he mentions the species of *Rubus* (bramble) and among scattered trees here and there *Artemisia* (mug wort), *Polygonum chinense* (knot grass), *Heracleum Sprangelianum* (cow parsnip) and *Plectranthus* (cockspur flower). The commonest ground orchids are, he says, *Spiranthes australis* (ladies tresses), *Habenaria elliptica* and *Habenaria galeandra*¹.

It is not possible in a book like this to enumerate the hundreds of flowering plants found on the hills and plains. For a detailed description of these, the reader is referred to the Flora of the Nilgiri and Palni Hill-Tops by P. F. Tyson (1915) and the Flora of the Presidency of Madras by J. S. Gamble.

The fauna of the district, though not so varied, is none the less interesting. The ibex dwells amidst the rocky precipices on the Upper Palni plateau. The samblur roams in considerable numbers on the Palni forests. The bison has made its home not only on the Palnis but also in the Kambam Valley and on the Karandamalais and Nagamalais. The tiger and the panther are occasionally seen on the Palnis. The bear is found on the Palnis as well as on the Murugamalais near Periyakulam and on the Nattam and Ailur hills. Elephants are frequently met with, though not in large numbers in the extreme south of the Kambam Valley. They seem to live in the Vannathiparai, the Suranganar and the Kudiraiyar valleys. In December 1933, no less than fourteen elephants were found dead one morning in a field of varagu near the Vannathiparai bungalow. They had eaten varagu and died because of the presence of hydrocyanic acid in the crop. A couple of elephants which were alive, but completely prostrated, were immediately given tamarind upon which they recovered sufficiently and staggered away into the forest. The musk-deer and the hare are found in the fuel forests of the Nattam and Ailur hills. The jungle sheep, the boar, the jackal, the large red-hill mongoose, the Nilgiri marten cat, the Malabar short-tailed and the brown squirrel are common on the hills. Monkeys, the ordinary grey variety as well as the black variety, are also common in many places. At one time they became such a nuisance in the Madurai town that the roofs of houses had to be covered with thorns and special steps had to be taken to catch and deport them².

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 16-19.

² Working Plan of the Forests of the Madurai Division, 1938, page 20.

Report on the Palni Mountains by D. Hamilton, 1864, pages 9-10.

Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 23.

Of small game, snipe are the only birds which are plentiful. They take cover under korai grass and the best spots for them are the tanks round Sholavandan which are periodically filled with the Periyar water. Duck and teal abound on the tanks in Tirumangalam. The other usual game birds are met with all over the district, but in small numbers. The florican is occasionally seen; the sandgrouse occurs round Andipatti; and the woodcock dwells on the Upper Palnis. Falcons and kites of different kinds are common. Eagles of three kinds, the large brown, the crested and the black are found on the Palnis. Screech owls are common. Crows are abundant on the plains but rare on the Palnis. Birds of song are scarce, but paroquets and minas are common and, on the hills are often met with, black-birds, bulbuls and thrushes. Peacocks are occasionally found in the jungles. Frogs, toads, lizards, chameleons, tortoises, cobras, vipers, carpet snakes, water snakes, etc., are found everywhere. So also are found everywhere ants, white-ants, wasps, hornets, mosquitoes and caterpillars (velvet puchis and kambli puchis). The lac insect, *Lacca Laccifera* was introduced with success in 1930 in the Vannathiparai Valley¹.

Fishes of various kinds, mostly exotic, are found in the rivers, channels, tanks, lakes and reservoirs of the district. The Fisheries Department maintains demonstration fish farms in four tanks in Madurai town and four tanks in Melur town. Large quantities of fish are annually caught from these tanks and marketed. In 1955, for instance, no less than 22,680 pounds of fish were caught and sold for Rs. 7,627. More than 18,000 fingerlings were also supplied in the same year to private pisciculturists for rearing in ponds and irrigation wells. Besides this, several varieties of exotic fishes have been introduced by the department in various places. In the Kodaikanal lake, the department has introduced three varieties of German carp, namely, the mirror carp, the leather carp and the scale carp, as well as the English carp and the tenoll. In the Manalan estate near Chinnamur, it has introduced minor carp very successfully. In the Upper Palnis it has introduced trout. Lastly in the tanks south of the Vaigai, it has recently introduced tilapia, a variety of fish which breeds very fast in any piece of water. Angling is a favourite sport in the hill stations².

The cattle of the district have been dealt with in the chapter on Agriculture and Irrigation. Mention may, however, be made here of special breed maintained in the district. The Kappiliyars of Kambam, who are said to be immigrants from the Kannada country and who speak Kannada, rear a distinctive breed of

¹ Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, pages 89-97.

² Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 22-23.

Working Plan of the Forests of the Madurai Division, 1938, page 20.

³ Based on information furnished by the Director of Industries and Commerce, Madras.

cattle called the "devaru avu" in Kannada and the "tambiran madu" in Tamil which mean the "sacred herd". These cattle are small, active, round-barrelled animals well known for their trotting powers. When they die, they are buried and not allowed to be desecrated by the Chuckler's skinning-knife. The cows are never milked and are only used for breeding. The leader of the herd is called the "king bull" and, when he dies, a successor is chosen amidst much pomp and ceremonial. On the auspicious day fixed for the election of the leader, the whole herd is assembled and camphor, plantains, betel and nut, etc., are solemnly offered to it. A bundle of sugarcane is then placed before it and the animal which first comes and eats the sugarcane is acclaimed as the new "King bull" and formally installed in his office by being adorned with saffron and kumkum and garlanded with flowers. Thereafter he is treated as a god, given the name Nandagopalaswami, and provided with a special attendant. These king bulls are credited with having performed many miracles¹.

The sheep are maintained in herds by shepherds who have followed their occupation for generations. The goats are reared by all castes of agricultural labourers some of whom keep herds of them. The largest number of sheep and goats are found in the Dindigul taluk².

The climate of the district is, on the whole, hot, dry and variable. The Upper Palnis (including the Kodaikanal taluk) have, however, a climate of their own with low temperature all round the year and fairly heavy rainfall during both the south-west and the north-east monsoons. The southern portion of the Periyakulam taluk which forms the Kambam Valley is cooler than the plains of the district and has a pleasant climate during the south-west monsoon³. The rest of the district is generally hot and dry. The cold season here is December, January and parts of February. During these months heavy dews refresh the earth, the nights become chilly, the mornings and evenings often raw and foggy; but in the day-time the temperature goes above 80° in the shade and the sun shines brightly and powerfully. If, as often happens, the October rains fail, the cold seasons differ little from the hot. After January the days get sensibly hotter, the dews become less, but a little refreshment is provided by the gentle showers which fall occasionally in February and March. In April and May the heat grows intense and, unless tempered by unusually plentiful rains, continues throughout June, July and August. In September the sky is overcast and there is usually rain but not a little sultriness. In October

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 20-21.

² Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1949, Madurai District, page 12.

³ 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai district, 1953, page 2.

and November the north-east monsoon sets in¹. About half the rainfall is registered during the north-east monsoon, during the months from October to December and about one-fourth during the south-west monsoon, during the months from June to September. October and November are usually the wettest months in the year and the driest are January, February and March. The district gets the full benefit of neither monsoon; the south-west monsoon is largely shut off from it by the Western Ghats. Both the monsoons are here very irregular and the distribution of rainfall varies in its different parts. Dindigul is the driest part of the district, next come Nilakottai, Periyakulam and Pailni. Madurai gets a little more rain. Tirumangalam and Melur come last excepting, of course, Kodaikanal. Most of the rain falls in more or less severe local showers and its effect is often lost only too quickly in the porous red soil which covers large parts of the district².

The average maximum temperature of the district (excluding Kodaikanal taluk which is exceptional) over a series of years from 1881 to 1940 and in the year 1951, is 92.2° and 93.8° respectively; and the average minimum over the same period and in 1951 is 74.2° and 74.8° respectively. The average highest and lowest temperatures recorded during the same period and in 1951 were 108° and 60° and 104° and 60° respectively. The average rainfall for the same period and for 1951 were 34.37 inches and 37.19 inches respectively. As to Kodaikanal, the average maximum temperature from 1881 to 1940 and in 1951 were 63.8° and 64.1°, the highest recorded temperatures were 82° and 71°, the average minimum were 50.7° and 51.2°, and the lowest recorded were 37° and 41° respectively. The average rainfall for the same period and in 1951 were 66.48 inches and 73.13 inches respectively. The range of humidity in Kodaikanal is phenomenal. Variations from nil to 98 per cent during the course of twenty-four hours are sometimes recorded here in the months of December and February. The mean humidity is however 74 per cent. The following tables give particulars of the temperature and rainfall³.

RECORDED AT MADURAI.

1881-1940.

Temperature.

Month.	Mean of		Highest recorded.	Lowest recorded.	Mean rainfall (in inches).
	Daily maximum.	Daily minimum.			
January	85.8	68.4	94	60	0.78
February	90.3	69.5	101	61	6.53
March	95.3	72.5	107	63	0.70

¹ Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, pages 43-44.² Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1949, Madurai district, page 3. G.O. No. 53, Revenue, dated 18th January 1916 - See Mr. Boag's Report.³ 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai district, 1953, pages 2-3.

RECORDED AT MADURAI—cont.

1881-1940—cont.

Temperature—cont.

Month.	Mean of.		Highest recorded.	Lowest recorded.	Mean rainfall (in inches.)
	Daily maximum.	Daily minimum.			
April	97.8	76.7	107	67	2.16
May	98.8	78.0	107	63	2.74
June	97.1	78.0	103	64	1.57
July	95.9	77.3	105	67	1.25
August	95.2	76.5	104	69	4.08
September	93.8	75.9	103	68	4.70
October	90.2	74.6	101	65	7.42
November	86.7	73.0	97	63	5.73
December	84.7	70.2	94	62	2.01
For the year	92.6	74.2	108	60	34.37

1951.

Temperature.

January	86.7	69.6	95	64	0.48
February	91.3	67.9	95	63	0.00
March	96.6	74.2	102	64	0.36
April	95.1	77.1	100	72	5.93
May	100.5	78.9	104	74	0.67
June	97.8	78.8	102	75	0.02
July	76.1	77.0	102	70	5.95
August	97.7	77.0	102	73	5.53
September	95.0	76.1	101	71	8.74
October	93.8	75.9	98	72	5.24
November	87.8	74.7	92	72	4.27
December	87.6	70.4	95	67	..
For the year	93.8	74.8	104	63	37.90

RECORDED AT KODAIKANAL.

1881-1940.

Temperature.

January	62.2	46.6	76	37	31.0
February	64.1	47.4	76	40	1.53
March	66.2	50.2	80	41	1.81
April	68.2	53.1	79	47	4.82
May	68.4	54.7	82	48	6.37
June	64.6	53.2	75	41	4.24
July	52.3	52.1	72	46	4.65
August	62.7	51.9	70	47	7.00
September	62.7	52.0	71	48	7.28
October	62.1	51.2	70	43	10.24
November	60.9	49.4	71	39	10.19
December	61.7	47.2	73	37	51.16
For the year	63.8	50.7	82	37	66.48

RECORDED AT KODAIKANAL—cont.

1951.

Temperature.

Month.	Mean of.		Highest recorded.	Lowest recorded.	Mean rainfall (in inches.)
	Daily maximum.	Daily minimum.			
January	61.8	46.8	68	42	1.62
February	64.9	47.1	71	42	0.15
March	66.0	50.1	70	45	6.87
April	64.9	53.0	69	51	18.22
May	68.6	55.1	71	52	7.72
June	63.7	52.9	69	51	2.51
July	62.2	52.9	68	51	6.63
August	64.4	52.8	69	51	3.98
September	65.2	53.0	69	51	10.17
October	64.1	52.2	67	49	5.42
November	61.4	51.2	65	45	2.33
December	62.5	47.1	69	41	0.45
For the year	64.1	51.2	71	41	73.13

1945-54.

Rainfall.

Taluk.	Average annual rainfall in inches.	Average number of rainy days in a year.
Palni	26.01	43.7
Kodaikanal	61.46	110.6
Dindigul	29.94	50.4
Nilakkottai	30.84	48.9
Melur	35.86	55.5
Periyakulam	33.13	53.9
Tirumangalam	33.50	48.6
Madurai	36.73	55.0

In regard to the winds, violent winds very seldom blow in the district even during the prevalence of monsoons. Tempests and thunder-storms are uncommon, but dust-storms and whirlwinds occur not infrequently and gusty winds blow from various quarters towards the end of March and the beginning of April. Except at these times and during the monsoons, the air is calm and undisturbed, but at nights there is almost always some movement and coolness in the air. When the north-east monsoon breaks in October and November, the wind blows from the north and north-west, sometimes with great violence, and then getting round towards the east, blows more or less steadily from the north-east and east. In December its direction is more settled and it has a leaning towards the east. In January and February it blows freshly and steadily from between the north and east and, occasionally, from the north and north-west. In

March it gradually leaves the north and losing strength and steadiness veers round to the east and south-east. In April and May it is very light and variable with a leaning towards the south-west and afterwards the west. In June and July the prevailing winds are light and south-westerly breezes, but the winds blow also from other quarters. In August and September the wind is still, mostly, in the south-west, but it is very variable at times and has a leaning towards the north¹.

Depending as the district does in a great measure on seasonal rains which are by no means regular or heavy, it has not been free from famines and scarcities. Of the famines that visited it in pre-British days we have very little information. But, what little information there is seems to show that severe famines sometimes occurred in it. In 1622 we are told that famine had been so bad for some years that numerous corpses of those who died of starvation were left unburied. In 1659-1662 more than 10,000 persons among Christians alone are said to have perished from want. In 1675, after Venkaji's incursion, it is stated, nothing was to be met with in any direction save desolation and the silence of the tomb. In 1678 a famine came following a flood; in 1709 following a storm another famine came which is said to have lasted till 1720; and in 1781, yet another, this time a man-made one, came, following Hyder's invasion of the previous year. In the British period also, until the closing years of the last century, several famines, some light and some severe, periodically visited the district. In 1799 there was considerable distress round Dindigul and the Collector was authorized to purchase grain on behalf of the Government and to distribute it to the people. In 1812-1814 a severe famine stalked about the district causing great distress and making it necessary for the Government to provide employment for a large number of people and to advance large sums to the merchants to import grain and foodstuffs from elsewhere. In 1832-1833 and in 1836 similar severe famines harassed the district and led to the grant of remissions of revenue, to the employment of the poor upon public works and to the provision of relief from the funds of the great Minakshi temple. The last two famines are said to have carried away a considerable portion of the population. They were succeeded by years of high prices and suffering and in 1857, both the south-west and the north-east monsoons having failed, another severe famine occurred. Prices shot up, many people fell on relief and over 40,000 emigrated to Ceylon. The next year was not much better; the prices continued to remain high and the people suffered much from cholera and other diseases. But this was only a prelude to the greater famines that were to follow. In 1866 a more severe famine distracted the district. The monsoon arrived late. Grain became scarce and, in some places, unprocurable at any price.

¹ Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, pages 51-52.

More than Rs. 14,000 were raised by local subscription, Rs. 24,000 were spent on gratuitous relief and Rs. 19,000 on works. The taluks worst affected were Melur and Tirumangalam.

Then came the great famine of 1876-1878 which created disaster not only in Madurai but also in most of the other districts of this State. It began in 1876 with the failure of the south-west as well as the north-east monsoon. By the middle of November all agricultural operations came to a standstill in the district and in many places even drinking water became scarce. Sheep and cattle in Palni began to die, although the forest reserves were thrown open for grazing. The ryots sold their cattle and emigrated in thousands to Ceylon and elsewhere leaving their wives and children behind them. One lakh and twenty thousand people are stated to have emigrated by June 1878 and special arrangements had to be made at Hamban to feed them. Cholera, small-pox and other diseases prowled along and carried away more than 20,000 people. Meanwhile, in December 1876, the relief works were opened. These were very soon augmented and intensified and early in 1877 the district was divided into four divisions for famine administration. All the same, things went quickly from bad to worse. The south-west monsoon of 1877 again proved a failure. More and more people fell on relief. More and more grain was rushed into the district by means of the railway which had just then been opened and elaborate arrangements were made for its distribution to the outlying parts. Weavers were sought to be relieved by advances, by the distribution of raw materials and by the purchase of finished goods. Ryots were assisted by large remissions. Gratuitous relief was provided from State funds and from the Mansion House Fund (Lord Mayor's Fund of London). But the famine still stalked about everywhere carrying away thousands, sundering parents from children, decimating the cattle, and causing untold misery. It was not till September and October 1877 that good rains began to fall and chase away the horrors. This famine cost the State about 17½ lakhs of rupees, out of which over 6½ lakhs were granted in the shape of remissions. The census of 1881 revealed that the population had decreased by 5 per cent over the census figures of 1871 in the district, by 6 per cent in the Dindigul taluk, by 7 per cent in the Palni and Madurai taluks and by 15 per cent in the Tirumangalam taluk¹.

Since the famine of 1876-1878 no famines have visited the district. Scarcities however have sometimes prevailed and it must be stated that the position of the district has since been not a little improved by the Periyar Scheme and the Grow More Food Campaigns of the Second World War and its aftermath.

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 161-166.

Floods, on the other hand, have occurred more frequently in the present century than in former times. The earliest flood in the district about which there is evidence, seems to have occurred in December 1677 when the heavy rains on the Western Ghats swept away many low-lying villages in the district. The next flood came with a cyclone which broke over the district on 18th December 1709. The cyclone began at 7 a.m. and lasted till noon with a strong north-easterly gale and violent rain. Then came a pause till 5 p.m. when the gale accompanied by the rain got up suddenly from the south-west and blew for most of the night with even greater force with the result that, by the morning, most of the tanks breached and a mighty wave of water surged through the district carrying everything before it. In November 1811 another terrific storm from the south-west swept over the neighbourhood of Madurai town and destroyed nearly 3,000 cattle. In December 1843 extraordinary freshes occurred in the Vaigai and breached many tanks. In December 1877 the Gundar came down in a dangerous flood and swept during the night through the famine camp pitched in its bed at Tiruchuli and drowned about 20 persons. It then ran to Kamudi, washed away the wall of a temple and a thousand yards of the big embankment there and breached almost every tank in that area. In 1834 an unusually high flood in the Vaigai topped the road to the west of Madurai and flowed into the Anupanadi channel¹.

In our own times a cyclone and heavy rains on the Western Ghats caused severe floods in the district on 30th November and 1st December 1922. On the morning of 1st December the Vaigai rose with extraordinary rapidity and in the afternoon flooded large areas. Thereafter it subsided leaving, however, much damage behind. The flood came as far as the temple on the southern side of the river in Madurai town and invaded Goripalayam and other villages on the northern side of the river. In Madurai town itself 683 houses collapsed, a number of topes were damaged and a causeway across the river gave way. In the Madurai taluk 190 houses either collapsed or were damaged, 21 tanks and the Nilayar channel breached, a bridge on the trunk road to Dindigul was washed away and a large number of topes were destroyed. In the Periyakulam taluk the floods in the Varahanadi and the Kottagudi rivers affected most of the villages on their banks. The former reached its maximum flood level on 30th November, overflowed both its banks and destroyed or damaged 120 houses in Periyakulam town and 160 houses outside the town. In Bodinayakanur, the floods washed away a number of cattle, and in the Kambam Valley the Suruli channels got silted up and an aqueduct and an anicut were swept away. In the Nilakkottai taluk, the Periyar main canal breached in four places near Peranai dam and

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906—pages 166-167.

immediately below the headworks of the canal about 100 yards of the canal were washed away. In Sholavandan firka 120 houses collapsed, 1,600 coconut trees were destroyed and 70 acres of paddy were completely damaged. The causeway across the Vaigai in Melakkal village was also damaged and in the other parts of the taluk 12 tanks and 12 channels breached, 400 houses collapsed, and a portion of the Chittanai anicut gave way. In the Kodaikanal taluk much havoc was caused by land slips; the ghat road was seriously damaged and the discharge of the Berijam lake was blocked up. In the rest of the district there were no heavy floods but there were heavy rains. In the Tirumangalam taluk about 7,000 houses collapsed owing to incessant and heavy rain and a number of roads were damaged. The railways in the district suffered badly. Every line leading out of Madurai was breached. Sholavandan station was actually under water. For some days Madurai was almost completely isolated both by rail and road. But, in spite of all this, there was very little loss of life in the district. The extent of damage caused to houses, streets, etc., was estimated at 3 lakhs of rupees¹.

The floods that came after 1922 were not so destructive. On the night of 16th December 1923 as a result of the heavy rains the Vaigai rose and came to the road level in Madurai town but by morning the flood began to subside². On the midnight of 4th November 1930 a heavy storm accompanied by rain broke over the Alagar hills in the Melur taluk and breached the Tirukundan tank.³ On the 9th and 10th December 1931 unusual floods occurred in the Suruli and damaged the irrigation works in the Kambam Valley⁴. On the night of 15th November 1935 rain and floods damaged a railway bridge over the Shanmuganadi, two miles west of Palni, washed away the railway lines in the Palni taluk and damaged also some irrigation works and houses in it.⁵ In December 1940 some breaches occurred in the Thevankurichi tank and supply channel⁶. On 2nd January 1943 a flood caused serious damage to the Periyar dam⁷. On 29th October 1944 a heavy downpour of rain caused a flood in the Usilampatti division, breached 27 tanks and resulted in damage to some lands and loss of cattle⁸. In 1946 owing to heavy rains from 10th to 12th November and 30th November to 8th December some of the irrigation tanks and channels in the Periyar and Madurai divisions breached⁹. In April 1947 the floods in the Vaigai and the channels branching off from it damaged 336 huts in Madurai town¹⁰.

¹ G.O. No. 152, Revenue, dated 26th January 1923.

² G.O. No. 47, Irrigation, dated 22nd February 1924.

³ G.O. No. 3343, Irrigation, dated 27th November 1930.

⁴ G.O. No. 798, Irrigation, dated 2nd April 1932.

⁵ G.O. No. 73, Revenue, dated 10th January 1936 and G.O. No. 235, Irrigation dated 30th January 1936.

⁶ G.O. No. 239, Public Works, dated 28th January 1941.

⁷ G.O. No. 5291, Public Works, dated 23rd February 1943.

⁸ G.O. No. 274, Revenue, dated 9th February 1945.

⁹ G.O. No. 782, Public Works, dated 4th March 1948.

¹⁰ G.O. No. 1360, Revenue, dated 5th June 1947.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY HISTORY.

The ancient history of Madurai is bound up with the history of the Pandyas. It is not known with any certainty when the Pandyas began their rule. Some say that they were ruling in the Madurai country even in the age of the Ramayana, that a verse in that epic in the Kishkindha kanda must be taken to refer to the Kapatapuram of the Pandyas mentioned in the Tamil legends of the "Three Sangams"¹. Others say that their kingdom was at least as ancient as the Mahabharatha, that Arjuna's bride Chithrangada was no other than the daughter of the Pandyan king Chithravahana². Some others again assert that the grammarian Katyayana refers to the Pandyas as the descendants of Pandu, the father of the five Pandava brothers³. Nor is this all. The Sthalapurana of Madurai dates back the origin and glories of the Pandyan kingdom to the fabulous times, associating them as it does with Gods like Indra, Siva and Saraswathi and the sage Agasthya, and weaving the sixty-four sacred sports of Siva round Madurai and chronicling the reigns of no less than seventy-three early Pandyan kings⁴. Tradition also has it that the three great kingdoms of the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas were, in the dim mists of antiquity, founded by three brothers who originally resided at Korkai, near the mouth of the Tambraparni river in the Tirunelveli country; that these brothers eventually separated, the Pandyan remaining at home, while the Cheran and the Cholan went forth to seek their fortunes; and that, soon afterwards, the Pandyan founded a kingdom comprising the Madurai and Tirunelveli districts, while the Cheran and the Cholan founded the kingdoms comprising the Travancore country and the districts of Malabar and Coimbatore on the one side and the districts of Tanjore and Tiruchirappalli on the other⁵.

There is, however, nothing to corroborate all this. But there is ample evidence to show that about the beginning of the Christian era the Pandyan kingdom of Madurai was a settled fact co-existing with those of the Cholas and the Cheras. The classical writers of Greece and Rome were acquainted with the Pandyan kingdom. Megasthenes (302 B.C.) speaks of a country called Pandana. Strabo (20 A.D.) records about an embassy presumably sent by the Pandyan king to the emperor Augustus. The anonymous author of the Periplus (70 A.D.) refers to the pearl fisheries of Colchi (Korkai) belonging to the Pandya kingdom. Pliny (77 A.D.) mentions the Pandae, the king Pandion and his "Mediterranean

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, page 13.

² History of Tirunelveli by Rev. R. Caldwell, 1881, pages 12-13.

³ *Idem*—page 12.

⁴ Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, Part III, pages 2-38.

⁵ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, 1906, Vol. I, page 25.

emporium of Medoura." Ptolemy (140 A.D.) writes about "Modoura, the kingdom of the Pandion." Many Roman coins of this period have also been found in and about Madurai¹. As to the Indian and Ceylonese classical sources, one of the edicts of Asoka (250 B.C.) boasts that "the conquest through the sacred law (of the Buddha) extended to the south where the Chodas (Cholas) and the Panidas (Pandyas) dwell, as far as Tambapanni (the Tambraparni or Ceylon?)"². By this conquest, however, is meant little more than that the Pandyas and the Cholas permitted the preaching of Buddhism; there is nothing to show that Asoka's army on its conquering march came to the Pandyan or Chola country. The Arthasastra refers to the Pandyas and to their capital Madurai³. The Mahavamsa, the Ceylon Chronicle, makes several references to the early Pandyan Kingdom and its affairs⁴. The Tamil Sangam works which have been said to belong to the first three centuries of the Christian era mention a number of Pandyan kings⁵. None of these sources, however, make clear the chronology of the kings or the dates of the events that took place⁶. The history of the later Pandyas is illumined better by a new source, namely, epigraphy; but even with the aid of epigraphy it is not always possible to fix the chronology. Among these epigraphic records may be mentioned the stone inscriptions from Anaimalai and Aivarmalai, the Tiruchirappalli and Ambasamudram inscriptions of Varaguna, the copper plate grants known as the Sinnamanur plates (two sets) and the Velvikudi grant, the Madras Museum plates of Jatilavarman, the Chola inscriptions, especially the Tiruvālangadu plates and the Leyden grant of Rajendra Chola, as well as some Pallava grants⁷. Some light is also thrown on the later Pandyas by the literature associated with the Saiya and Vaishnava Saints of the sixth to the tenth centuries⁸ and by the accounts left by travellers like Marco Polo (1293) and Wang Ta-Yuan (1330-1349) and historians like Wassaf (1300-1328) and Ibn Batuta (1333-1345)⁹. It is with sources such as these that the history of the Pandyas has been reconstructed.

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, 1906, Vol. I page 26.

Foreign Notices of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1939, pages 41, 47, 53 and 59.

² Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 26.

History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, page 85.

³ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, page 14.

⁴ *Idem*, page 5.

⁵ *Idem*, page 25.

⁶ *Idem*, pages 7-9, 22-25.

⁷ *Idem*, page 7.

⁸ Tamil Studies by M. Srinivasa Aiyangar, 1914, pages 281-339.

Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 95-124.

⁹ Foreign Notices of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, pages 179, 182, 291-292, 317 et. seq.

History of India as told by its own Historians by H. Elliot, Vol. III, 1871, pages 24-66.

✓ At the dawn of the Sangam Age when the curtain lifts on the Pandyan country of Madurai, we find that country ruled by King Nediyan (the tall one). He is almost a mythical figure and his achievements are recorded in the legends relating to the sacred sports of Siva. He is said to have brought the Pahruli river into existence and organized the worship of the sea. The next king is Palsalai Mudukudumi. He is more real. He has been sung in several poems and is credited with having conquered many lands and having performed many sacrifices and earned for himself the title 'palsalai' which means "of the many (sacrificial) halls." There is a poem (Puram 6) containing a blessing coupled with extravagant hero worship which claims all India as his kingdom. He is, however, said to have treated the conquered countries with uncommon harshness. It is not possible to say what distance of time separated these two kings from each other or from their successors. The third king was Nedunjeliyan who is stated to have won a victory over an Aryan (northern Indian) army. He has been immortalised in the great epic Silappadikaram. The story told in this epic is that, when Kovalan, its hero (of the Chola country) came back to his devoted wife Kannaki after having been drained of his wealth and cured of his folly by Madhavi, a famous courtesan, he and his wife started in search of fortune in the Pandyan country. Here, having nothing to fall back upon, he tried to sell one of his wife's anklets but, as ill-luck would have it, the queen also having lost a similar anklet at the same time, he was forthwith arrested, charged as a thief by the goldsmiths and beheaded under the orders of the king. As soon as Kannaki came to know of this, she ran in despair to the royal court and proved the innocence of her husband by producing before the king her other anklet. Shocked by the great injustice he had committed, the king fell down from the throne and died broken-hearted. His son and successor seems to have been Seliyan, called Verri Verceliyan or Uanjeliyan who wreaked terrible vengeance on the goldsmiths by sacrificing a thousand of them in one day to appease Kannaki who had come to be looked upon as a goddess.¹

The most famous of the Pandyan kings of the Sangam Age was Nedunjeliyan of Talaiyalanganam renown. He came to the throne as a youth but proved himself more than equal to the hostile combination of two of his neighbouring monarchs, the Chola and the Chera kings, and five minor chieftains. His enemies came to the very gates of Madurai, but nothing daunted he gathered his forces, assailed them, drove them out of his kingdom and defeated them in a pitched battle at Talaiyalanganam about eight miles north-west of Tiruvalur in the Tanjore district. At this battle he took the Chera king "Sey of the Elephant look" captive

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 26-27.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, pages 121-122.

Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 77-78.

and threw him into a Pandyan prison. Under him the Pandyan sway was extended over Korkai and the pearl fishery coast and portions of the Tanjore country. That he was a follower of Brahmanical Hinduism is clear from the fact that he performed a vedic sacrifice with the help of the Brahmins learned in the vedas. That he was a great patron of poets is testified by the praises bestowed upon him by several poets including Mangudi Marudan, Nakkirar and his father and Paranar and Kalladanar. That he was a poet himself of no mean merit is evident from a simple poem of his of great force and beauty (Puram 72) in which he swears an oath of heroism and victory before he set out to crush his enemies¹.

Other Pandyan kings of the Sangam Age may be disposed of briefly. Some of them however appear to have been nothing more than members of the royal family, such as Ilamperuvalludi who died at sea, the author of Paripadal 15, Puram 182 and Narrinai 55 and 56; Nambi Nedunjeliyan (Puram 239), Pandyan Nalvaludi, the author of Paripadal 12 and Chittiramadattu Tunjiya Nanmaran (Puram 59). Of the kings proper Pandyan Arivudai Nambi figures as the author of several wise little poems and it is to him that Pisirandaiyar (Puram 184) addressed a homily on moderation in taxation. A more well known king is Ilavandikaippallittunjiya Nanmaran who has been pilloried in song by two poets for his illiberality (Purams 196 and 198). A still more well-known king is Ugraperuvalludi, the contemporary of the author of the Tirukkural. He is said to have subdued by the strength of his arm the chieftain of Kanapper who had entrenched himself behind a strong fortress. He was a poet himself and was responsible for the compilation of the anthology of Ahananuru. One other king is Bhuttipandiyan who took Ollaiyur and whose queen is remembered for the song which she composed on the occasion of her sati. He was a poet (Puram 71, 246, 247 and Aham 25), a loving husband and a faithful friend².

This is all that can be said of the political history of Madurai under the early Pandyan kings, but of its social and economic conditions and administration, we can say more. The form of the government was doubtless monarchy. The king was the supreme head of the State. He was in theory an autocrat whose word was law, but in practice he was bound by custom and the dharma-sastras, which in those days were held more or less sacrosanct. He was also, it would appear, in the habit of consulting on all important matters his chief officials and the leading public men of his capital. Among these officers were the Mantrin (the head of the Civil Service), the Purohita (the royal priest), the Senapathi (the commander-in-chief), the Duta (the Ambassador) and the Chara

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 27-29.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, page 122.

² The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 29-30.

(the intelligence officer). It was through them and their subordinates that he conducted the administration of his kingdom and controlled its foreign affairs¹.

His army was composed of the corps of chariotry, elephantry, cavalry and infantry. The chariots had two wheels, were drawn by two horses and accommodated two persons, a warrior and a charioteer. The elephants were well trained and richly caparisoned. The privilege of riding on chariots and elephants was given only to the chosen few, the generals of the army and the members of the nobility. The cavalry consisted of horses imported from Arabia and elsewhere and of captains wearing light arms and short bucklers. The infantry comprised archers carrying bows and arrows and footmen carrying a spear or battle-axe in their right hand and a shield made of ox-hide in their left hand. Bows, arrows, swords, battle-axes, spears, javelins, and shields were the weapons used by the army. Most of the soldiers were recruited from the warlike Maravar and Eyinar tribes. The Maravars are said to have presented a striking martial appearance and proved excellent soldiers, what with their moustaches and beards, their uncommon physical strength, their fierce bearing and their undaunted valour².

The army was distributed in various fortresses scattered throughout the kingdom. There were fortresses in the capital, in all important towns and in all border towns. Each of these was surrounded by high walls, a deep moat, and an extensive and thick forest without. The Maduraikanchi gives a vivid description of these fortresses. There can be little doubt that they served the king well against the frequent marauding raids of petty tribal chieftains and occasional invasions of the Chola and the Chera kings. The causes that often furnished occasions for his wars were the incursions of the neighbouring rulers, their refusal to give their daughters in marriage, the insubordination of vassals, cattle lifting and, sometimes, ambition to extend the bounds of the kingdom. On the eve of the march the army was sumptuously fed to infuse in it vigour and enthusiasm. The march itself was begun on an auspicious day after consulting the purohit and the astrologers and while on the march, amidst the din of war-drums and war-songs, the king's emblem of the fish was conspicuously displayed on flying colours. The army was often accompanied by a large commissariat, and numerous camp followers among whom were to be seen poets, dancing girls, musicians of both sexes, and even wives of nobles. The king and the nobles wore garlands of margosa (sacred to the Pandyas) and took no small delight in fighting in the fore-front and evincing real solicitude towards the wounded and the disabled. A wound at the back or cowardice of any sort

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 32-33.

Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1930 pages 196-197, 204-208.

² *Idem*, pages 228-229, 231-233.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, pages 128-129.

was frowned upon and regarded as an unpardonable disgrace even by the wives and mothers. A victory was often succeeded by sacrifices and feasts, by dancing and rejoicing, by the composition of heroic poems and sometimes also by the ruthless destruction of the conquered territories. The crowns of the vanquished kings furnished the gold for the anklets of the victor, and the trunks of their guardian trees provided the wood for his war-drums. Captains who had distinguished themselves were rewarded by the title of Enadi at formal investiture ceremonies or by rings and other insignia of honour¹.

There is not sufficient information to show how the king carried on the civil administration of the country. But it is clear that he was regarded as the fountain head of justice and as such was approachable by all who wished to seek redress. The story of Kovalan and Kannaki strongly exemplifies the high sense of justice entertained by the Pandyan kings. For the trial of all important cases, civil as well as criminal, the king generally summoned a sabha of a manram consisting of the chief men of the capital, official as well as non-official. In other places, in each and every town and village, justice was administered by the local manrams composed of representatives of the people. In both cases there is reason to think that witnesses were examined at the trials and that the law administered was customary law and the dharmasastra (dharmanul). Where the witnesses were not forthcoming, trial by ordeals was resorted to, such as the ordeals by oil and fire. Minor offences were visited with fines which fetched a goodly income to the State; while serious offences, like theft, assault, adultery and treason were punished by imprisonment, mutilation of limbs and sentences of death. Thefts seem to have been common and even the palace and the person of the king were not free from them².

The king derived his income mostly from land revenue, customs and transit duties. What assessment he imposed, what portion of the gross revenue he took, is, however, not clear. One-sixth was the share he was entitled to by the sastras, but there is nothing to show that he did not take more. The ideal of moderation in taxation laid down by the Kural was constantly pressed on his attention by the poets. Puram 84 addressed to one of the kings vividly contrasts the effects of moderate and excessive taxes; the former would, it says, increase the prosperity of the country, continually fill the treasury and make the king very popular, while the latter would speedily ruin the country, empty the treasury and make the king thoroughly unpopular. Next to land revenue, the prosperous foreign trade of the country and the numerous inland

¹ Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 229-231, 233-239, 243-246.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 128-130.

² Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 215-222.

South Indian Polity by T. V. Mahalingam, 1954, pages 205-208, 223-224.

transit duties must have brought in a considerable amount of customs revenue to the king. Besides customs and land revenue he derived an income from his right to treasure troves, fines and booty captured in war¹.

Local affairs of the kingdom were managed by manrams or sabhas elected by the people. Every town and village had its manram which met beneath the shade of a tree and decided on all matters of public interest. It sat as a court of civil and criminal justice, and provided for the watch and ward. It managed public lands, raised taxes, constructed irrigation works, and corresponded with the king's officers on all matters affecting larger public interests. It would appear that these officers rarely interfered with its affairs, thus vesting it with an autonomy more or less complete in local administration².

That the kingdom had a prosperous trade with even the distant ports of Rome, Greece and Arabia is abundantly testified by the classical writers of Greece and Rome, by the literature of the Sangam Age, as well as by the large number of Roman coins of that time found in and around Madurai. Saliyur, Neleynda, Kumari and Korkai are mentioned as important ports. From these ports went forth large vessels laden with cotton and silk fabrics of exceptional fineness and exquisite patterns with beryls, pearls, tortoise shells, diamonds, sapphires, etc., and to these ports they returned bringing back with them great quantities of coins, linens, glass, copper, tin, lead, and wines and liquors of all sorts. The internal trade of the country was also brisk and extensive. Caravans of merchants with carts and pack animals carried their merchandise from place to place, from fair to fair bartering, selling and sending hawkers into every town and village³.

The chief occupation of the people was, of course, agriculture. The bulk of the land was owned by Vellalars who held a high social status. They were rich and powerful and they occupied also important positions in the civil and military administration; and such of them as were distinguished earned the title of Kavidi. Cattle was another source of wealth and cattle stealing, as has already been noticed, led even to wars. Spinning and weaving of cotton and silk was also an important occupation of large sections of people. Cotton and silk fabrics, as has also been noticed, formed the chief articles of export to foreign countries. In addition to the agriculturists and the weavers there were the merchants, the vendors of gems, jewels and scents, the masters of dance and music, the makers of musical instruments, like the veena, the yal,

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, page 33.

Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 203-214.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, page 128.

² Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 222-226.

³ A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, pages 134-137.

Foreign Notices of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1939, pages 4-7.

the flute, etc., purohiths, astrologers, poets, artists, dancers, songsters, minstrels, stone masons, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, carpenters and tailors. For in those days, as now, the king, the nobles and all those who could afford, enjoyed fully all the sweets and luxuries of life. The king lived in a palace the grandeur and wonder of which were the themes of poets. The Nedunalvadai (நெடுநல்வாடை) says that Nedunjeliyan's palace contained apartments, the walls and pillars and the artistic lamps of which were manufactured by the Yavanas (Greeks) and that its bed rooms were furnished with exquisite ivory bedsteads and cosy cushions. The palaces and big houses were constructed according to the rules laid down in the sastras and surrounded by gardens tastefully laid out. The rich lived in houses made of brick and mortar the walls of which often bore paintings of divine figures and pictures of animal life. Their food included wines and liquors of foreign lands, munnir, a mixture of tender coconut water, fruit juice and sugarcane juice and meat and vegetable viands of all kinds, besides sweet puddings of milk. Hunting, wrestling, boxing and dice-play formed the pastimes of men, while playing with balls and beans formed the pastimes of women and girls. Music and dancing provided their amusements. The courtesans, who were experts in both these fine arts and who used to deck themselves with all sorts of finery were a veritable danger to the wives. The story of Kovalan and Kannaki points to this danger, which is also mentioned in the Narrinai (320) by a woman who failed in all her attempts to save her husband from the clutches of courtesans. It is said that the courtesans, sometimes dressed in nothing but leaf garments, were wont to walk about the streets striking fear into the hearts of honest housewives. But the role of the wife was all the same honoured; Arundhati and Kannaki were held as models to all housewives. The poor lived in huts but were not devoid of simple pleasures and amusements. Wandering minstrels, women ballad singers and dancers and feasts and festivals enlivened their lives. They also took part in mixed dances and torch-light wrestling tournaments¹.

All that has been stated above shows without a shadow of doubt that civilization was considerably advanced in the Sangam Age. It must further be stated that at that age people had already imbibed the essentials of Aryan culture and retained whatever was good in the Dravidian culture. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Dharmasastras were all known and the ethics and religion inculcated by them were upheld and followed as far as possible. We find the kings performing yajnas and yagas, the poets preaching dharma and nyaya, and the people worshipping Siva, Vishnu and other gods of the Aryan pantheon and following the Aryan customs of marriages, rituals, disposal of the dead by cremation and inhumation and sati. Sati, however, was not common. We find at the same time the king and the people

following several Dravidian traditions and customs too, such as erecting hero stones on the graves, worshipping Muruga and other Dravidian Gods and demons and marrying according to 'Kalavu' and 'Karpu' forms of marriage. We find them also adopting the Dravidian customs of tonsure of widows and of tying the tali at the marriage ceremony. Nor is this all. Toleration was shown to all religions; the Buddhists and Jains were allowed to preach and practise their tenets without molestation. Learning was held in great respect, the Brahmins enjoyed special privileges and the poets who constituted the intellectuals of the day were courted, consulted, and feasted by the kings and nobles and allowed even to criticise royalty with impunity¹. No wonder, however, that this was so. Madurai was the seat of the Tamil Sangam and the Pandyan kings were from the very dawn of history, if not earlier, the great patrons of Sangam literature. It was they who founded it, nurtured it and made it distinguished in grammar, philosophy, ethics and poetry². It is neither possible nor necessary here to enter into the vexed questions as to whether there were three Tamil Sangams or not or as to whether Agasthya was or was not the founder of the First Sangam. It is enough to observe that the Sangam literature which has been handed down to us in the celebrated works like Tolkappiar's Tolkappiam, Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural, Ilango Adigal's Silappadikaram and Sattanar's Manimekalai, not to speak of the several other works of Nakkirar, Kapilar, Parananar, Arvaiyar, etc., constitute at once an invaluable treasure and an imperishable heritage which will be enjoyed by all as long as the Tamil language lasts.

The Sangam Age was followed by an age of darkness of nearly three centuries (300 to 600) in the history of South India. All that can be ascertained as to what happened during this period is that the country was occupied by the chieftains called Kalabhras who professed Buddhism, tolerated Jainism and undermined Hinduism. One of their chieftains Achutavikantha is said to have established Buddhist monasteries, encouraged Buddhist literature and kept in confinement all the three Tamil kings, the Chera, the Chola and the Pandya³. When the dawn comes towards the close of the sixth century, we find the Pandyan country once more in the possession of a Pandyan king, Kadungon (590-620). We know little about Kadungon and his son and successor, Maravarman Avanisulamani (620-625) save that they were responsible for recovering their patrimony from the Kalabhras. The next king Sendan or Jayantavarman (645-670), who succeeded his father Maravarman, is praised for his prowess in war and impartiality

¹ A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, pages 124-125, 138-139.

² Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, Part III, pages 1-55. Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 1-176.

Tamil Studies by M. Srinivasa Ayyangar, 1914, pages 231-280.

The Chronology of the Early Tamils by K. N. Sivaraj Pillai, 1932, pages 1-42.

³ A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, page 111.

⁴ Idem, page 139.

¹ Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 264-266, 268-271, 288-300.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, pp. 130-133.

in justice. He also bears the name Vanavan which seems to indicate that he won some successes against his Chera contemporary. He was succeeded by his son Arikesari Maravarman or Arikesari Parankusa (670-710) or Kun Pandya, as he is sometimes called. In his reign began the great contest with the Pallavas who were then fast rising into power in the northern part of the Tamil land. In his reign began also the fighting with the Cheras. He is stated to have won victories against both, against the former at Nelveli and against the latter at Sennilam, and to have reduced to subjection the Paravas and the people of Kurunadu. The fact that he performed several times the Hiranyagarbha and Tulabhara would seem to show that the victories with which he is credited were not mere empty boasts. The story goes that originally he was a follower of Jainism, that his wife a Chola princess, a devout Hindu, finding it impossible to convert him to Hinduism, implored the famous Saiva saint Tirugnanaśambandar to come and assist her; that the saint accordingly came, routed the Jains in every religious contest, healed the king of an incurable disease, converted him to Hinduism and rid the country of the Jains¹.

His son who succeeded him was Koccadayan who was also called Ranadūra (710-740). He was a great warrior who waged aggressive wars against his neighbours. He is given the titles of Vanavan, Sembian and Solan which imply his claim to supremacy over the Chera and Chola kings. He is also said to have attacked and subdued the Maharashtras in the great city of Mangalapuram (Mangalore) and reduced to subjection the Ay chieftain after the battle of Marudur (near Ambasamudram). His son and successor was Maravarman Rajasimha I (740-765). Like his father, he proved himself a great warrior. He won important successes against the Pallavas and in the Kongu country. He is called Pallavabhanjana, and credited with having won a series of victories against the Pallavas at Naduvayal, Kurumadaḥ, Mannikurichi, Tirumangai, Puvalur and Kodumbalur and captured numerous elephants and horses. He is also credited with having won a victory at Periyalur against the Malaya king ruling on the border land of the modern districts of Tiruchirappalli and Tanjore, with having secured that king's daughter in marriage, and with having "worshipped the lotus feet of Pasupati" and given away "heap of gold and lustrous gems" at Pandikkodumudi. He is also said to have defeated Vallabha, the Western Chalukya king, and his Ganga feudatory at Vembai, secured the hand of a Ganga princess in marriage and, what is more, defeated the Cholas and the Chera and performed many Gosahasras, Hiranyagarbhas and Tulabhara and relieved the distress of Brahmins learned in the vedas².

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1920, pages 50-55.

² Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshita 1936, pages 89-92.

³ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1920, pages 55-59.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, pages 148-149.

He was followed by his son and successor who is variously called Jatila Parantaka, Varaguna Maharaja, Maranjadayan and Nedunjadayan. Jatila Parantaka was a remarkable ruler who reigned for fifty years (765-815) and extended the Pandyan sway well beyond Tiruchirappalli into Tanjore, Salem and Coimbatore districts. He defeated the Pallava forces at Pennagadam on the south bank of the Cauvery, and when Pallavamalla sought to restrain him by organizing a confederacy of the rulers of Kongu and Kerala and the chieftain Adigaiman of Tagadur (Dharmapuri) against him, he rose equal to the occasion. He attacked and put the Adigaiman to flight. He captured the king of western Kongu with many elephants, sent him into confinement at Madurai and annexed the whole of the Kongu country to the Pandyan Empire. He penetrated far into the Pallava country and fixed his camp at Arasur on the banks of the Pennar in Tondainad. He led an expedition into Travancore, attacked the strongly fortified fort of Vilimam, reduced it and brought that country under his rule. He also waged a successful war against the Ay Chieftain who had perhaps been friendly to the ruler of Venad. Though a Vaishnavite, he encouraged Saivism. He built a temple to Vishnu in Kanji-vayppur and endowed the temples of Kuntara at Tiruchendur and of Tirupputudaiya Bhatarar of Ambasamudram. He was probably the most powerful Pandyan king of those times.

Under his son and successor Sri Mara or Sri Vallabha (815-862) the Pandyas saw both the expansion and decline of their empire. He began his reign with brilliant successes. He invaded Ceylon, ravaged its northern province, sacked its capital, drove its king Sena I to the Malaya country, but eventually made peace with him, and left him as his feudatory. He then faced a formidable confederacy of Gangas, Cholas and Rashtrakutas got up against him by the Pallava ruler Nandivarman III. He was at first defeated by Nandivarman and his allies at Tellaru in the Wandivashi taluk of the North Arcot district. His enemies advanced even as far as the bank of the Vaigai, in the very heart of his kingdom. But he did not lose courage. He showed remarkable resourcefulness, collected his forces, attacked his enemies and defeated them near Kumbakonam. It was, however, of no avail. Very soon Nripatunga, the new Pallava ruler, assailed him and won a decisive victory over him on the banks of the river Arisil, a branch of the Cauvery. This was the first sign of the coming doom. His aggressive campaigns which earned for him the title of Parachakrakahala (confounder of the circle of his enemies) roused the hostility of his neighbours. Sena II of Ceylon, nephew and successor of Sena I, allied himself with the Pallavas and with a pretender to the Pandyan throne and sent an expedition into Madurai at about the same time as the battle of Arisil. The invasion proved a complete

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1920, pages 59-67.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, pages 150-151.

success. Madurai was sacked, Sri Maru died of his wounds and his son Varagunavarman II was enthroned in his place by the Sinhalese Commander-in-chief.¹

Of Varagunavarman II (862-880) we know hardly anything except that he fought the great battle of Sri Purambiam and lost it. It would appear that this king smarting under the hegemony imposed upon him by the Pallavas and fearing the rising power of the Cholas, attacked first the latter at Idava, defeated them and then pushed his arms further north into the former's country. This, however, immediately raised against him a powerful combination. The Pallava king Aparajita assisted by the Ganga ruler, Prithivipati I and the Chola ruler Aditya I, gave battle to Varaguna at Sri Purambiam (Tiruppurambiyam near Kumbakonam). In this decisive battle Prithivipati lost his life but Aparajita crushed the Pandyan power and Aditya I obtained sufficient renown to carve out a kingdom for himself which soon became most powerful.²

Varaguna died childless and was succeeded by his younger brother Sri Parantaka, also called Viranarayana Sadayan (880-900). He is known to have captured single handed the naughty chief Ugra near Kharagiri together with his elephants, to have endowed many agraharams and numerous devasthanams and tatakas and to have married a Chera princess by name Sri Vanavan Mahadevi who in her beauty resembled "Lakshmi and Indrani". He seems to have thus made the Chera king his ally, fought a battle in the Kongu country and tried his best to shake off the Pallava yoke, but with little success. He was succeeded by his son Maravarman Rajasimha II (900-920) who also seems to have struggled hard against the Pallavas and the Cholas. His downfall came when he attacked the Cholas and was defeated by them at the battle of Velur. Parantaka, the new Chola king, lost no time in commencing hostilities against him. He sought and obtained the aid of the king of Ceylon, but it was of no use. In a decisive battle fought at Velur (a place not yet identified), the Pandyan and the Ceylon forces were routed. Rajasimha fled to Ceylon, and after a time, leaving behind him his crown and other royal insignia, betook himself to the Kerala country, the home of his mother Vanan Mahadevi. Madurai was in the meanwhile occupied by the Cholas and annexed to the Chola kingdom.³

Thus fell the first empire of the Pandyas founded by Kadungon. During the whole period of its existence from 590 to 920, very few changes seem to have taken place in the administration of the country. Some new officers came into prominence such as the Uttaramantrin, the Mahasamantar, and the Matangajadhyaksha (the officer in charge of elephants). Marankari or Madhura Kavi and his son Nammalvar or Kari Maran seem to have held the post

49 25
82

of Uttaramantrin under the Pandyan king Jatila Parantaka and his successor. A new system of making endowments to soldiers who had distinguished themselves in war also came into vogue. A new administrative division, referred to as nadu or rashtra embracing a number of gramams made its appearance. Gifts of whole villages to the Brahmins learned in the vedas also came to be now made in the form of brahmadeya grants, and endowments to the temples became more and more numerous. The sabhas or manrams came to consist of representatives of landed interests and learning and their business came to be transacted by their executive committees called *variyams*. Beyond this nothing is known about the administration of that period. But in the field of religion great changes took place. The age of tolerance gave place to the age of evangelical conquests. Brahminism ousted Buddhism and relegated Jainism to the background. This was because of the great revival of Hinduism carried on during the period by the most illustrious band of Saiva saints and Vaishnava acharyas whose names have become household words in Southern India. The Saiva saints Tirugnanasambandar, Appar, Sundaramurti and Manikkavachakar and the Vaishnava acharyas, Nammalwar, Kulasekara Alwar, Tirumangai Alwar, and Andal, not to mention a host of lesser lights, by their devotion, by their mysticism, by their miraculous powers as well as by their songs and sayings created everywhere a mighty wave of Hindu revival, and all the kings and all the people not only in the Pandyan kingdom but also in all other kingdoms in the South, found themselves swept off their feet and elevated into the luminous realm of Hinduism from where there was to be no return back to Buddhism, Jainism or any other unorthodox religion.⁴ Historians are agreed that from that time onwards Buddhism and Jainism failed to make any headway in Tamilnad.

From about 920 to the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Pandyan kingdom ceased to exist and remained as part of the Chola empire. During this period of three centuries we get very little light from the inscriptions and other sources to trace with any accuracy the history of the Pandyas. Almost throughout the reign of the Chola king Parantaka I, the Pandyan country gave him no trouble; but towards the close of his reign, some time before 949, when the Rashtrakuta king Krishna III invaded the Chola country and undermined the Chola power at the battle of Takkola, the Pandyan country seems to have been recovered by a prince of the old Pandyan line called Vira Pandya. Vira Pandya claims to have killed a Chola King in war, possibly Parantaka II Sundara Chola. But very soon, however, he was reduced to subjection by Aditya⁵,

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 85-90.
Studies in Tamil Literature and History by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1936, pages 86-124.
Tamil Studies by M. Srinivasa Aiyenger, 1914, pages 281-330.
Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India by C. V. Narayana Ayyar, 1936, pages 122-471.

² The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 68-76.

³ *Idem*, pages 76-78.

⁴ *Idem*, pages 78-82.

the successor of Parantaka II. All the same, it was not till Raja Raja I came to the Chola throne in 985 that the subjugation of the Pandyan country was made complete. An inscription of the twenty-ninth year of Raja Raja says, for instance, "that he deprived the Seliyas (the Pandyas) of (their) splendour". It would appear that Raja Raja declared war against the Pandyas and Cheras (who had presumably joined the Pandyas) and seized the Pandyan king Amarabhujanga and captured the port of Vilinam. There is some evidence to show that he called the Pandyan country Raja Raja Mandalam or Raja Raja Pandinadu. He must have used it also as a base of operations against Ceylon when he carried out his successful raid on Ceylon. His son Rajendra inherited the Pandyan country from him and, during the opening years of his rule, when he too carried out an expedition against Ceylon and recovered the crown and insignia of the ancient Pandyas, he too seems to have used the Pandyan country as a base of operations. In the beginning he seems to have allowed one of the Pandyan princes of the old line to govern the country in a subordinate capacity. But the Pandyan prince soon having proved insubordinate, Rajendra had to conquer the country again, to drive away the Pandyan prince and to appoint his own son Jatavarman Sundara Chola as his Viceroy over it (1020). Thus began the line of the Chola Pandyan Viceroys which continued to govern the Pandyan country for about fifty years.

The Chola Pandyan Viceroys were subject to the Chola emperors and the control from the centre was both vigorous and systematic. They were constantly harassed by the Pandyan princes of the old line who had allied themselves by intermarriages with the rulers of Ceylon. During their reign, it also became necessary for the Chola emperors (from Rajendra I to Kulottunga I) to send several expeditions into the Pandyan country in order to subjugate it and keep it as a part of the Chola empire.

With the accession of Kulottunga I to the Chola throne, however, things began to change for the better for the Pandyas. The Chola Pandyan Viceroys no longer came to be appointed and the princes of the old Pandyan line gradually began to consolidate their power. A Pandyan prince, Jatavarman Srivallabha seems to have reigned in this period with some real power for about twenty-three years. Another Pandyan prince, Pillaiyar Sundara Pandya, seems to have also governed a part of the Pandyan country. Kulottunga is also said to have carried out a successful campaign against five Pandya rulers. Some historians are inclined to think that the Pandya princes or kings of this as well as of the subsequent period ruled as co-regents exercising equal powers. Others are of opinion that there was always a single monarchy and that the co-regents, if any, acted only in a subordinate capacity. This much at any rate is clear, that Jatavarman Srivallabha was succeeded by Maravarman Tribhuvanachakravartin Parakrama Pandya Deva

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 99-117.

and that the next Pandyan king, perhaps his successor, was Jatavarman Parakrama Pandya. This last ruler is said to have defeated the Chera king, married the daughter of the king of the Kupakas, a local ruler in South Travancore, conquered Vilinam and destroyed Kandalur Salikkalam. He is also said to have improved the weights and measures, set up ten golden lamps of rare workmanship for the god at Anantapuram and endowed a whole village to the goddess Kumiari. Nor is this all. He is said to have captured Kulan of the Telinga Bhima and subdued South Kalinga.

The next Pandyan king of whom we have some definite information is Maravarman Sri Vallabha. He is known to have been reigning in 1160-1161 and it was to him that King Vira Ravi-varman of Travancore was tributary. His coins are found mostly in the Tirunelveli district and an inscription shows that he made a grant of land to the Suchindram temple. Soon after his death, the whole country was thrown into a civil war. The claim of Kulasekhara, possibly his son, to the Pandyan throne was challenged by another Pandyan prince, Parakrama, who actually occupied Madurai. Then ensued some bitter fighting. Parakrama applied for and obtained the aid of Parakramabahu, the ruler of Ceylon, who sent an army under his General Lankapura. But before the Sinhalese forces came to the mainland, Kulasekhara succeeded in capturing and putting to death Parakrama with his queen and children and in occupying Madurai. According to the Ceylonese account, Lankapura won a succession of victories against Kulasekhara and his Chola allies and eventually expelled him and reinstated in his stead, Vira Pandya, the son of Parakrama, as the Pandyan king. According to the Chola account Kulasekhara sought for and obtained the help of the Chola king Rajadhiraja II who sent his army under Sambuvarayan, and this Chola General fought and defeated Lankapura, put him to death and reinstated Kulasekhara on the Pandya throne. The latter account is perhaps the more reliable. Whatever it is, Kulasekhara did not live long. He was succeeded by Vikrama Pandya when, once more, the civil war broke out. Vira Pandya made another attempt to capture the throne again with Sinhalese help. Vikrama Pandya secured the aid of the Cholas. The Chola army, it is said, routed the Sinhalese army, defeated Vira Pandya, captured the town of Madurai and installed Vikrama Pandya on the throne.¹ Vira Pandya made a third attempt to retrieve his fortune with the aid of the king of Ceylon but it was nipped in the bud by the Cholas on the battle field of Nettur. On this occasion, according to the Chola inscriptions, Kulottunga is said to have "placed his foot on the crown of the king of Ceylon".

Vikrama Pandya was succeeded by Jatavarman Kulasekhara (1190-1217). Kulasekhara showed not a little vigour and extended

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 118-137.

his rule over the greater part of the districts of Madurai, Ramana-nathapuram and Tirunelveli. This made Kulottunga lead a third expedition into the Pandyan country, during which, it is stated, Madurai was sacked and the coronation hall of the Pandyas demolished. But this vandalism in no way contributed to diminish the growing power of the Pandyas; it only exhibited the increasing weakness of the Cholas.¹

From now we come to the establishment of the Second Pandyan empire, which under a succession of brilliant rulers challenged the might of the Hoysalas, crushed the power of the Cholas, the Sinhalese and other lesser rulers and extended its bounds from Ceylon right up to Nellore and beyond. Jatavarman Kulasekhara was followed by his brother Maravarman Sundara Pandya (1236-1238). Sundara lost no time in avenging the wrongs sustained by his brother. Soon after his accession, he invaded the Chola country, sacked Uraiyur and Tanjore, drove Kulottunga III along with his yuvaraja Rajaraja III into exile and performed a Virabhisheka in the coronation hall of the Cholas at Ayirattali (Madikonda-solapuram). He then marched up to Chidambaram, worshipped at the famous shrine of god Nataraja, fixed his camp at Pon Amara-vati (Pudukkottai) and from there sent for Kulottunga. Meanwhile, Kulottunga had appealed for aid to Hoysala Ballala II who had promptly sent out an army under his son Narasimha to Srirangam. It would appear that partly because of the Hoysala pressure and partly because of his own clemency, Sundara restored the Chola crown to Kulottunga after making the latter acknowledge his suzerainty.

This was but the beginning of the growing might of the Pandyas. Kulottunga died soon afterwards (1215) and was succeeded by Rajaraja III, a feeble and incompetent ruler under whom the Chola empire speedily hastened to its ruin. He was not able to maintain order even in the very heart of his kingdom. Sundara had to march there and put down sternly a disturbance caused by the Odda (Onya) soldiers. He was also harassed by a Kadava chieftain, Kopperunjinga who had established himself at Sendamangalam. But he little realized the increasing difficulties of his position. He withheld tribute from Sundara Pandya and made an unprovoked attack on the Pandyan country. This was enough for Sundara. He repelled the Chola invasion, took the offensive, signally defeated Rajaraja, took his chief queen prisoner and after collecting a lot of booty performed a Vijayabhisheka at Ayirattali. Rajaraja made an attempt to join his allies, the Hoysala forces of Narasimha II, but was intercepted by Sundara and after a battle at Tellara was taken prisoner by Kopperunjinga and confined in the fortress of Sendamangalam.

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 141-143
A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, page 188.

The glory of the Cholas was now fast falling, that of the Pandyas was rapidly rising. Narasimha II, the Hoysala ruler (connected by marriage to the Cholas as well as the Pandyas) now saw a sure danger to himself in the rising power of the Pandyas. He therefore rescued Rajaraja from the hands of Kopperunjinga, attacked and defeated Sundara Pandya at Mahendramangalam on the banks of the Cauvery and re-established Rajendra on the Chola throne. Sundara had to acquiesce in this position. On the death of Rajaraja III, Rajendra III who succeeded him tried to shake off both the Hoysala and the Pandyan yokes. He attacked the Pandyas and defeated two Pandyan princes one of whom was Maravarman Sundara Pandya II, who had succeeded his father in 1238. But Someswara, the Hoysala king who had succeeded Narasimha II, now became impatient of Chola intransigence, took the side of the Pandyas, defeated Rajendra in battle and then made peace with him thereby imposing his supremacy firmly over the Cholas.¹

But a new star was just then rising on the horizon. Maravarman Sundara Pandya II was succeeded by the celebrated Jatavarman Sundara Pandya (1251-1270), the most famous of the Pandyan Kings. This bold, invincible conquering monarch extended the bounds of the Pandyan empire to their utmost limits and became the supreme, unquestioned, ruler of Southern India. He ravaged the Malainadu and destroyed the Chera king Vira Ravi Udaya Martandavarman and all his forces. He compelled Rajendra to acknowledge his suzerainty and to pay him tribute. He attacked the Hoysalas in the region of the Cauvery and captured their strong fortress of Kannanur-Koppam. He fought and killed several Hoysala generals, including the brave Singanna, captured numerous elephants and horses, a large amount of treasure and a large number of women and eventually attacked and killed Someswara the Hoysala king himself (1262). Nor was this all. He assailed the fortress of Sendamangalam "struck terror into the heart" of Kopperunjinga, conquered Madagai and Kongu countries and pushing his arms to the north, killed Gandagopala the ruler of Kanchi, occupied Kanchi, defeated Ganapathi, the Kakatiya king at Mudugur, drove a Bana chief into exile and performed a Virabhisheka at Nellore. He also, between 1262 and 1264, invaded Ceylon, defeated and killed one Ceylon prince, received the submission of two other princes, and after exacting a great booty of pearls and elephants from the ruler of Ceylon, returned victorious to Madurai. A devout Hindu, tolerant to both Saivism and Vaishnavism alike, he did much to beautify the Chidambaram and the Srirangam temples. After his victory over the Kadava chieftain Kopperunjinga, he is stated to have repaired to Chidambaram, worshipped God Nataraja, performed many Tulabharas and roofed the temple with gold. From there he is

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 143-155.
A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, pages 202-205.

said to have proceeded to Srirangam, worshipped God Ranganatha, built a shrine to Narasimha and another to Vishvakshena, covered both of them with gold and covered also the main shrine of the temple with gold and installed in it a golden image of Vishnu. He is stated to have given away to these temples an immense quantity of jewels and precious stones and pearls¹.

He was ably assisted in his conquests by two of his co-regents Jatavarman Vira Pandya (1253-1274) and Maravarman Kulasekhara (1268-1308-9). The latter who became the supreme ruler after the death of the former had also at first two co-regents, Jatavarman Sundara Pandya and Maravarman Vikrama Pandya and subsequently two more co-regents, Jatavarman Sundara Pandya, his son born of his wife, and Jatavarman Vira Pandya, his son born of his mistress. It is during this period especially that we find several princes of the royal family governing the kingdom, and one of them enjoying a primacy over the rest. Wassaf mentions three, and Marco Polo mentions five Pandya princes ruling at one and the same time. This arrangement must have been made partly to govern effectually the different parts of the far-flung empire and partly to keep the several princes satisfied and contented.

Kulasekhara inherited the greatness of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya. He consolidated and even extended the Pandyan empire. He declared war against Hoysala Ramanatha (son of Someswara) and Chola Rajaraja III who had allied themselves and defeated them both in 1279. This was a crushing blow to the Cholas from which they never recovered. He became the unquestioned ruler of the Chola as well as the Hoysala districts of Tamilnad. He also put down a rising in Travancore and rivetted his hold upon that country. He likewise sent an expedition under his able minister Aryachakravarti to Ceylon who "laid waste the country on every side"; entered the fortress of Subhagiri and carried away to Madurai "the venerable Tooth Relic (of the Buddha) and all the solid wealth that was there". This was at the time when Ceylon was ruled by Bhuvanaikabahu I. For some twenty years thereafter the island formed part of the Pandyan empire. Parakramabahu III (1303), who succeeded Bhuvanaikabahu as a tributary ruler of Ceylon, had to personally come to the Pandyan court before he could persuade Kulasekhara to surrender the relic. Ceylon regained independence only during the civil war and the Muslim invasion that followed Kulasekhara's death².

Kulasekhara's last years were embittered by quarrels between his two sons. He wanted Vira Pandya to succeed him but Sundara Pandya who had a better claim, feeling greatly incensed at the

injustice done to him; murdered his father and promptly ascended the throne. Vira Pandya instantly attacked him but was defeated at Talachi and taken prisoner. He, however, soon managed to escape and with the help of his cousin Mannar Perumal, the ruler of Karambati, near Kalul, seized the crown and forced Sundara Pandya to take safety in flight³.

Misfortunes, as has been well said, never come single; and it was when these internal dissensions were distracting the empire that the external foes began to assail it and ultimately led to its dissolution. When Sundara was casting about his eyes in all directions to seek the aid of some strong power to regain his throne, Ala-ud-Din Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi, was turning his attention to the south. Sundara is said to have invited the aid of the Sultan and the Sultan is said to have at once embraced the opportunity. The Sultan was as strong as he was ambitious. He had already crushed the power of Ramadeva, the Yadava ruler of Devagiri, and Prataparudra, the Kakatiya ruler of Warangal, and made them his vassals. He had no love for Sundara but he longed to possess the riches of the south associated with its temples, its palaces, its trade and commerce. He longed also to spread the light of Islam into the heathen lands and to convert them to the True Faith. He therefore ordered the Malik Naib (Shaik Kafur), one of his trusted generals, to march with an army to the south. The Malik marched to Devagiri and from there learning that Ballala III, the Hoysala ruler, was busy angling in the troubled waters of Tamilnad, immediately rushed to Dwarasamudra, and in spite of the hurried arrival of Ballala to defend his capital, compelled him to surrender it with all its treasures and to become a zimmi (vassal). He then lost no time in despatching the booty to Delhi and in descending on the Pandyan Empire. He put to flight Vira Pandya in a fight on the banks of the Cauvery, harried the country, sacked the rich temples and shrines of Kanchi (Marhatpuri of the Muslim historians) and after razing them to the ground, it is said, dug up even their foundations to discover hidden treasures, if any. From there he turned to Madurai where Sundara Pandya had taken refuge. Sundara must have found to his cost that the Malik bore him no goodwill at all. He lost his nerve and took to flight and the Malik forthwith ransacked the city and set fire to its temple. At this threat of dire destruction, the Pandyan brothers recovered their sanity, patched up their quarrels and, under the leadership of Vikrama Pandya, Sundara's uncle, a veteran general who had contributed much to the success of the Pandyan arms in the glorious days of Jatavarman Pandya, gave battle to the Malik, defeated him and thus rolled back the Muslim tide for a time from the south. For, the Malik is stated to have left for Delhi soon after this battle (1311), not without, however, a vast booty he had collected in the Pandyan empire. According to Barani the booty consisted of 612

¹ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 158-171.

² A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, pages 204-207.

³ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 174-1.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, pages 207-208.

⁴ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 201-205.

elephants, 96,000 maunds of gold, several boxes of jewels and pearls and 20,000 horses¹.

The disappearance of the common danger led at once to the reappearance of the common enmity. The Pandyan brothers started the civil wars again, and again invited fresh dangers. Vira Pandya worsted Sundara Pandya and Sundara Pandya, who ought to have known better what to seek and what to shun, fled to Delhi and sought once more the aid of the Sultan. There is nothing to show that an expedition was actually sent from Delhi to assist him, but he seems to have, with the consent of the Sultan, collected some Muslim forces from Devagiri and returned to recapture his throne. But when he came back, he found to his dismay that during his absence the Chera King Ravivarma Kulasekhara had made a lightning attack upon Madurai and conquered it after driving away Vira Pandya. Sundara and his Muslim forces found it impossible to overthrow Kulasekhara. Sundara then sought and obtained the help of the Kakatiya ruler, Prataparudra, while Vira patched up his quarrels with Kulasekhara and joined forces with him to oppose Sundara. In the battle that was then fought, the Kakatiya forces defeated Vira and Kulasekhara and installed Sundara on the Pandyan throne. But this throne had by now been shorn of all its glory. The ruler of Ceylon and the Chera king had already become independent; the Chola chieftain Sarabavaraya now became independent; and the Muslim Sultans of Delhi, once again began to cast their longing eyes on the inexhaustible wealth of the distracted Pandyan empire².

Sultan Qutb-ud-Din wanted no invitation to send an expedition to the south. He despatched thither a large army under his veteran general Khusru Khan. This general came like a scourge, plundering and devastating the country everywhere. On his approach, it is said all citizens fled in terror. At Pattan, a rich seaport of the Tamil country, he seized the wealth of even a Muslim merchant and subjected him to indignities. Sundara evaded battle, evacuated Madurai and left it to be sacked by Khusru Khan. But the very profusion of wealth and the ease with which it could be collected soon turned Khusru's head. He plotted to become independent. His generals, however, detected his treachery and compelled him to march back to Delhi³. A brief respite then followed only to bring in another storm, and this time a storm which swept away the Pandyan empire altogether. In the reign of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluk, his son Ulugh Khan, after having conquered Warangal, marched to the south. The Pandyan

¹ The Early Muslim Expansion in South India by N. Venkatramanayya, 1942, pages 17, 71.

The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 205-211.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, pages 219-227.

² The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, page 213.

³ The Early Muslim Expansion in South India by N. Venkatramanayya, 1942, pages 91-92.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1935, page 222.

kingdom was at this time ruled by Parakrama Pandya who had succeeded Sundara Pandya, and whose sway, though enfeebled, extended over Tirunelveli, Madurai, Ramanathapuram and parts of Tanjore and Pudukkottai. Ulugh Khan conquered the whole country, took him captive and established a Muslim rule in Madurai.

It would appear that Ulugh Khan, who shortly afterwards ascended the throne of Delhi under the title of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, appointed a Governor at Madurai to rule over his southern possessions. As soon as he became emperor he also made the weight of his arm felt by the Deccan powers by subjugating the kingdoms of Kampili and Dwarasamudra. He made both Kampila, the ruler of the former and Ballala III, the ruler of the latter, his vassals⁴. In 1327 he fixed his capital at Devagiri so as to have a firm hold on all parts of his extensive empire. But soon afterwards, when in 1329 he retransferred his capital back to Delhi, he seems to have lost his hold on Madurai. At any rate, in 1334-1335 Syiid Jalal, one of the imperial officers, treacherously slew the Governor and declared himself an independent Sultan under the title of Jalal-ud-Din Ahasan Shah. Thus was founded the Sultanate of Madurai. When Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq heard of this rebellion he ordered Syiid Jalal's son, who was one of his attendants, to be instantly sawn in two and marched without delay with an army to the south. But at Warangal a severe outbreak of cholera decimated his army and forced him to retrace his steps, having accomplished nothing. Jalal-ud-Din Ahasan Shah, however, did not enjoy the fruits of his treachery for long. He was succeeded by one of his officers, Ala-ud-Din Udanji who was harassed by the dispossessed Pandyan princes and by Ballala III; and in one of his fights with the latter, he was, though victorious, killed by an arrow from an unknown hand (1341). His son-in-law succeeded him under the title of Qutb-ud-Din; but he was killed within forty days and was succeeded by Ghiyas-ud-Din Damghani who was originally a trooper in the service of the Delhi Sultan. It was during his reign that Ibn Batuta saw with his own eyes the innocent slaughter of "idolatrous" Hindus—men, women and children, and recorded with horror that "it was for this reason that God hastened the death of Ghiyas-ud-Din"⁵.

Meanwhile Ballala III stationed at Tiruvannamalai was gradually trying to consolidate his power at the expense, if possible, of the Muslims. At the time of Ghiyas-ud-Din Damghani's accession, he was investing the fortress of Kannanur-Koppam after a decisive victory against the Muslim forces. The siege lasted for six months and just when the Muslim garrison was about to surrender, he, with unaccountable folly, allowed the garrison to get into touch

⁴ The Early Muslim Expansion in South India by N. Venkatramanayya, 1942, pages 122-125.

⁵ *Idem*, pages 122-125.

⁶ South India and her Muhammadan Invaders by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1921, pages 164-166.

with Ghiyas-ud-Din for settling, as he thought, the terms of surrender. Ghiyas-ud-Din, however, instead of settling the terms of surrender, at once marched with a large army, took Ballala and his troops completely by surprise and inflicted a signal defeat upon them. He took Ballala prisoner, stripped him of all his wealth, horses and elephants and then had him killed and flayed. "His skin was stuffed with straw and hung upon the wall of Madurai where", says Ibn Batuta, "I saw it in the same position" (1342). This wanton cruelty had its nemesis. Soon after his return to Madurai Ghiyas-ud-Din lost his only son, his wife and his mother by an attack of cholera and he himself died a few days later, it is said, "from the effects of an aphrodisiac prepared by a yogin".

Ghiyas-ud-Din was succeeded by his nephew Nasir-ud-Din (1342) who was originally a domestic servant of the Sultan of Delhi. He obtained the consent of the nobles and the army for his accession by a lavish distribution of gold. And the moment he became the Sultan he killed a son of his own paternal aunt who had married Ghiyas-ud-Din's daughter and who therefore was a possible candidate for the Sultanate. The last extant coin of Nasir-ud-Din belongs to the year 1344. Then follows a break in the coins till we come to 1356-1357 when we find Adil Shah ruling over Madurai. He was succeeded by Fakr-ud-Din Mubarak Shah in 1359. Fakr-ud-Din was followed by the last of the Sultans of Madurai, Alla-ud-Din Sikandar Shah (1372), during whose rule the Sultanate collapsed under the hammer of the Vijayanagar kings (1377-1378).

The Muslim Sultanate of Madurai thus lasted from 1334 to 1378, a period of about forty-five years. These years were marked by constant persecution of the Hindus. The Hindus were often slaughtered, their temples were invariably pillaged and desecrated and their idols were continually deprived of worship. All this time the Pandyan princes did not disappear from the scene. They governed parts of Madurai, Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram, Tanjore and Pudukkottai countries; but they found themselves helpless and powerless to do anything beyond harassing the Sultans now and then. Several of these princes continued to govern these parts right down to the establishment of the Vijayanagar rule in Madurai and Tanjore in the second half of the fourteenth century. Thereafter some of these princes shifted their headquarters into the Tirunelveli district and struggled hard to maintain their position till towards the close of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century. But these helpless, feeble rulers can by no means be called

¹ South India and her Muhamadan Invaders by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1921, pages 163-168.

² A History of South India by K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, pages 229-230.

³ South India and her Muhamadan Invaders by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1921, pages 168-170.

⁴ The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 241-245.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 245-252.

⁶ Journal of the Annamalai University, Vol. XVII, pages 1-43.

Pandyan kings or emperors. The Pandyan empire was gone. The civil wars and follies of the Pandyas themselves undermined it. The Muslim invasions gave it a shock from which it never recovered. The Sultanate wrecked it and it was left to the Vijayanagar rulers to establish a kingdom under their Nayaks in a pattern conformable to Hindu traditions.

It becomes necessary at this stage to make a pause to review the administration and the social and economic conditions that prevailed under the second Pandyan empire. We have, however, very little information about administration; and all that we know can be described in a few words. The king was supreme, all powerful, despotic; but all the same, restrained by custom and guided by the advice of his ministers or officials. He always maintained a great state. He moved about with a great many barons around him, his trusty lieges who, it is said, even immolated themselves on his funeral pyre. He had splendid thrones and splendid palaces in Madurai as well as other important places like Kanchei, Jayangondacolapuram, etc. He maintained a large number of wives. He possessed immense wealth; Kulasekhara's treasury, for instance, was said to contain "1,200 crores of gold (dinars) besides an accumulation of precious stones such as pearls, rubies, turquoise and emeralds, more than in the power of language to express". He adorned himself with jewels "worth more than a city's ransom"; with a necklace made "entirely of precious stones, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and the like", a japamala made of "104 (108) large pearls and rubies" and golden bracelets, anklets and rings thickly set with pearls of great value. He collected treasures in plenty from his wars and victories. But he knew, not only how to accumulate wealth and how to maintain a Byzantine style, but also how to utilize the wealth for the strength, glory and prosperity of his kingdom. His purchase of thousands of horses every year to augment his cavalry, his virabhishekams and vijayabhishekams, his brahmadevams and devadanams, his construction of gold images and gopurams and his lavish distribution of precious stones and jewels to the temples bear eloquent testimony to this.

He governed his extensive kingdom with the aid of royal princes who acted as his co-regents. They were employed as viceroys over the several provinces and expected to assist him in all his wars. There is ample evidence to show that they fulfilled this expectation in a signal manner. Succession normally went to the eldest son who had acted as co-regent during his father's rule; but disputed succession was not unknown as is evidenced by the civil wars of Vira Pandya and Sundara Pandya, the sons of Kulasekhara. The king was, of course, the supreme head of the State, but the co-regents seem to have possessed and exercised some regal powers such as issuing coins, making grants of land and recording inscriptions, in their own names. As the heads of both civil and military administration, the king and the co-regents under him, employed a large number of officials, but the duties of

these officers have not been anywhere precisely defined. It would, however, appear that they made themselves felt on several occasions and sometimes even took bribes and levied exactions. Local affairs were more or less, as before, managed by local sabhas or manrams with the aid of their own variyams or committees. The sabhas sat as courts, managed public properties, maintained temples, levied local taxes and looked after the local irrigation sources.

Land still continued to be the mainstay of public revenue. The king levied land assessment, granted rent-free or partially rent-free lands to Brahmins, temples, mathams and charitable institutions and collected the land revenue through his own officers. But what proportion of the gross or net produce he took as revenue is not known. It is, however, known that the assessment was based on a survey and classification of soils, that the dry rates and wet rates prevailed and that the construction and maintenance of major irrigation works were undertaken by the State. The king also levied professional taxes, house-tax, transit duties and customs. Considering that the trade, both internal and external, was brisk and prosperous according to foreign as well as Indian observers, these taxes must have fetched a good amount.

Justice was still administered through local sabhas and royal dharmanams. All ordinary cases seem to have been tried by the former, while all important cases seem to have been tried by the latter. Ordeals, fines, imprisonments, capital sentences, outlawry, forfeiture of property, all these stand out as the prominent features of administration of justice. Thefts were visited with fines and imprisonment, murder and gang robbery were visited with death or outlawry or forfeiture of property. Those who were sentenced to death were given the option of sacrificing their lives to the gods. Those who were outlawed were liable to be killed by anybody with impunity. Those who were subjected to the forfeiture of property had to surrender their property to the temples.

Society was organized on the traditional pattern. The Brahmins enjoyed special privileges; as the repositories of learning they were given rent-free or partially rent-free lands and honoured in popular as well as in royal assemblies. The warrior classes too enjoyed high status; they were employed in the military and civil administration of the country. The mercantile classes prospered not a little under the stimulus of extensive foreign as well as internal trade. Marco Polo and Wassaf speak of this trade in raptures. Kayal was the chief emporium of the Pandyan kingdom. Hither came horses and merchandise of all sorts from Persia, Arabia, Rome and other European countries; and from hither went out large ships laden with great quantities of pearls, cloth and other articles of merchandise. Marco Polo gives a vivid description of pearl-fishing conducted by companies of merchants who paid a royalty to the State and fished pearls in great quantities with the aid of divers, charmers and divers. The mercantile classes were also great landlords. The lower classes were mostly employed in agriculture.

possibly as farm labourers and petty tenants. The shares of the farm labourers and tenants were defined by custom and there is nothing to show that they were inadequate to permit them to lead contented lives.

It is this picture of the Pandyan kingdom that must have made Marco Polo, declare the Pandyan country as "the finest and noblest in the world". A few social habits and customs that he observed have been recorded by him. Among these may be mentioned the habit of the generality of the people dressing themselves scantily, walking bare-footed, smearing the floors of houses with cow-dung, drinking only from drinking vessels and that too without touching them with the lips, taking baths twice a day, sitting on the ground, eating *pan* and *supari* and abstaining from wine. He records also the prevalence of the devadasi system in temples, of the presence of experts in the arts of physiognomy, astrology and sorcery and the readiness of the people to consult them, of the custom that permitted the creditor to draw a circle round his defaulting debtor and prohibit him under severe penalty from passing out of it without satisfying the claim and of the habits of "the nobles and great folks" of sleeping on beds made of light cane work suspended from the ceiling.

Several of these habits and customs remain with us even today. But there was one custom which Marco Polo failed to notice but which is made abundantly clear by the inscriptions, namely, the custom of congregating in temples on many occasions for religious as well as secular purposes. This custom is now only partially with us, so partially that it has lost all its mediaeval grandeur and significance. For in those days the temple was the grand centre of culture and civilization. Here were to be found all the best that art, architecture, sculpture and painting could give. Here were to be enjoyed music, dancing, drama, harikathas, kalakshepams, recitations from the puranas and the like. Here were to be learnt grammar, logic, vedas, sastras, etc., at the feet of the great masters, and here were to be heard public disquisitions on literature, religious and secular. Here too were conducted the local meetings of the sabhas which decided all matters relating to land, justice, taxation, etc. Worship, prayer, pastimes as well as serious business all combined to make the temple, a vital, endearing, inseparable element of society. No wonder, therefore, that kings and subjects alike showed great regard for the temples and showered on them all kinds of benefactions¹.

¹ Foreign Notices of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1939, pages 161-172, 175-180.

The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 191-200, 215-230.

A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, pages 191-196, 212-213.

South India and her Muhammadan Invaders by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1921, pages 62-66, 71-72.

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CHAPTER III.

LATER HISTORY.

The fall of the Muslim sultanate of Madurai is to be traced to the rise of the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. That kingdom arose out of the ashes of Muslim persecution and soon rallied round it all the Hindu kings and chieftains, and the Hindus of all denominations, the Pasupathas, the Kapalikas, the Vira Saivas, etc., from the Vindhya mountains to Cape Comorin, and with a supreme effort swept the Muslim rule altogether from the south. The credit for this achievement goes in a large measure to Kumara Kampana, son of Bukka, the brother of the first Vijayanagar ruler, Harihara. Between 1343 and 1356 he crushed the power of the Muslim Sultan of Madurai and by 1377-1378, he put an end to the sultanate itself¹.

A pathetic picture of the state of Madurai under the Muslim rule is given in a contemporary poem called Madhuravijayam, composed by Kampana's wife Ganga Devi. She says that while sojourning in Kanchi after the conquest of the Sambuvaraya chieftain Rajanarayana, Kampana had a dream in which the goddess of the Pandyan country appeared before him and described in moving terms how in her lands, temples had fallen into neglect and become the haunts of jackals, how the worship in them had ceased, how the sacrifices and chants of vedas had everywhere given place to the foul roastings of the flesh and the riotings of the Muslims, how the suburban gardens of Madurai had been reduced to a most painful sight with their coconut trees cut down and their space covered by rows of stakes from which swung numerous human skulls strung together, how the Tambraparni had been flowing red with the blood of slaughtered cows, how the veda had been forgotten, justice had gone into hiding, virtue had fled from the land and despair was writ large on every face. So saying the goddess handed over to Kampana the mighty sword of the Pandyan Sovereignty, specially entrusted to her to be given over to him by Agastya, the custodian of Tamil Culture, and exhorted him to use it fearlessly for the restoration of dharma. Kampana is thus represented to have restored Hindu Sovereignty in the Madurai kingdom as a lawful successor of the Pandyan kings².

The history of Madurai for about two hundred years from the time of its conquest by Kampana to the establishment of the Nayaka kingdom, is wrapped in obscurity. We have very little

information as to what was happening at Madurai all this time. All that we know is that in the early period Kampana was the viceroy of the Vijayanagar king Harihara I and that his nephew Virupaksha followed him in that office under Harihara II. The next we hear of Madurai is in the time of Devaraya II, when two brothers, Lakkana and Madana, were ruling over the whole of the Tamil country with their headquarters probably at Madurai and Tanjore respectively. Lakkana is given the title of Viceroy of Madurai and "Lord of the Southern Ocean" which clearly indicates that the sway of Vijayanagar extended to the sea. He seems to have ruled over the Madurai province with the aid of a deputy, he having been often called to the headquarters of the Vijayanagar empire to reorganize its resources in order to wage war against the Muslims of the Deccan. On the death of Devaraya II, the empire fell into disorder on account of the recurring hostilities of the Muslim Sultan of the Deccan and the imperial hold on the Madurai viceroyalty became weak. In the period of the usurpation of Saluva Narasinga, a Pandyan chieftain, by name Manabhusa, tried to regain independence and had to be subdued by the famous Vijayanagar general Narasa Nayaka. In fact it would appear that this period of turmoil continued from about 1450 to the beginning of the next century, to the opening years of the reign of Krishnadeva Raya, or even Achyutadeva Raya³.

Tradition ascribes the foundation of the Nayaka kingdom of Madurai to Krishnadeva Raya. It is said that he came to the south about 1520-1525 and appointed Vira Narasimha as the governor of the Chola country and Nagama as the governor of the Madurai country. Nagama, a tried officer of the empire, is stated to have subdued two recalcitrant princes, one a Chola and another a Pandyan prince, with a stern hand and refused to reinstate the latter in his territories even when the emperor ordered it to be done. Thereupon the emperor is said to have exclaimed in a rage in open court as to which of his trusted officers would bring the rebel captive, when Visvanatha, his betel-bearer and Nagama's own son, is said to have volunteered to do so. Visvanatha, having fulfilled his task, is then said to have been rewarded by the emperor with the Nayakship of Madurai. This event is said to have occurred in 1529⁴.

This traditional account of the foundation of the Nayaka kingdom of Madurai, embodied in chronicles like the Tanjavur Andhra Rajula Charitramu, has been held to be incorrect by some historians in the light of recent historical research. It has been held that Visvanatha could not have been appointed as a ruler of Madurai by Krishnadeva Raya, that even during the reign of Achyutadeva Raya, he was only a governor of Madurai and that

¹ South India and her Muhammedan Invaders by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1921, pages 182-188.

² The Pandyan Kingdom by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pages 242-243.

³ A History of South India by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1955, page 255.

⁴ History of the Nayaks of Madurai by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 5-8.

⁵ Idem, pages 48-52.

too for some years only and that it was Visvanatha's son Krishnappa, who is to be regarded as the founder of the Nayaka dynasty. It is stated that Krishnappa took advantage of the confusion caused by the battle of Kaniyankumari to declare himself as the king or Nayaka of Madurai and that the Vijayanagar emperors had to recognize him as such on account of their weakness.

Whatever it is, Visvanatha (1529-1564), whether as a governor or as a Nayaka, showed outstanding abilities both as a warrior and statesman. Soon after he came to Madurai, he reconstructed its fort with 72 bastions with the aid of Ariyanatha, his Dalavay and Pradhani, a man born of Vellala parents who by sheer ability had won a high position in the Vijayanagar empire. He then gave Valam in exchange for Tiruchirappalli to the Nayaka of Tanjore, cleared the jungles of thieves and robbers on both sides of the Cauvery, to make the pilgrim route to Rameswaram as safe as possible, fortified Tiruchirappalli and subdued with the help of Ariyanatha, the Pandyan princes, 'the pancha pandyas' of Tirunelveli. He also subdued the Kambam-Gudalur country with the aid of his able general Ramabhadra Nayaka. It would appear that his territories comprised the modern districts of Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore and Salem and parts of Kerala State. He devised for the administration of his territories with the help of Ariyanatha a system called the palayam system which with all its defects had a number of good points to recommend it. In those turbulent times it was one thing to subdue the petty chieftains or defend the territories by a campaign or conquest, but it was quite another to restore peace and order by systematic administration and ward off sudden and frequent enemy invasions. The local chieftains had to be pacified, their wars against one another had to be eliminated, their loyalty had to be secured and their agency effectually employed in administration and defence. It was for these purposes that Visvanatha divided his territories into seventy-two palayams and placed each of them in charge of a local chieftain called a palayakar or poligar. The palayakars were to maintain troops for the defence of the territories, to run the civil administration of the country, and to pay one-third of the land revenue collections as tribute. They were to restore peace and order, to improve agriculture, to clear the forests and to bring the waste lands under cultivation. In all times of storms and stress, they were to rally round the ruler and obey his orders. As has been indicated the system, no doubt, had in it also the seeds of disruption and misrule. The palayakars might rebel, might become independent, might oppress and tyrannise the people and might even join the enemies. But so long as the ruler was strong and able he could

always hold them in leash and get the best out of them. Visvanatha got the best out of them. His palayakars, according to their family traditions, are stated to have done much for the country by founding villages, building dams, constructing tanks and erecting temples. Visvanatha himself showed real concern for the well-being of his subjects by renovating the temples of Tiruchirappalli and Srirangam, by building the temple for God Sundara and Goddess Minakshi, by spending lavishly on works of public utility and by enlarging, especially, the town of Tirunelveli, by erecting in it temples and by opening in it new streets. He remained throughout loyal to the Vijayanagar emperor. Achyuta Raya treated him with kindness. During the presence of Rama Raja Vittthala in the south he occupied a subordinate position. The inscriptions refer to him as an agent of Achyuta Vittthala and make it clear that he recognized the sovereignty of Achyuta and Sadasiva.

Visvanatha Nayaka, as has already been stated, was succeeded by his son Krishnappa Nayaka (1564-1572). The moment this Nayaka ascended the throne, he had to face a rebellion stirred up by one of his most powerful palayakars, Tumbichechi Nayaka. This sullen, turbulent palayakar collected a large number of followers and discontented chiefs, entrenched himself at Paramakudi, laid waste the country all round and defied the king's authority. Krishnappa, however, lost no time in despatching against him Dalavay Pedda Kesavappa and when this Dalavay was defeated and killed, he sent out his son, Chinna Kesava, and had the rebel captured and beheaded. He confiscated most of the rebel's territories. But he was not a man of vindictive nature; he only wanted to teach the palayakars a lesson in obedience and he is said to have treated the rebel's sons with generosity by entrusting them with a small palayam consisting of Paramakudi, Parambur and some neighbouring villages. He next turned his attention to Ceylon the ruler of which had failed to send tribute to the Vijayanagar empire ever since its conquest by Krishnadeva, Achyuta and Sadasiva Rayas and possibly also, as is said, added fuel to the fire by speaking slightly of his victory over Tumbichechi Nayaka. He collected fifty-two palayakars with their troops, crossed to Ceylon, and on failing to receive homage and tribute from its king, despatched against him his whole army under Chinna Kesava Nayaka. Chinna Kesava, his capable general, defeated and killed the king of Ceylon and Krishnappa Nayaka is then said to have appointed his own brother-in-law as the ruler of Ceylon and returned in triumph to Madurai. His loyalty to the Vijayanagar emperor was undoubted. He is said to have sent his Pradhani and Dalavay Ariyanatha to Vijayanagar to do his best to ward off the

¹ Studies in the History of the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagar by N. Venkatramanayya, 1935, pages, 453-481.
Further sources of Vijayanagar History by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri and N. Venkatramanayya, 1946, pages 239-241.

² History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages, 48-67.
Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, Part III, Pages 87-101.

Muslim peril and it was not till about two years after the tragic battle of Rakshasi-Tangadi (Talikota 1565) that Ariyanatha is said to have come back to Madurai. His solicitude for his subjects is equally undoubted. He is said to have built the towns of Krishnapuram and Kadaiyam to the east of Palayamkottai and to the west of Tirunelveli respectively. He constructed the Tiruvengadanatha temple and endowed it with a number of villages. He built also a Siva temple and endowed it with lands. He constructed a Teppakulam and granted several agraharams. There is evidence to show that he made gifts of land to many temples besides those mentioned above¹.

He was followed on the throne by his son Virappa Nayaka (1572-1592) who during his long rule gave peace and prosperity to his kingdom. He nipped the only rebellion that occurred of Maveli Vanadaraya, an illegitimate son of a Pandyan king, with a promptness and decisiveness that knocked the bottom out of all opposition to him during the rest of his reign. He established a firm hold over his tributaries, the Pandyas of Tenkasi and Thiruvaiyar. Indeed, it would appear that he had a perfect control over all his tributaries and palayakars. He was loyal to all Vijayanagar emperors of his time, and all of them seem to have depended upon him to maintain intact their power in the south. He improved the fort of Tiruchirappalli, constructed a fort at Aruppukottai, built walls round the Chidambaram temple and granted many agraharams in charity. He is also said to have constructed the Vellaiyambalam, the northern gopuram, the Servisvaram, the kitchen, the thousand pillared mantapa, the Surru mantapa in the second prakara and the Virappa mantapa of the temple of Sundaresvarar and Minakshi in Madurai. He is likewise said to have covered the pillars of the mantapa of the Minakshi temple with gold. Nor is this all. All the evidence available shows that he was a just ruler who exercised complete impartiality in the administration of justice. Towards the close of his reign (about 1592) he permitted the Jesuit missionaries, till then working on the coast among the Paravas, to establish a mission and to build a church and presbytery in Madurai. Father G. Fernandez, the head of the mission, tried his best to convert the people, especially the higher classes but, as may be expected, met with little encouragement. The higher classes are said to have looked down upon the Christians with contempt because of their habits of eating beef, drinking intoxicating liquors and associating with low castes.

Krishnappa Nayaka II, son of Virappa Nayaka, ruled for a few years (1595-1601). His was a peaceful reign during which he remained loyal to the Vijayanagar emperor Venkata II. He had, however, to keep watch over the growing power of the Pandyan

princes and Thiruvaiyar ruler. It was during his reign that Ariyanatha, the famous Dalavay, died, leaving behind him a splendid record of services to the State¹.

Upon the death of Krishnappa Nayaka II the throne was usurped by his youngest brother, Kasturi Ranga, his elder brother, Viswappa, having predeceased him. But within a week, Kasturi Ranga was murdered, probably by the people as a protest against his usurpation, and was followed by Muthu Krishnappa Nayaka (1601-1609), the son of Viswappa. To Muttu Krishnappa belongs the credit of reorganizing the Marava country. He appointed Sadaika Teva as his ruler (or Udaiyan Setupati, or as he is sometimes called, Dalavay Setupati) on condition of his paying a fixed annual tribute and remaining loyal to the kingdom. The objects of this appointment were no other than those of clearing the nests of robber chieftains who perpetually haunted the pilgrim route to Rameswaram, of extending the king's sway over the Parava coast, a sway which had come to be questioned and assailed by the Portuguese, and of restoring law and order in the southern portion of the kingdom. These were no doubt laudable objects and they seem to have been completely fulfilled by Dalavay Setupati and his son Kuttan Setupati. That the Portuguese menace was real in those days is proved by their unauthorised usurpation of the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the fishery coast. They are said to have ruled this country as if they were sovereigns, by appointing governors of their own. There is also evidence to show that they collected all dues and taxes, including all the royalties from the pearl fishery. Muttu Krishnappa was the first among the Nayaka rulers to root out this menace. But while he put down the political power of the Portuguese, he allowed them to preach their religion unmolested. It was during his reign that Robert de Nobili came to the Madurai Mission and began proselytizing in a manner at once unique and unprecedented. Nobili saw with his characteristic acumen that the reason why Christianity had failed to make headway among the higher classes was that it had failed to take into account the manners, the customs, the ideas and the languages of the people. He is stated to have declared "I will make myself Indian to save the Indians"; and he seems to have succeeded to some extent, in spite of the opposition of Fernandez to his unorthodoxy, by adopting the life of Brahmin, by calling himself "a Roman Brahmin", by permitting the converts to continue their harmless ceremonies and customs, by studying their languages and literatures, and by appealing to their heart and intellect by preaching in their own languages. It would appear that the conversions he made among the higher classes set against him the Brahmins, but nothing untoward happened during the reign of Muttu Krishnappa.

Muttu Krishnappa, though he showed a broad tolerance towards Christianity, never failed in his duty to encourage Hinduism. He

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madurai by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 68-76. Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, Part III, pages 101-105.

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madurai by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 77-88.

endowed the Bhagavati temple at Cape Comorin, he constructed a Siva temple at Kayattar; he built several pagodas and granted many aghaharams. Indeed, he is said to have done much for the welfare of his subjects. He is said to have built a town called Krishnapuram between Madurai and Skandamalai, and constructed many tanks. He remained, like his predecessors, throughout loyal to the Vijayanagar emperor¹.

Not so, however, was his son and successor, Muttu Virappa Nayaka I (1609-1623). He lived at a time when that empire was passing through a shattering experience. Venkata II died leaving behind him a succession feud which suddenly flared up into civil war. Upon his death-bed he nominated his nephew Sriranga II Chikkaraya, as his successor, but the rights of this nephew were bitterly opposed and contested by Venkata's putative son. Very soon two parties formed themselves. The loyal chieftains under the banner of Yachama Nayaka, a veteran leader, supported the cause of the nephew, while the disloyal chieftains, under the banner of Gobburi Jaggaraya, the emperor's brother-in-law, supported the cause of the putative son. Jaggaraya, having contrived to murder Sriranga II, marched to the Tamil districts for mustering strength for his cause followed closely by Yachama Nayaka who, having rescued Ramadeva, Sriranga's son, was anxious to give battle to the rebels at the first opportunity. Muttu Virappa Nayaka saw at this crisis no reason why he should not espouse the rebel's cause and shake off once for all the effects of overlordship of the emperor of Vijayanagar. There was no point in sending tribute annually to an overlord who could give nothing in return for his kingdom. He, therefore, allied himself with Jaggaraya, while the Nayaka of Tanjore allied himself with Yachama Nayaka. In the battle of Toppur that took place (1616) he was defeated and Jaggaraya was killed, but this did not in any way lead to the loss of any portion of his territories. There is reason to think that the Pandyan princes remained throughout loyal to him and even assisted him in this battle. The Raja of Mysore, however, taking advantage of the confusion caused by the battle soon sent an army to harass the province of Dindigul; but this army was beaten off by the Palayakars of Virupakshi and Kannivadi.

Muttu Virappa, it is said, transferred his capital from Madurai to Tiruchirappalli in order to strengthen his frontier against the incursions of the Nayaka of Tanjore. Meanwhile in Madurai, the missionary activities went on unabated until Nobili and Fernandez openly quarrelled, the latter dubbing the former's religion as nothing but a monstrous combination of Paganism and Christianity. Nobili was ordered by Cardinal Bellarmine (1613) to stop his activities altogether. Pope Gregory XV, however, subsequently exonerated him (1623), but he found his prestige in Madurai gone for ever

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 89-97.

and shifted his activities to the north. With his departure departed also all the enthusiasm for converting the higher classes. Muttu Virappa could not but view these missionary activities with concern, but he did not show any intolerance¹.

Muttu Virappa Nayaka was succeeded by his younger brother Tirumala Nayaka, a man of remarkable abilities who has left an imperishable name in the history of Madurai. He was great alike in the fields of war, diplomacy, art and architecture. None of the Nayakas could or did approach his stature. Ascending as he did on the throne at a time when the Vijayanagar empire had been thrown into confusion; when wars and invasions had become the order of the day in the whole of the Deccan and Southern India, he immediately set about to strengthen the defences of his kingdom. He constructed fortresses on the frontiers, he raised an army of 30,000 men, and what is more, he shifted his capital from Tiruchirappalli back to Madurai. Madurai was more central, less vulnerable, better defensible and much more hallowed as the home of the ancient Pandyan glory. All this does not by any means show that he was from the very beginning bent on breaking the bonds of subservience to Vijayanagar. For all that we know, he would have been content to remain nominally, if possible, under the suzerainty of that empire. But he was not prepared to transmit year after year one-third of his revenues as tribute when that empire was unable to contribute anything towards the defence of his kingdom against external or internal foes. Nor was he prepared to sit quiet if he were to be attacked by any powers, Mysore, Tanjore or even Vijayanagar. He was prepared, if necessary, to call in the aid of the Muslims for the protection of his own kingdom. It is possible to criticise his policy, even to condemn it as being narrow, selfish, traitorous to the cause of Vijayanagar and therefore to the cause of Hinduism itself. It is possible also to defend it, even to admire it as being the only practicable policy for a statesman who found it impossible to prevent the inevitable collapse of that empire under the hammerings of the Sultans of Bijapur and Golconda and who could therefore do nothing better than try to save his own kingdom amidst the unprecedented dangers threatening every Hindu kingdom in the south.

The first important event of his reign was the war with Mysore. Thamaraja Udayar, the ruler of Mysore, having become powerful sent his general Nandi Raja to invade the Madurai country. Nandi Raja advanced as far as Dindigul, but Tirumala despatched his generals, Dalavay Ramappayya and Ranganna Nayaka, the palayakar of Kannivadi, to oppose him and they repulsed the invasion and carried the war into the Mysore country itself and besieged its capital. The second important event of his reign was his invasion of Travancore. The ruler of Travancore who was till then the

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 8-109.

subordinate of Madurai withheld his tribute and tried to assert his independence; but Tirumala lost no time in proceeding against him and bringing him under subjection. The third important event was his interference in the affairs of Ramanathapuram. Kurian Setupati having died, his son Dalavay Setupati or Sadaika Teva II succeeded him; but the claims of his son were challenged by an illegitimate son called the 'Tambi'. The Tambi obtained the support of Tirumala, and Tirumala's generals Ramappayya and Ranganna Nayaka, proceeded to Ramanathapuram, drove the Setupati to the island of Rameswaram, captured him and placed the Tambi on the throne of Ramanathapuram. In this war Tirumala enlisted the support of the Portuguese while the Setupati enlisted that of the Dutch. Very soon, however, Tirumala found that he had committed a mistake, that the Tambi was not only becoming increasingly unpopular but also utterly incapable of governing the turbulent Marava chieftains. He, therefore, again, interfered, reinstated the Dalavay Setupati and thereby established peace in the country. The Setupati was eventually murdered by the Tambi in about 1645 whereupon, in order to avoid disturbances, Tirumala divided the whole country into three parts and gave two parts to the two nephews of the Dalavay Setupati, Raghunatha Teva and Tarakka Teva, and the third part to the Tambi. The last two rulers having shortly afterwards died, Raghunatha Teva became the sole ruler of the whole country. He established order everywhere, became a staunch supporter of Tirumala and rendered him signal service on several occasions. It is said that he repulsed a Muslim raid, crushed a rebellion of the Palayakars headed by the Palayakar of Ettiyapuram, and by these acts earned for himself the title of "the Defender of the Kingdom" and secured the unique privilege of celebrating the Navaratri festival in his own capital on the same scale as at Madurai. His last act, as we shall presently see, was to save Madurai from the great peril of Mysore invasion.

The most important event of Tirumala's reign was the war with the emperor of Vijayanagar. Ever since the decisive battle of Rakshasi Tangadi, the Vijayanagar emperors had been compelled to retreat gradually to the south before the Muslim expansion until at last by the time of Tirumala, the empire had been reduced to a mere shadow and confined practically to Vellore and the surrounding country. The Mysore king had already become independent; and Tanjore, Gingee and Madurai had to decide once for all whether to bow down to this shadow any longer or to assert their independence and endeavour to preserve their own kingdoms against the inevitable Muslim invasions. A decision was forced upon them by the hasty, incautious and unwise action of the emperor Sri Ranga III himself. Instead of making them his allies and confederates in his wars against the Muslims, he marched south with a large army to subdue them. Tirumala at once decided to oppose the march. He made alliances with the Nayakas of Tanjore and Gingee and when at the last moment, Vijayaraghava, the Nayaka of

Tanjore, betrayed him and joined the emperor, he did not hesitate to call in the Muslim aid to defend his own kingdom against the emperor. He induced the Sultan of Golconda to attack the emperor's territories and thereby compelled the emperor to rush to the north for the protection of his dominions. It was only when Sri Ranga was completely overpowered by the Golconda forces that he thought of gaining the co-operation of Madurai, Tanjore and Gingee. But then it was too late; his attempt at co-operation after aggression failed and he had to fly to the forests and thence to Mysore never to return. The Golconda forces, meeting with no opposition, marched to the south and laid siege to Gingee. The Tanjore Nayaka surrendered to them, but Tirumala did not lose heart. He sought and obtained the help of Bijapur against Golconda and flew to the relief of Gingee. But, as fates would have it, the Bijapur forces betrayed him by joining with the Golconda forces. The latter then entrusted the siege to the Bijapur forces and marched north and Gingee was taken by the Bijapur forces. The Bijapur forces thereafter overran the whole of the Tanjore country and were prevented from ravaging the Madurai country only by the supreme efforts made by Tirumala to put up a stiff opposition. It is said that he collected all the Kallar chieftains and with their aid beat off the Bijapur forces from his frontiers. It would, however, appear that the Muslims exacted tribute both from Tanjore and Madurai.

The last years of Tirumala saw the second war against Mysore. Kantirava Narasa Raja, the king of Mysore, despatched an army under his general Hampaiya to invade Madurai. This general marched to Satyamangalam and from there to the very gates of Madurai perpetrating the most horrible outrages on the inhabitants. It is said that his army cut off the noses of all people that came on its way, men, women or children. Tirumala was then on his sick bed. He could do nothing himself to stem the tide of the invasion. But he sent for his faithful vassal, Raghunatha Setupati, and commanded him to drive away the Mysoreans. Raghunatha collected 25,000 Maravas and with the help of these as well as 35,000 royal troops stoutly defended Madurai and soon afterwards in a pitched battle defeated the enemy and carried the war into the Mysore country itself, perpetrating the same cruelty of cutting off the noses on the Mysoreans. In this campaign Kumara Mattu who is considered to be either the brother or an illegitimate son of Tirumala is stated to have taken an active part.

Tirumala had no time to establish proper relations with the Portuguese and the Dutch who were then fighting with each other and encroaching upon his rights in the coastal region. As has been said already, he secured the aid of the Portuguese in his first war against the Marava country. In recognition of their services he gave them certain privileges in trade and turned the

Dutch out of Pattanam in 1648. In 1649, however, the Dutch captured the pagoda of Tiruchendur, fortified it, sacked Tuticorin and levied tribute on the Paravas. In 1658 they captured Tuticorin from the Portuguese. Tirumala failed to interfere and make himself felt by these foreign powers.

His attitude towards the missionaries was one of toleration and even protection. During his reign Nobili shifted his activities to the north, first to Sendamangalam, then to Salem and lastly to Tiruchirappalli while Vico carried on his activities in Madurai. The wholesale conversions which they attempted to make naturally roused the indignation of the people and some of the palayakars and led to many awkward situations which the missionaries described as "persecution". Tirumala rescued them from these situations and ordered that they should be allowed freedom of action in their work. Nobili soon afterwards left the Madurai country and retired to Jaffnapatam and subsequently to Mylapore.

Tirumala is remembered not so much for his religious toleration nor even so much for his wars and diplomacy, as for his piety, and love of art and architecture. His numerous temples, mantapams and gopurams and notably his choultry and palace bear eloquent witness to this. As these works are described fully in the Gazetteer chapter it is needless to describe them here. But it may be said here that almost all his surplus revenues were spent on these monuments and that every one who has seen his choultry and his palace has been struck by their extraordinary grandeur and magnificence. That he should have found time to plan and execute such marvellous structures, comparable to those of Thebes, amidst the din of wars and turmoils, speaks not a little for his greatness. Inscriptions and Jesuit accounts testify that he also made numerous gifts to temples, that he had the interests of his subjects at heart and that he constantly toured round his territories looking after their welfare. No wonder that on his death a temple was erected for him and his image was worshipped, and that his name is ever cherished by the people of Madurai¹.

Tirumala was succeeded by his son Muttu Virappa Nayaka who ruled only for about a few months (1659). But in these few months he did much. As soon as he ascended the throne he threw all subservience to the Muslims to the winds and made rapid preparations to attack the Nayaka of Tanjore for his infidelities to Tirumala. Vijayaraghava, the Nayaka, became desperate and appealed to the Sultan of Bijapur for aid. The Sultan despatched a large army under 'Sagosi' (Shahaji?) and 'Mulla', but this army instead of helping Tanjore attacked it and conquered it and drove away Vijayaraghava into the jungles. Tanjore, Vallam,

and Mannargudi, fell one after another into the hands of the Muslims, but Madurai stoutly held out. Muthu Virappa offered stiff resistance and the Muslim army harassed by famine and the Kallars came readily to terms with him and walked off with whatever they could get¹.

Chokkanatha Nayaka (1659-1682), the son of Muttu Virappa Nayaka, became king when he was only sixteen years old. Taking advantage of his youth, the Pradhani, the Rayasam and the Dalavay formed a cabal, usurped all the power to themselves and in order to divert public attention, waged a war against the Muslims at Gingee. But Chokkanatha soon broke up this cabal, assumed all power to himself, and promptly marched against Vijayaraghava who had befriended the cabal and reduced Tanjore to subjection. Shortly afterwards, however, a Bijapur general 'Vanamian' came south plundering and harrying the country and laid siege to Madurai itself. Chokkanatha had to buy him off with a large sum of money. The moment 'Vanamian' turned his back, however, Chokkanatha marched once more against Vijayaraghava who had given him fresh offence by co-operating with 'Vanamian'. He captured Vallam and humbled the pride of Tanjore. He next turned against Tirumalai Setupati who had refused to come to his aid against 'Vanamian' and captured the important forts of Tirupattur, Pudukkottai, Manamadurai and Kalaiyar Koil. But before the war was completed, he returned to Madurai to perform a religious festival, and no sooner was his back turned than the Setupati sallied out, defeated the Madurai generals and recovered some of the forts. Soon after this, Tirumalai Setupati died and was succeeded by his nephew Raja Surya who also having died within a few years without heirs, was succeeded by his illegitimate son, Raghunatha Teva, who is better known as Kilavan Setupati.

Meanwhile Chokkanatha transferred his capital from Madurai to Tiruchirappalli, possibly with a view to carrying on renewed hostilities with more facility against Tanjore. He erected there a palace with materials taken from Tirumala's palace at Madurai, an act which posterity has found it impossible to excuse. The preparations of war against Tanjore seem to have gone on for several years when, in 1673, Chokkanatha, it is said, demanded a Tanjore princess in marriage, and on being refused, commanded his Dalavay Venkatakrishna, immediately to invade Tanjore. Venkatakrishna assailed Tanjore and in the fierce battle that ensued Vijayaraghava put up a gallant fight but in vain. Despairing of success Vijayaraghava is said to have eventually blown up his zenana with gun powder and plunged into the thick of the battle and perished.

We now come to a critical phase in the life of Chokkanatha. Up till now it is clear he showed sagacity, courage, persistence and

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 112-149.

Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, Part III, pages 121-142.
Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, 1906, pages 44-50.

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 150-153.

other warlike qualities. From this time onwards he, for some reason which we are not able to discover, showed nothing (some say it was mental derangement) but foolishness, pusillanimity and helplessness. He became, after the Tanjore war, the sole master of the Tanjore country and appointed Muddalagiri Nayaka as its governor, but he never exercised any control over his subordinate's conduct. He left him to become practically independent; and when Alagiri was attacked by Ekoji, the Maharashtra general of the Sultan of Bijapur and was reduced to apply for his aid, he refused to give him any and left him to be defeated by Ekoji. He thus lost the Tanjore country without striking a blow and enabled Ekoji to found a Maharashtra kingdom. He permitted the king of Mysore to encroach on his north-western territories and suffered at his hands a defeat at Erode. He declared war against Tanjore but failed to attack Ekoji when the latter was returning utterly discomfited after his disgraceful defeat by Santaji, the Governor of Gingee. He lost some more portions of his northern territories to Mysore without putting up any resistance. Nor is this all. He allowed himself to be shortly afterwards superseded by his younger brother, Muttulinga Nayaka (1678) and to be made captive by Rustum Khan, a Muslim adventurer. And although the fates saved him from captivity, although he was restored to power by the energetic Kilavan Setupati and some palayakars, he made no attempt to recover his strength or re-assert his authority with vigour. And in the final war with Mysore he allowed Kumaraiya, the Mysore general, to gain time and to obtain reinforcements even though he could easily have attacked him and perhaps defeated him in the early stages of the war with the help of his allies Ekoji and Arasumalai, the general of Gingee. Eventually, Arasumalai drove the Mysoreans from the kingdom of Madurai (save Madurai town) but proved treacherous to Chokkanatha by attacking Tiruchirappalli. Unable to bear this shock, Chokkanatha is stated to have died of heart failure.

Chokkanatha's relations with the Christian missionaries were always cordial. He showed tolerance and protected them in all possible ways. In his reign Martinz at Madurai, Andre Fraire at Tiruchirappalli and Alvarez at Changanpatti briskly effected conversions, meeting often with much opposition from the people but sometimes with considerable support from the chieftains¹.

When Ranga Krishna Muttu Virappa Nayaka (1682-1689), the son of Chokkanatha, ascended the throne, he found that a great part of his kingdom was in the hands of the Mysoreans, the Maharashtras of Tanjore and Gingee and the Setupati of Ramanathapuram. His capital itself was in the hands of the Mysoreans. Confusion and anarchy reigned everywhere and robbers carried on

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 154-160.

Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1863, Part III, pages 182-204.

their brigandage with impunity. But events soon favoured him to regain his kingdom and re-establish his authority. His enemies quarrelled among themselves or found themselves faced with troubles of their own. Sambaji, the ruler of Gingee, declared war on Mysore, attacked the Mysoreans and compelled them to withdraw from Madurai. The king of Mysore encountered a rebellion of his subjects. Ekoji saw his own subjects ready to revolt at the failure of his domestic policy. And the Setupati was rendered harmless by the rebellion of his Dalavay. These factors assisted Ranga Krishna to regain his authority. But he was not left in peace. Kilavan Setupati entered into a conspiracy with the king of Tanjore to conquer Madurai and inflicted a defeat upon him. However by this defeat Ranga Krishna lost no part of his kingdom. He, indeed, seems to have had full control over it and governed it with vigilance, going often *incognito* among his subjects to feel the pulse of the public; and his subjects seem to have trusted and even loved him. He had, it is clear, many amicable qualities. He was frank, jovial and good-natured. Unlike other kings, he remained a strict monogamist. He built many temples and choultries and made several charitable grants. He evinced a strong sense of justice and decided all disputes with impartiality. He was well disposed towards the Christian missionaries, although he could do nothing to prevent their ill-treatment in the Marava country. During his reign John de Britto carried on his activities both at Madurai and Ramanathapuram¹.

A few months after the death of Ranga Krishna Muttu Virappa his wife Muttammal gave birth to a male child and committed suicide. The child was named Vijayaranga Chokkanatha and crowned when three months old, his grandmother Mangammal (Chokkanatha Nayaka's wife) becoming the regent during his minority. The regency of Mangammal (1689-1706) was notable inasmuch as she showed not a little tact and sagacity alike in the fields of politics and administration. She became regent at a time when Aurangzeb, after extending the Moghul supremacy in the Deccan, was periodically despatching his generals to the south for collecting tribute. She found that Mysore and Tanjore had bowed down to the Moghul supremacy and she decided that it was politic for her also to do so. But she went a step further. She endeavoured to win the good offices of the Moghul generals to secure her own ends. When Zulfikar Khan came to besiege Gingee in 1693 she sent him tribute; when he came again in 1697 she sent him costly presents and, it is said, recovered with his help some of her towns captured by the king of Tanjore. When Daud Khan came down in 1702, she again sent him very costly presents to keep him off her kingdom. She seems to have followed a similar policy towards the Maharashtras and preserved her kingdom from their

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 191-203.

ravages by bribing them extensively. But she could not by this tactics ward off her other enemies, Mysore, Travancore, Tanjore and Ramanathapuram. Chikkadeva Raya of Mysore invaded her territories of Salem and Coimbatore and was compelled to abandon his campaign only by the Maharashtras who suddenly invaded his own kingdom. King Ravi Varma of Travancore, who was till then a subordinate of Madurai, assumed independence and made it necessary for her to send annually expeditions into his country for the collection of tribute. On one occasion, it is said, he cleverly managed to use the Madurai troops to break up the opposition of his ministers and then to destroy them. But Mangammal, before long, sent her general Narasappaiya to Travancore with a large army and exacted from Ravi Varma all arrears of tribute. The king of Tanjore continued his aggressive policy against her and captured some of her towns; but here again she despatched Narasappaiya with a large army and compelled Shahji to surrender her towns and, what is more, to cement an alliance with her. But Kilavan Setupati proved too astute, too strong, for her. He asserted his independence, strengthened the fortifications of Ramanathapuram and defeated and killed Narasappaiya when he invaded Ramanathapuram.

Mangammal showed tolerance towards the Christians at a time when the Kilavan in the Ramanathapuram country persecuted them in all manner of ways and even put to death their missionary, John de Britto. She showed much concern towards the Muslims; she made endowments for the maintenance of a mosque and a darga. But she showed great solicitude towards her Hindu subjects by making liberal donations to the temples and by granting numerous agraharams. She also built choultries, planted trees along the roads, provided inns and water pandals, and constructed irrigation works. She died in 1706¹.

Vijayaranga Chokkanatha (1706-1732) who assumed the reins of the government on her death, showed hardly any capacity as a ruler. He wasted much of his revenues on indiscriminate grants to temples, choultries, etc., and on pilgrimages and left the administration of the kingdom in the hands of his Dalavay Kasturi Rangaiya and Pradhani Venkatakrishnaiya. There is plenty of evidence to show that these officers and their subordinates oppressed the people with impunity. Meanwhile the king of Mysore quietly came and occupied Salem and Coimbatore territories while the Marava politics dragged Madurai into a war and robbed her of all her prestige. On the death of Kilavan Setupati in 1710, Vijayaraghunatha, his son, became the Setupati by popular choice. But his claims were challenged by Bhavani Sankara Teva, the illegitimate son of the Kilavan. Bhavani Sankara secured the help of

the Raja of Pudukkottai and the king of Tanjore and attacked Arantangi where Vijayaraghunatha had entrenched himself. As the siege was proceeding Vijayaraghunatha fell a victim to an epidemic and was succeeded by Tanda Teva, a great grandson of the Kilavan's father. Bhavani Sankara now tried diplomacy and succeeded in driving away Tanda Teva and in becoming the Setupati himself. Tanda Teva, however, sought and obtained the help of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha of Madurai and the Raja of Pudukkottai, and drove away Bhavani Sankara to Tanjore. But Bhavani Sankara was not to be easily beaten. He promised the king of Tanjore all the territories north of the Pambar in return for his help and with a Tanjore army invaded Ramanathapuram, defeated the forces of Ramanathapuram, Madurai and Pudukkottai, captured the town of Ramanathapuram, put Tanda Teva to death and became the Setupati again. But shortly afterwards he became so unpopular that Kattaya Teva, the maternal uncle of Tanda Teva, succeeded in inducing the king of Tanjore to attack Ramanathapuram by promising to cede to him the territories which Bhavani Sankara had promised but refused to cede. The king of Tanjore thereupon invaded Ramanathapuram and defeated Bhavani Sankara. He then took the territories promised and parcelled out the remainder of the territories into five portions. Three of these portions he gave to Kattaya Teva who ascended the throne of Ramanathapuram as Kumara Muttu Vijayaraghunatha Setupati, while the other two, he gave to a palayakar refugee, the co-adjutor of Kattaya Teva who later became the Raja of Sivaganga. The King of Madurai had to acquiesce in this arrangement¹.

On the death of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha without male issue his wife Minakshi began to govern the kingdom and adopted Vijayakumara, the son of Bangaru Tirumala, a scion of the branch of the royal family issuing from Kumara Mutlu, supposed to be either the younger brother or an illegitimate son of Tirumala Nayaka. Her rule (1732-1736) proved disastrous to Madurai. Internal rebellion and external invasions racked the kingdom and put an end to the Nayaka dynasty itself. The trouble started with an internal rebellion, Bangaru Tirumala, the father of the adopted son, formed an alliance with Dalavay Venkatacharya to depose Minakshi and, being foiled in his attempt to take Tiruchirappalli by surprise, appealed for aid to Safdar Ali and Chanda Saheb, the son and son-in-law of Dost Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic. Safdar Ali espoused the cause of Bangaru Tirumala, invaded the Madurai country, but hesitated to attack the impregnable fortress of Tiruchirappalli. Chanda Saheb, however, managed to cajole Minakshi into the belief that he was her friend and entered the fortress as her defender, but, finding that she had come to terms with Bangaru, returned to Arcot intending to come back again; to usurp

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madurai by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 204-222.

Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1863, Part III, pages 205-228,

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madurai by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 223-231.

the kingdom. In 1736, he came back with a large army to Tiruchirappalli, once more cajoled her into the belief that he had come as her ally to defeat her enemies and the moment he was allowed to enter the fortress, made her prisoner and usurped her position. It is said that Minakshi, finding herself duped, committed suicide while Chanda Sahib unconcerned sent out his generals to conquer the Madurai country. Very soon he took possession of Dindigul and Madurai, drove Bangaru to Sivaganga and became the sole master of the whole kingdom¹.

We may pause here to give an account of the administration of the kingdom under the rule of the Nayakas. There can be no doubt that the Nayaka, as the Pandyan king of old, was autocratic. He was the unquestioned head of the army, the executive and the judiciary. He could appoint or dismiss any officer. His word was law or a command which had to be implicitly obeyed. But his autocracy was tempered, even restrained, by tradition and custom. None of the Nayaks, not even the great Tirumala, dared to ride rough-shod over Hindu traditions or Hindu customs followed by the majority of his subjects. The truth is, tradition and custom constituted in those days the essence of public opinion; and this public opinion, stronger than any modern law or modern public opinion, put an effectual curb on the autocracy of the Nayaka.

Moreover, the Nayaka was in practice upon all important matters, assisted by the advice of a council of his high officers or ministers. And, if, in any case, he set aside their advice, he did so at his own peril. This council normally consisted of the Dalavay, the Pradhani, the Rayasam, the Kanakkan and the Stanapati. The Dalavay was both the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-chief. He wielded immense power alike in the military and in the civil administration of the realm. He was responsible for the organization of the army, for the conduct of war, for the control of foreign policy, as well as for the maintenance of public peace. The Pradhani was the Finance Minister. He was responsible for the collection of revenue and its expenditure. The Rayasam was the Chief Secretary, the head of the whole administrative machinery. The Kanakkan was the Accountant, in charge of the audit department, while the Stanapati was the Foreign Secretary, the accredited agent of the king in his dealings with foreign powers.

We have hardly any precise information about the constitution of the various departments of the Government. It would, however, appear that under the Dalavay there were Provincial governors, each in charge of a province consisting of several palayams. There were thus the governors of Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli and Sattamangalam. Below these governors, came the palayakars and some

of the bigger palayakars exercised control over the smaller palayakars. The palayakars, as has already been seen, supervised both the civil and the criminal administration of the palayams, paid one-third of the revenue as tribute to the Nayaka and maintained and furnished a specified number of troops for the defence of the kingdom. The kingdom was protected from invasions by a number of forts well built and well garrisoned at strategic places like Dindigul, Dharapuram, Coimbatore, Sattamangalam, Erode, Karur, Namakkal, Sattamangalam, Salem, Melur, Attur, etc. Besides these forts, there were the famous fortresses of Madurai and Tiruchirappalli which were considered impregnable and garrisoned by the pick of the troops. The seventy-two bastions of the Madurai fortress, it is said, were garrisoned by the best contingents supplied by the seventy-two palayakars. Each fort or fortress was in charge of a commander and all the commanders were under the immediate supervision and control of the Dalavay. The army of the Nayakas consisted of the infantry, the cavalry and the elephantry. The chariots had by their time fallen into disuse, but instead of them artillery was fast becoming popular. Guns, swords, lances, bows and arrows and shields formed the chief weapons of offence and defence. The Marava country still continued to supply the best soldiers.

As to the civil administration each province or palayam was divided into a number of nadus, seemais or maghanams. The smallest division was obviously the village variously called the gramam, the mangalam, the samudram, the kudi, the ur, the puram, the kulam, the kurichi, or the patti. We do not know who were the officers in charge of every one of these subdivisions and what were their functions. But this much we know, that the whole brunt of the administration fell on the villages which enjoyed a large measure of local autonomy. The village assembly consisting of the representatives of the people still, it would seem, played a vital part. It had its village headman who maintained peace and order through village watchmen. It had its revenue officer, maniyakarar or ambalakarar who collected the land revenue of the village. It had its kanakkupillai who kept revenue accounts. And it had its panchayats and arbitrators who decided all civil and criminal cases. Over these officers there seem to have been other corresponding officers of the larger territorial divisions. The Nayaka himself, it is stated, constituted the highest court in the realm and decided all cases impartially after consulting his chief officers. All these officers, whether the king's officers or the village officers, were paid mostly in maniams or grants of land; and such of them as rendered any meritorious services were also periodically rewarded by presents of money.

The chief source of revenue of the Nayakas, as of the Pandyan kings, was land. It is, however, not known how much land revenue was claimed and collected by the State. Some historians say it

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 232-234.
Madura District Gazetteer by J. H. Nelson, 1868, Part III, pages 239-264.

was half the gross produce while others say it was half the net produce. Whatever it is, there is nothing to show that the assessment pressed hard on the people and led to any migrations or disturbances. There is, on the other hand, much evidence to show that agriculture was encouraged, that large tracts of waste and forest lands were systematically brought under cultivation by the Nayakas and their palayakars and that the crown lands which formed no small part of the cultivated lands of the kingdom were considered rich and fertile. It would seem that the assessment was fixed on the village and that the ryots shared it among themselves. It would also seem that tenancy was known.

Next to land revenue came the tribute paid by the palayakars. And next to the tribute came the various profession taxes, import and export duties, transit duties, receipts from fines and royalties from the pearl and chank fisheries. Nelson calculated that the receipts from all sources of revenue amounted to no less than Rs. 1,60,00,000. Later historians are apt to put them at Rs. 95,00,000. A large part of these revenues was saved every year by the Nayakas, inasmuch as their expenditure over the administration came to very little. The palayakars maintained the army, the civil as well as military officers were paid mostly in maniams; the villages bore all the expenses connected with their administration. No wonder, therefore, that large surplus revenues accumulated. These were set apart by the Nayakas for contingencies like wars and famines; these were also, it would seem, partly spent by Tirumala over his magnificent buildings, like the palace and the choultry. He perhaps saw no reason why a part of these surplus funds could not be utilized for beautifying in a befitting manner his ancient and glorious capital. Historians have not been charitable to him; some of them seem to think that he employed forced labour for his works, but they have not been able to adduce any evidence to support this view. For one thing, so long as the surplus funds were there, he had no need to resort to forced labour; for another, no such artistic wonders can be created by forced labour.

The Nayakas, however, could not boast of having done anything for the encouragement of trade. They maintained no navy and they allowed the foreign trade to slip entirely into the hands of the European powers, the Portuguese and the Dutch. The ancient ports which in the glorious days of Pandyan prosperity controlled both the Western and Eastern trade routes, fell into decay. The exports of cloth, etc., became restricted and the imports of luxuries negligible. Pearl and chank alone continued to be exported but this was done not by the Indian merchants but by the Portuguese and the Dutch.

But if the Nayakas figure as non-entities in the sphere of commerce, they show themselves as conspicuous leaders in the field of religion. To them, more than to anybody else, must be given

the credit for having preserved, upheld and encouraged in every way the Hindu culture and all that it implies. Their devotion, their numerous gifts to temples and mathams and their more numerous grants of agra-harams ensured the continual prosperity of Hinduism. Nor is this all. They endowed schools, they built choultries, and they constructed irrigation works. Nobili tells us that in Madurai town alone there were 10,000 students "distributed in different classes of two or three hundred" and that "splendid foundations" had been made for their maintenance. It would appear that, besides Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu were encouraged by the Nayakas.

Society in general continued in its old traditional pattern under the Nayakas. It respected the Brahmin, the vedas and the dharma-sastras and carried on its avocations untrammelled by State interference and unconcerned about State policy so long as its cultural heritage was not exposed to danger. The Nayakas followed a policy of tolerance towards missionary activities and the people showed no disposition to resent so long as such activities were carried on in an honest and peaceful manner. But whenever the missionaries in their excessive zeal resorted to unfair methods of proselytisation, the people unmistakably showed their resentment and intolerance. They could not see their religion maligned and their relations inveigled into Christianity¹.

We have already seen how the Nayaka rule in Madurai was extinguished by Chanda Saheb. For a time Chanda Saheb had his own way. He strengthened the fortifications of Tiruchirappalli and appointed his two brothers as the governors of the strongholds of Dindigul and Madurai. He subjugated the king of Tanjore and compelled him to cede Karaikkal to the French. But very soon his position became insecure. The king of Tanjore and Bangaru Tirumala applied for the assistance of the Maharashtras of Satara. Nizam-ul-Mulk who had no love either for Chanda Saheb or for Dost Ali Khan, the Nawab of Arcot, also instigated the Maharashtras to come down to the south. And the Maharashtras who really wanted no instigation or appeal from any one, having always had the excuse for interference for the non-payment of chauth, suddenly appeared in 1740 with a large army, defeated and killed Dost Ali at Damalacheruvu pass, collected whatever money they could from Safdar Ali and retired. Safdar Ali immediately proclaimed himself as the Nawab and Chanda Saheb, who had made a feint at helping him, feigned submission to him and thought himself safe. But he was mistaken. Safdar Ali knew full well that he could not rely on Chanda Saheb. It was at his suggestion that the Maharashtras had withdrawn but only to come back again a little later to take Chanda Saheb by surprise. By the end of the year, therefore, they appeared again with a vast army and made

¹ History of the Nayaks of Madura by R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, 1924, pages 235-332

Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, 1868, Part III, pages 143-176.

straight to Tiruchirappalli. Chanda Saheb was not only surprised but alarmed. He had not enough provisions to withstand the siege, nor had he enough troops within the fort to put up a stiff resistance. They however, invested the town closely, defeated and killed his two brothers and after a siege of three months compelled him to surrender. They then took him captive to Satara and disregarding the claims of Bangaru Tirumala, appointed Murari Rao of Gooty as their governor of the Madurai country¹.

But Madurai was not to enjoy peace now or even for a long time to come. She was soon drawn into the vortex of the politics of the Carnatic. The disappearance of Chanda Saheb from the scene no doubt strengthened the hands of Safdar Ali, but he still felt his position by no means safe, as Nizam-ul-Mulk refused to recognize him as the Nawab. He, therefore, took his family to Madras, placed it under the protection of the English and himself proceeded to Vellore to court the aid of his powerful kiledar, Murtaz Ali. Murtaz Ali gave him a warm reception but very soon assassinated him in October 1742 and proclaimed himself as the Nawab. The army, however, obliged Murtaz Ali to fly and proclaimed Saheb Jemma, Safdar Ali's son, as the Nawab under the name of Muhammad Said. But this boy, though he was promptly recognized as the Nawab by the English, had hardly any chances to rule. In 1743 Nizam-ul-Mulk arrived at Arcot and, when the young Nawab visited him, made him prisoner and appointed Khuwaja Abdulla Khan as the Nawab, and upon the latter's sudden death appointed Anwar-ud-Din Khan as the Nawab of the Carnatic and, it is said, specially recommended the boy to his care. But Murtaz Ali secured the assassination of the unfortunate boy, instigated possibly, as is said, by Anwar-ud-Din. Meanwhile Nizam-ul-Mulk drove away Murari Rao and the Maharashtras from Madurai and made over the country to Anwar-ud-Din as the Nawab. Anwar-ud-Din entrusted the administration of Madurai and Tirunelveli to two of his own sons, Muhammad Ali and Mahfuz Khan. It is said that Anwar-ud-Din soon afterwards got rid of Bangaru Tirumala by poisoning².

Close on the heels of the kaleidoscopic changes came the news of the declaration of war between France and England. Events now quickly moved to a head. Anwar-ud-Din received overtures from both the English and the French and secretly rejoiced at the capture of Madras by the French. But his days were numbered and his son was very soon compelled to seek the English aid. On the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1748 both his son Nizar Jang and his grandson Muzafar Jang, claimed the title of Nizam and Muzafar Jang, in order to strengthen his claims, came to the south with a large army and allied himself with Chanda Saheb (who had been

lately released by the Maharashtras) and Dupleix and with the aid of a small picked French force attacked, defeated and killed Anwar-ud-Din in the battle of Ambur. The united forces then marched towards Tiruchirappalli where Muhammed Ali had entrenched himself. Muhammed Ali now proclaimed himself as the Nawab and frantically applied to the English for help and the English sent him a strong force to repel the attack. From this time onwards the English persistently supported his cause and in the war that followed Clive defended Arcot against the forces of Chanda Saheb. Eventually the French were reduced to great straits and Chanda Saheb was compelled to seek refuge in Tanjore, where he was soon murdered under the order of Manoj, the Tanjore general³.

Meanwhile Madurai was lost by the Nawab. In 1750 while Abdul Rahim, his younger brother who had been for some time ruling over Madurai was absent in Tirunelveli, one Alam Khan, a partisan of Chanda Saheb seized Madurai, thus cutting off the Nawab from the country of Tirunelveli and depriving him of half his revenues. The moment the Nawab received the news of this disaster he applied to the English for aid and the English sent him a force under the command of Captain James Cope, then stationed at Tiruchirappalli, for the recovery of Madurai. But Cope failed in his attempt to capture Madurai. Shortly afterwards Alam Khan died gallantly in a fight against the English near Tiruchirappalli in March 1752. When Alam Khan went on this campaign he seems to have appointed Mayana, a relative of his, as the Governor of Madurai and one Nabi Khan as the commander of Tirunelveli. The Nawab somehow induced these two men and Muhammad Barki, the son-in-law of Nabi Khan, to sign a paper acknowledging his sovereignty over the Madurai and Tirunelveli countries. This, however, brought him no revenues from those countries—revenues which were needed to repay the large debts he had incurred to the East India Company. He, therefore, sought and obtained English aid and in the beginning of 1755, sent an expedition under Colonel Heron to Madurai, accompanied by his brother Mahfuz Khan. Among Colonel Heron's forces were the Company's sepoy led by a distinguished Indian Officer, Muhammad Yusuf Khan. Heron took Madurai without any difficulty, Mayana having neglected its fortifications and depleted its garrison. He then assailed and took the temple of Koviladi situated east of the town where Mayana had taken refuge and, what is more, indulged in an act of sacrilege for which there was no excuse. He carried off the images of the gods worshipped by the Kallars and for this the Kallars subsequently waylaid him and his forces and made them pay heavily⁴.

¹ Studies in Madras Administration by B.S. Baliga, Vol. II, 1949, page 263.

Vestiges of old Madras by H. D. Love, Vol. II, 1913, pages 427-430.

² Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 60-62.

History of Indostan by Robert Orme, Vol. I, Fourth Edition, 1861, pages 136-402.

Yusuf Khan by S. C. Hill, 1914, pages 23-46.

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 58-59.

Vestiges of Old Madras by H.D. Love, Vol. II, 1913, pages 277-280.

² Studies in Madras Administration by B.S. Baliga, Vol. I, 1949, pages 262-263.

Vestiges of Old Madras by H.D. Love, Vol. II, 1913, pages 280-288.

Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 59-60.

After conquering Madurai Colonel Heron gave the lease of the Madurai and Tirunelveli countries to Mahfuz Khan at an annual rental of 15 lakhs of rupees, it is said, for a handsome consideration received. But Mahfuz Khan was as incompetent as he was vain. He found it impossible to control the palayakars or to reduce the Kallar chiefs, much less to remit any rent to the Company to liquidate the growing debts of the Nawab. Mayana and Nabi Khan plotted to seize Madurai itself, while Maodamiah, another Muslim adventurer who had established his hold on Tirunelveli, sold the southern district of Kalakadu to the king of Travancore. The Nawab now opened his eyes and found his position precarious. He again sought and obtained the aid of the English to reduce once more the Madurai and Tirunelveli countries and once more the English sent an expeditionary force, this time commanded by no other than their distinguished Indian Officer, Muhammad Yusuf Khan.

Yusuf Khan with an ability unsurpassed by any, lost no time in overthrowing the rebels and restoring the country back to Mahfuz Khan. But both the Nawab and Mahfuz Khan proved utterly ungrateful to him. The Nawab who had some personal grudge against him induced the English to recall him, while Mahfuz Khan secretly plotted against him and with the help of some palayakars and Kallar chiefs raised a standard of revolt in Madurai. Upon this, Yusuf Khan marched at once to Madurai from Tirunelveli and joined his forces with those of Captain Calliaud who was in charge of Tiruchirappalli. Calliaud made two attempts to storm Madurai but in vain (1757). Eventually, however, he managed to secure Madurai by paying Rs. 1,70,000 to the rebels. But this did not solve the problem. The Nawab showed an unreasonably lenient attitude towards his brother; he refused to recall Mahfuz Khan in spite of the strong pressure exerted by the English. The Kallar chieftains ravaged the country the moment the English troops were withdrawn. Hyder Ali who was soon to usurp the throne of Mysore invaded the country round Madurai and was beaten off with difficulty. The palayakars asserted their independence everywhere. As a result of all this it became impossible for the Nawab to secure any revenue from Madurai and Tirunelveli. The English would not wait any longer. They appointed Yusuf Khan as the renter and Governor of the Madurai and Tirunelveli countries, fixing the rent of Madurai at 5 lakhs of rupees and asked him to restore peace and order¹.

Yusuf Khan's governorship of Madurai proved an astounding success. He reduced the Kallars and palayakars to complete subjection. He made severe examples of all those who stirred up any trouble. He erected forts at Melur and Vellalapatti, garrisoned

¹ Yusuf Khan by S. C. Hill, 1914, pages 46-54.

History of Indostan by Robert Orme, Vol. I, Fourth Edition, 1861, page 104-117, 197-201, 209-217, 221-226, 235-239, 246-248, 250-262, 293-294, 467-468, 560-569.

the fort of Uttumalai, established a military post at Sorandai and cemented an alliance with the king of Travancore. He showed equal ability as an administrator and never failed to remit in time the rents due to the Nawab. But it was of no avail. The Nawab began to hate him and Mahfuz Khan plotted against him. Governor Pigot who had great faith in him tried to defend him in vain. Yusuf Khan must have known all this. He regarded himself as the servant of the Company and not of the Nawab and hoped to bear down all opposition by his good administration. But in this hope he was disappointed. He was informed by the English that he was responsible to the Nawab and as such should obtain his consent if he wished to renew his rentership. He offered to rent the country for 9 lakhs of rupees, that is, nearly double the sum for which the country was first leased to him. But the Nawab showed no disposition to agree. All this was naturally not only galling but intolerable to him. He felt himself let down by the English and deceived by the Nawab. He was not the man to take this calmly. In spite of his severity he had earned the admiration and loyalty of all the palayakars; and because of his excellent administration he had won the affection of all his subjects. He thought that he could, with the support of both, defy the Nawab and the English and began to make preparations for defence. The English, knowing that they had to deal with a man who once determined would go to any lengths, sought to smooth over matters by recalling him to Madras. But it was too late. He had already determined to compel them as well as the Nawab to accept his own terms by showing his strength. He recruited more and more men for his army, including some French soldiers and officers, and greatly strengthened the defences of Madurai. And when the English and the Nawab sent their forces against him he put up a stiff resistance. He compelled them to raise the siege twice and foiled all their attempts to storm the place. But eventually, one of his French officers, a man named Marchand, conspired against him, took him captive and handed him over to Major Campbell, the commander of the English forces. He was immediately delivered over to the Nawab who lost no time in hanging him to the nearest tree (1764). His body was buried at the spot and a small square mosque was erected over it. It is still in existence and lies about two miles to the west of Madurai on the road to Dindigul¹.

Thus fell one of the most outstanding rulers of Madurai, a warrior and a statesman, comparable in stature to Hyder and Tipu. Born in Ramanathapuram, originally in a Hindu family of Vellalars, he left his home while still young, took service under two Europeans at Pondicherry and later under the Nawab of Arcot. He rose rapidly in the Nawab's army, married a Parangi (Portuguese) woman and served for a time as a physician to Muhammad Kemal at Nellore. Here he collected a band of trusty followers and in 1748 entered the company's service, and by his

¹ Yusuf Khan by S. C. Hill, 1914, pages 95-226.

sheer valour and abilities as a soldier soon became the commandant of all the Company's sepoys and earned for himself the reward of a gold medal and, what is more, the good opinions of several of the Company's military officers, including the famous Colonel Lawrence. "The Nellore Subedar", as he was often called, became the trusted, loyal, indispensable officer capable of facing and overcoming all sorts of obstacles and difficulties. He rendered signal service both to the Nawab and to the English by reducing all the refractory palayakars of Madurai and Tirunelveli by leading several successful sorties against Lally when he besieged Madras and by restoring peace and order in Madurai. He endeared himself to the people by permitting them, for the first time, under the Muslim rule, to worship freely in their temples and by making fixed grants to the temples for their support. He induced the Kallars and the Vellalars to extend cultivation by granting loans and remissions and by constructing and maintaining irrigation tanks. He encouraged the weavers to increase their output by giving them loans and finding markets for their cloth. He erected choultries, cleared the forest of thieves and robbers and provided for the security of the roads through Kallar Kavalkars. Colonel Fullarton who had occasion to see Madurai some years after the fall of Yusuf Khan says: "While he ruled these provinces his whole administration denoted vigour and effect; his justice was unquestioned; his word was unalterable, his measures were happily combined and firmly executed; the guilty had no refuge from punishment On comparing the state of that country with his conduct and remarks I found that wisdom, vigour and integrity were never more conspicuous in any person in whatever climate or complexion".

The subsequent history of Madurai is soon told. On the death of Yusuf Khan the Revenue administration of Madurai was entrusted to Abiral Khan Sahab and after him to several others. None of these colourless individuals had any military powers, these being entrusted to the English officers. In 1780 Hyder Ali who by now had made himself the king of Mysore carried out his famous invasion of the Carnatic reducing considerably the power and resources of the Nawab Muhammad Ali. In 1781 the Nawab who had all along become greatly indebted to the company assigned to it the revenues of the Carnatic to defray the cost of the war with Hyder and a Committee of Assigned Revenue consisting of six officials was appointed to administer them. This committee appointed officers under it in Madurai to look after the revenue collection. But the collection was found to be exceedingly difficult, what with the turbulence of the palayakars and the Kallars. In 1783, therefore, an expedition was sent under Colonel Fullarton to restore peace and order in Madurai. In 1785 the assignment of the revenues was surrendered to the Nawab and the Committee of Assigned Revenue was dissolved. In 1790 the English finding it impossible to induce the

Yusuf Khan by S.C. Hill, 1914, pages 1-22, 95-113.

Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 66-67.

Nawab either to pay off his debts or to reassign the revenues, took possession of the country by proclamation. They then appointed a Board of Assumed Revenue and under it collectors to administer the territories. Alexander Macleod was accordingly sent as the Collector of Dindigul. In 1792 the Nawab agreed to permit the English to carry on the administration of the Madurai and Tirunelveli countries until his debts could be cleared off. In the same year the province of Dindigul formally came into the possession of the English.

The fate of Dindigul differed from the rest of the Madurai country for some years. In 1742 Birki Venkata Rao, a Mysore general, captured Dindigul. In 1748 Venkata Rao was recalled by the king of Mysore and replaced by Venkatappa. In 1751, for a few months, Namagiri Raja replaced Venkatappa, but by the end of the year, Venkatappa was restored and given charge of the palayams while Srinivasa Rao, son of Birki Venkata Rao, was given charge of the government lands. In 1755 Hyder Ali reduced the palayakars of Dindigul to obedience, removed Srinivasa Rao and appointed Venkatappa in sole charge of the country. Subsequently the governors changed often until in 1783, when during the First Mysore War, Dindigul surrendered to the English. But the country was restored to Mysore in the next year by the treaty of Mangalore. Tipu then appointed Saiyal Sahab as its governor. In 1790 during the Second Mysore War, the English again took Dindigul and in 1792, they acquired it by a treaty. During the occupation of the country by the Mysoreans, several palayams were resumed by the governor. When the country finally came into the hands of the English, there were twenty-six palayakars. Some of them proved refractory for a time, but by 1802 they were all effectually brought under subjection¹.

The rest of the Madurai district came into the hands of the English within a few years. In 1795 Muhammad Ali died leaving behind a heavy load of debts to the Company. The English tried to induce his eldest son, Umdat-ul-Umrah, to surrender to them full sovereignty over certain parts of the Carnatic in liquidation of these debts. But Umdat-ul-Umrah refused to do this. At this juncture Lord Wellesley made the discovery of a secret correspondence carried on by the Nawabs, Muhammad Ali and Umdat-ul-Umrah with Tipu. This discovery was made in 1799, on the capture of Seringapatam and the death of Tipu. The correspondence was carried on in violation of the terms of the treaty of 1792. It gave a handle to Wellesley to dictate his own terms to the Nawab. He saw that the Nawab could no more be trusted. He saw also that the Nawab could not by any means, short of depriving him of all his territories, be expected to discharge his heavy debts to the company. He, therefore, resolved to assume the government of the

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 67-71.

Guide to the Records of the Madura District, 1790-1835, Vols. I-III—See the references to disturbances.

Carnatic and to make a suitable provision for the Nawab and his family. He wrote: "My judgment is convinced of the criminal purpose of the actual endeavours of the late and present Nawabs of Arcot to establish a union of intercourse with the late Tipu Sultan, incompatible with the existing engagements between the Nawab of the Carnatic and the Company and tending to subvert the British power in the Peninsula of India . . . My knowledge of the internal administration of His Highness's affairs convinces me that the resources of the Carnatic can never be faithfully applied to the exigencies of public affairs while His Highness shall exercise the executive government. I have no hesitation, therefore, in stating my decided judgment that no actual security can be established for the rights pledged to the Company in the Carnatic, for the effectual restraint of the adverse and faithless disposition of the Nawab of Arcot and for the successful introduction of an improved system of finance, revenue and judicature into the territories subject to the Government of Fort St. George by any other mode than by administering through the Company's Officers the entire civil and military government of the Carnatic ¹."

Meanwhile Umdat-ul-Umrah died in July 1801 and Wellesley insisted that his son Ali Hussain, or Tajeel Umrah as he was called, could ascend the musnud only on the conditions mentioned above and when Ali Hussain refused to accept the conditions, Lord Clive, the Governor, lost no time in negotiating with Azeem-ud-Dowlah, son of Ameer-ul-Umrah, the second son of Nawab Muhammad Ali. By this treaty Azeem-ud-Dowlah was recognized as the Nawab and became entitled to the rank and dignity of his ancestors, the former Nawabs of the Carnatic. He agreed to vest the company with the sole and conclusive administration of the civil and military government of the Carnatic and with all the revenues thereof. He also agreed to certain terms regarding the debts while the Company agreed to make suitable provision for his maintenance and for the maintenance of his relations. It was thus that Madurai, one of the districts of the Carnatic, came under the British Government ².

From this time onwards there were no wars or political disturbances in the district. It was only with the rise of nationalism that Madurai again came into prominence in the field of politics.

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CHAPTER IV.

NATIONALISM AND INDEPENDENCE.

The dawn of political consciousness in Madurai came with the rise of the Home Rule, the Non-Co-operation and the Khilafat movements. All these movements, as is well known, began to make themselves felt during the First World War and its aftermath, a period which may rightly be called the formative epoch of Indian nationalism. It was this period that witnessed the untiring efforts of stalwarts like Mrs. (Dr.) Annie Besant, Tilak, Gandhiji, Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali in the field of nationalism: it was also the period which for the first time in many parts of this State, such as in the Madurai district, taught the people to assert their rights and to voice forth their grievances alike in the social, the economic and the political spheres of life.

The Home Rule Movement which agitated Madras between 1914-1918 had for its objects swadeshi, boycott of foreign goods, temperance, national education, labour welfare and home rule (responsible government), objects similar in essence to those preached by the Indian National Congress since 1885¹. Under the inspiring zeal of its leaders like Dr. Besant, Mr. Arundale, Sri Wadia and Sri Subramania Ayyar, it captured the imagination of many intellectuals, both young and old, and spread its ideals through the numerous branches of the Theosophical Lodges scattered in the State². It resulted in speeches, processions and strikes. In Madurai, which is an industrialized district, it manifested itself mostly in strikes. It was led by leaders like Sri George Joseph and Sri Adinarayana Chetty, both barristers by profession, and Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu of Salem, a labour leader of South Indian reputation³. Dr. Besant herself came down to Madurai in 1915 and delivered a number of speeches on Home Rule⁴. There is evidence to show that the Madurai Theosophical Lodge was one of the first of the Lodges of this State to be converted into a Home Rule Organization⁵. From 1917, the movement began to bear fruit. In that year the monster petition of the Home Rule League demanding self-government was signed by a very large number of people of the district⁶. In 1918, it caused great excitement over the conversion of two Brahmin youths of the district to Christianity, giving rise as it did to public meetings, to indignant comments in the Indian press and in particular, to an outspoken article in the *New India* entitled "The Missionary Havoc"⁷. Then came a series

¹ For an account of the latter see *History of the Non-Co-operation and Khilafat Movements* by P. C. Bar (Confidential) 1923.

² G.O. Nos. 542-543, Public (Confidential) dated 15th September 1918—See the *Newspaper cuttings*.

³ Forthwith Remota (Confidential), dated 14th February 1918; dated 17th July 1918; dated 29th August 1918 and dated 1st October 1918.

⁴ *Idem*, dated 14th April 1915—*Newspaper Cuttings*—1915, page 2013.

⁵ *Idem*, dated 10th September 1916; dated 1st October 1916.

⁶ *Idem*, dated 17th November 1917.

⁷ *Idem*, dated 4th February 1918.

¹ *St. Paul's Madras administration* by B. S. Baliga, Vol. 1, pages 264-267.

² *Idem*, pages 267-268.

of political meetings at which Home Rule propaganda was carried on by Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu, Sri B. V. Narasimha Ayyar and Sri George Joseph¹. And this was followed by a strike in the Harvey Mills, Madurai, which caused considerable agitation in the State.

This strike, which originated as a result of a demand for higher wages, was sponsored in the beginning by an anti-Brahmin politician, Sri J. N. Ramanathan of the Justice Party. He desired to make capital out of it for the Non-Brahmin party which had just then come into being. But very soon, the situation got out of his hands. The Government prohibited him from making any speeches for a period of one month within 10 miles of Madurai, but Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu stepped in and by a "series of lectures" persuaded the strikers not to give in, until he was arrested, tried and sentenced. His trial caused a sensation in Madurai². Funds were collected for his defence by the people. He was hailed as a national leader by men like Sri K. Rama Ayyangar of the Madras Legislative Council and by Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, a rising Congress leader, while Dr. Besant herself in the *New India*, announced a personal subscription of Rs. 100 to the defence fund on the ground that "it is the duty of all patriotic citizens to help the defence in all lawful manner in view of the correct and impartial administration of justice"³. At the trial large crowds attended the court house, gave him an ovation, broke the police cordon, and made it necessary for the authorities to summon troops from Tiruchirappalli to quell the commotion. Nor is this all. The trial and conviction led to a number of political meetings in Madurai, Tiruchirappalli and even in Madras. At Madras an important meeting was held under the auspices of the Madras Presidency Association with Sri A. Rangaswami Ayyangar, Editor of the *Swadesamitran*, in the chair, at which Sri S. Satyamurthi, Sri T. V. Venkatarama Ayyar and Sri T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar delivered political speeches⁴. It may be noted that this strike ended with an all-round enhancement of 25 per cent in the wages and encouraged also the labourers of the Railway Workshops of Nagapattinam to demand higher wages and to go on strike⁵.

Meanwhile the Home Rule Movement merged itself into the Non-Co-operation and the Khilafat movements—movements which

¹ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 16th February 1918; dated 5th March 1918; dated 20th March 1918; dated 1st May 1918; and dated 17th July 1918.

² *Idem*, dated 20th August 1918; dated 31st August 1918; and dated 18th September 1918.

³ History of Labour Unions in the Madras Presidency, 1908-1919 (Secret), pages 7-9.

⁴ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 18th September 1918.

⁵ *Idem*, dated 1st October 1918; dated 18th October 1918; and dated 17th January 1919.

⁶ *Idem*, dated 18th September 1918.

took the whole country by storm and gave a permanent character to nationalism. It is not pertinent here to trace their origin and development. Suffice it to state that the ideal of nationalism inculcated by the Indian National Congress since 1885 received a tremendous fillip during the First Great War, owing to various causes. The arrival of Gandhiji from South Africa after his successful prosecution of the Satyagraha campaign (1915), the capture of the Congress by the Extremists at its Lucknow Session (1916), the declaration of war by England and her allies against Turkey (1914), the endangering thereby of the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey, the Khalifa (hence the Khilafat), the occupation of the holy places of the Muslims in Asia Minor and Arabia by the Allies and the enemies of the Khalifa, and finally the passing of what is known as the Rowlatt Bills (1919) which armed the Government with powers of arrest and detention without trial of persons suspected of anti-government activities—all these combined to draw the Hindus and Muslims, the Congress and the Muslim League, together and enabled leaders like Gandhiji, Sri Shaukat Ali and Sri Muhammad Ali to start the nation-wide non-co-operation and Khilafat agitation.

As early as 1918, Congress propaganda was carried on in Madurai by Bepin Chandra Pal, an All-India leader, at largely attended meetings¹. In February 1919, Gandhiji who had by now become the unquestioned leader of India, launched the famous Satyagraha campaign, as a result of which non-co-operation with the government and passive resistance to the government were preached everywhere with unprecedented vigour. Shortly afterwards he came down on a propaganda tour to the south and visited Madurai on 29th March 1919, accompanied by Dr. T. S. S. Rajan. The same evening he delivered an address on the Satyagraha movement in connexion with the Rowlatt legislation to a large audience assembled on the College Road under the presidency of Sri K. Rama Ayyangar. His speeches at this time emphasised that civil disobedience signified the force of truth or the force of the soul, that its acceptance involved the rejection of all physical violence and that in view of the passing of the Rowlatt Acts all people who worked for Swaraj should make it a point to observe 6th April as a day of fast, hartal and peaceful meetings. A resolution was then passed embodying the willingness of the people to follow his advice and on 6th April most of the shops were closed, business was suspended and peaceful meetings were held². Gandhiji was closely followed in Madurai by Sri Bepin Chandra Pal for popularising passive resistance³.

About this time the awakening of the political consciousness in the country led to the introduction of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919). By the Morley-Minto Reforms (1909) the Madras Legislative Council had secured more members, both nominated

¹ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 16th May 1918.

² G.O. No. 222, Public (Confidential), dated 24th April 1919—See also Newspaper cuttings.

³ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 2nd February 1919.

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and elected, and acquired the right of asking questions and criticising the doings of the Executive. It had the rights to move resolutions, to raise points of order and to take notes. But nevertheless its resolutions had not been binding on the executive government, nor had it any control over any department of the government. By the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms the powers of the Legislative Council and the proportion of elected members in it were increased and a system of dyarchy in the executive government was set up. Provincial subjects were now classified as "reserved" and "transferred" and while the former were administered by the Governor in Council, the latter were administered by the Governor acting with the Ministers appointed from and responsible to the Legislative Council.

The introduction of these reforms brought in its wake other parties than the Home Rule and the Congress parties. The chief of these parties in the south was no other than the Non-Brahmin Party which came to be called the South Indian Liberal Federation or the Justice Party. This party was equally nationalistic in its outlook as the Congress and Home Rule parties. But it was more moderate, more liberal, as its name implies, and hoped to attain its goal gradually by constitutional methods. It came into being in this State towards the end of 1916 and gathered strength gradually during the Home Rule, the Non-co-operation and the Khilafat agitations. Its first pillars were Sri P. Theagaraya Chetty, President of the South Indian Chamber of Commerce, the oldest member of the Corporation of Madras and an ex-Legislative Councillor, and Dr. T. M. Nair, both of whom enjoyed the confidence of several Non-Brahmins. In December 1916, Sri P. Theagaraya Chetty issued a manifesto attacking the Home Rule movement in trenchant language, charging it with being a scheme devised by the Brahmins who were not content with having secured the practical monopoly of political power and high government appointments, and calling upon all Non-Brahmins to assert and press their claims against the domination of the Brahmins. The party thus ushered into this State was backed by a journal, called the 'Non-Brahmin' and shortly afterwards by a newspaper of its own called 'The Justice' with Dr. T. M. Nair as editor and Sri Theagaraya Chetty as publisher. The party lost no time in making propaganda. It had as its local leader in Madurai Sri J. N. Ramanathan who, as has been seen, started the Harvey Mill strike and who for many years carried on much anti-Brahmin propaganda in the district. Indeed what gave the Justice Party its strength was the appeal which it made to the large sections of Non-Brahmins that the predominance of the Brahmin leaders in the Home Rule and the Congress movements and the over-representation of the Brahmins in the services were matters demanding the notice of all Non-Brahmins. It was this appeal combined with its moderate views on reforms that made this party carry on its propaganda with some effect against the Home Rule and the Non-co-operation movements and co-operate

with the Government. The reforms of 1919 were by no means palatable to this party. When they were on the anvil and even afterwards, it agitated for separate electorates for the Non-Brahmins and for communal representation for them in the services as well as educational institutions. But after the reforms were introduced, although they failed to set up separate electorates for the Non-Brahmins, it accepted office and tried to work the reforms with as much co-operation with the British as was possible¹. In 1918 a Non-Brahmin conference was held in Madurai for propagating the views of the Justice Party². In 1921 a dispute arose about the management of an important temple in Madurai which soon resolved itself into a Brahmin and Non-Brahmin controversy. The Non-Brahmins headed by Sri J. N. Ramanathan endeavoured to obstruct the receiver appointed by the local sub-judge from entering the temple by passive resistance and some violence was shown towards the Brahmins. In the same year a collision occurred between a Non-co-operation meeting and an anti-Non-co-operation meeting, the latter organized by Sri J. N. Ramanathan³.

When all this agitation and counter-agitation were going on, the Non-co-operation and the Khilafat movements suddenly came to an end. The Congress split over the question of council entry and the Muslims beheld with dismay the abolition of the Khalifa by Kemal I'asha, the great deliverer of Turkey. Still the agitation for Swaraj continued; and gradually the Congress creed hardened into several important demands such as the renunciation of titles, honours and honorary offices; the resignation of posts in the civil, police and military services; the boycott of foreign goods, the boycott of the reformed councils and of local bodies, the removal of untouchability, the prohibition of liquor and drugs, the encouragement of khadi, the formation of kisan sabhas and trade unions to improve the conditions of agricultural and industrial labour and the insistence on complete independence for India⁴. Not all these demands made themselves felt in Madurai but some of them persistently raised their heads and gave not a little trouble to the Government.

From the time of the Non-co-operation movement of 1919-1921 to the time of the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1931, Madurai presented a scene of considerable national activity. In 1920, in spite of the higher wages offered by the management, two labour strikes broke out in the Madurai Mills, one in the men's

¹ G.O. No. 339, Public, dated 17th April 1918.

G.O. Nos. 854 and 855, Public, dated 19th September 1918.

G.O. No. 980, Public, dated 31st October 1918.

G.O. Nos. 1019 and 1020, Public, dated 7th November 1918.

G.O. No. 142, Public (Confidential), dated 28th February 1920.

G.O. No. 155, Public, dated 6th March 1920.

Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 1st January 1917; dated 1st March 1917; dated 2nd April 1917; dated 2nd November 1917; dated 10th April 1918; dated 1st May 1918.

² *Idem*, dated 1st November 1918.

³ *Idem*, dated 20th May 1921.

⁴ *Idem*, dated 19th July 1921.

⁵ *Histories of the Non-Co-operation and Khilafat Movements* by P.C. Bamford (Confidential), 1925.

section over the question of dismissal of a worker¹, and another in the women's section over the ill-treatment meted out by a maistry². Both these strikes arose spontaneously as a result of the workers asserting their supposed rights and privileges; and both had to be ended after much negotiation and persuasion. And no sooner were these strikes over than the Congress propaganda started the agitation among the Kallars against their registration under the Criminal Tribes Act. Sri George Joseph addressed mass meetings of Kallars and "The Hindu" took up the question and condemned the compulsion used by the police. The Government found it necessary to arrest about 150 Kallars who refused to present themselves for registration³. But the matter which gave most concern to the Government was the persistent Congress propaganda made in the district and the successful attempts at picketing carried on at the time of auction sales of toddy licences. Gandhiji himself visited the district in 1921⁴. In 1923 a meeting of the Tamil Nad Provincial Congress Committee was held at Madurai and the district was visited by Sri Devadas Gandhi and his party⁵. In the same year Konda Venkatappaya, the Andhra Congress leader, received an address of welcome at Madurai, while Sri George Joseph received addresses of welcome from no less than seven local bodies in the district and a considerable purse for the Tilak Swaraj Fund⁶. It became now common to make attempts to hoist national flags and to install photographs of Gandhiji on temple cars at the time of the car festivals and to organize marches of volunteers carrying national flags⁷. In 1924 Sri Shaukat Ali and his party came from Ceylon and held several Congress and Khilafat meetings⁸. The effect of all this soon came to be felt by the Government. In 1922 the political prisoners succeeded in fomenting discontent among the other prisoners in the Madurai jail, and in inducing them to go on hunger strike. The noisy demonstration inside the jail attracted a large and sympathetic crowd outside, which could be dispersed only with the aid of reserve police⁹. In 1923 much political activity was displayed on the occasion of the Tilak anniversary, and this ended with the arrest and conviction of Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu and a Muslim political leader¹⁰. In both these years intensive picketing of liquor shops and auction sales of toddy was carried on. On one occasion, renters returning from an auction sale were molested; on another, a toddy shop was burnt; and on a third, obstruction was caused and abuse employed to prevent

¹ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 19th February 1920.

² *Idem*, dated 4th May 1920; dated 17th May 1920; dated 6th January 1920.

³ *Idem*, dated 17th May 1920.

⁴ The Non-Co-operation and Khilafat Movements in the Madras Presidency (Confidential), pages 14-15.

⁵ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 1st February 1923; dated 16th May 1923.

⁶ G.O. No. 316, Public (Confidential), dated 30th April 1924.

⁷ *Idem*, page 65.

⁸ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 2nd February 1924.

⁹ *Idem*, dated 1st April 1922.

¹⁰ *Idem*, dated 16th August 1923.

people from resorting to toddy shops. On all these occasions, reserve police were called in, a number of arrests were made and several persons were convicted and sentenced, including Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu. In 1924 intensive and well-organized canvassing secured for the Congress candidates a majority in the Madurai Municipal Council. In the same year the Policemen's Union in Madurai became restive under the influence of the Congress¹. In 1925 a revision of the property tax in Madurai led to widespread protest meetings². It is by methods such as these that political consciousness was kept active among the people of the district till the starting of the famous civil disobedience movement of 1930.

The Civil Disobedience Movement, as is well-known, was forged by Gandhiji and introduced at the Lahore Session of the Congress in 1929. The resolution on this movement framed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the rising leader of India, and issued on behalf of the Congress Working Committee charged the British Government with having not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but also "ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually" and declared in emphatic terms that "India must", therefore, "sever the British connexion and attain purna swaraj or complete independence". The way to swaraj, it further declared, was not through violence but through civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes³. A manifesto like this issued to the numerous Congress organizations throughout India and a movement like this led by no less a leader than Gandhiji could not but be expected to produce widespread political agitation. A wave of nationalism, the like of which had never been witnessed before, spread over the whole of India and the Congress leaders everywhere began to organize mass meetings, salt satyagraha, no-tax campaigns, boycott of the government and the village servants, boycott of British goods, boycott of liquor shops, the seducing of troops and police from loyalty to the government and anti-government propaganda⁴. The Government for the first time realized the national significance of the movement and introduced a series of repressive laws to meet the extraordinary situation⁵.

The first mention of the Civil Disobedience Movement in Madurai was made at a meeting held in the Madurai Congress Office on 8th July 1929 when the subject for discussion was the selection of a president for the "Disobedience to Law" party. Sri V. J. Patel, an All-India leader, was then selected as the president and he visited Madurai on 7th September 1929. He received an address

¹ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 1st April 1922; dated 16th July 1923; dated 1st August 1923.

² *Idem*, dated 19th September 1924.

³ *Idem*.

⁴ *Idem*, dated 17th March 1925.

⁵ The Civil Disobedience Movement (India), 1930-1934, pages 29-30.

⁶ *Idem*, page 1.

⁷ *Idem*, pages 4-8, 15-16.

from the Madurai Municipal Council and attended a meeting of some 1,500 persons organized by the local Congress party. From that time began intensive Congress propaganda in the whole district; political meetings were held, political speeches were made and the Government found it necessary to take action against several local leaders under section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Some of the political trials created a considerable amount of demonstration. In January 1930 the Independence Day was celebrated in Madurai, Dindigul, Palni, Tirumangalam and Tiruparankundram. Political agitation now became widespread in the district with Madurai as its centre. At Tirumangalam an Independence Youth League was formed. At Dindigul much propaganda was made which called for counter-propaganda on the part of the Government. From every part of the district volunteers came forward to join the famous Salt Satyagraha march to Vedaranyam organized by no less a leader than Sri C. Rajagopalachari. In many places the police were urged to resign, patriotic songs were sung, patriotic meetings were held, collections for patriotic causes were made and all patriotic people were urged to wear Khaddar, boycott foreign goods, declare hartal on the arrests of Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, withdraw children from schools and picket liquor shops. Picketing of liquor shops, indeed, assumed serious proportions and caused great anxiety to the Government. Speeches on the subject were delivered in Madurai, Dindigul, Palni and in the Periyakulam taluk. Picketing in Madurai actually began on the 17th July, attracted a large number of people and led to the setting on fire of a toddy shop and to police firing. On the 18th July it led to the burning of the central police station and lathi charges. Picketing at Kombai, in the Periyakulam taluk, started on 25th July and continued for a week and resulted in several lathi charges. Picketing at Bodinayakanur commenced on 6th August and ended soon in serious rioting, repeated attacks on the police and police firing. Picketing at abkari sales seriously affected the rentals in the Melur taluk, at Madurai, at Dindigul and in the Periyakulam taluk. All this agitation caused many arrests and convictions and the passing of a resolution by the Madurai-Bar Council condemning the repressive policy of the Government¹.

Meanwhile by a settlement reached by Gandhiji on behalf of Congress with Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, on behalf of the Government the Congress agreed to participate in the discussion in the Round Table Conference in London and the British Government agreed to withdraw all the repressive ordinances banning the Congress bodies, etc., and to release all prisoners convicted in connexion with the movement. Gandhiji then agreed to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Civil Disobedience Movement was started again by the Congress early in January 1932 on account of the repressive ordinances passed by the Government to put down

¹ The Civil Disobedience Movement (Madras), 1930-1931. (Confidential) pages 137-140.

agitation in the North-West Frontier Province, in the United Provinces and in Bengal². And Madurai once again became one of the strongholds of the movement in spite of the fact that the Government at this time declared all the Congress organizations of the district unlawful and seized all their buildings and funds under the Unlawful Ordinance No. 4 of 1932³. On 29th May 1932 the Tamil Nad Provincial Congress Committee met secretly in a temple at Madurai⁴. Thereafter public meetings were held everywhere and arrests courted in large numbers. It was at this time that Sri A. Vaidyanatha Ayyar, one of the leaders of the Madurai Bar, became also a prominent leader of the Congress. His arrest was signalized by a public hartal. It was also at this time that some ladies of respectable families took an active part in the movement and courted imprisonment; among them may be mentioned Srimathi Sundararaman, Srimathi Subbaraman and Dr. Pichamuthu Ammal. It was again at this time that two nationalist publications, one a book entitled "Congress Pattu" or "The Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha Gitam" printed at the Raja Press, Madurai, and another a pamphlet entitled "Police Raj under Emergency Ordinance" printed at the Satyagraha Press, Madurai, were proscribed⁵. Nor is this all. It was at this time that Gandhiji twice visited Madurai and, with the aid of the seasoned leader like Sri C. Rajagopalachari, carried on effective propaganda for improving the social and economic condition of the Harijans, for securing them temple entry and for providing for them new schools, scholarships, wells, medical relief, etc. Madurai which had till then remained a stronghold of orthodoxy and had resisted all the attempts of even Non-Brahmins to share equally with Brahmmins the privileges of temple worship, showed a disposition to listen to the temple entry reform preached by Gandhiji⁶. Indeed by this time, the leaven of nationalism had spread into the whole mass of the people. But again there was a break in the agitation. The Civil Disobedience Movement was called off by Gandhiji and the Congress in April-May 1934, when the Unlawful Association Ordinances were cancelled by the Government⁷.

During all this time, from the end of the Non-Co-operation Movement to the end of the Civil Disobedience Movement, other parties in the State were not idle. The Justice Party, although it co-operated with the British in running the dyarchy, now began to

² The Civil Disobedience Movement (India), 1930-1934 (Confidential), page 16.

³ G.O. No. 51-S and 52-S, Public (Confidential), dated 15th January 1932.

G.O. No. 155, Public (Confidential), dated 27th January 1932.

G.O. No. 119-S, Public (Confidential), dated 3rd February 1932.

G.O. No. 609, Public, dated 11th June 1934.

⁴ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 4th June 1932.

⁵ G.O. No. 1255, Public (General), dated 26th September 1932.

G.O. No. 1431, Public (General), dated 8th November 1932—See pages 15-19.

⁶ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 20th January 1933; dated 4th February 1933; dated 20th February 1934; dated 5th April 1934.

Secret File No. 877, dated 1st March 1934—See Madurai Collector's reports.

⁷ G.O. No. 609, Public, dated 11th June 1934.

demand full provincial autonomy and Indianization of services. This party, under leaders like the Raja of Panagal and Sri A. P. Patro, having run the Ministry till 1926, was defeated by the Swaraj Party (the party of the Congress which believed in Council entry) in the elections held in that year. But the Swaraj Party, though it had a majority, refused to form the ministry and, as a result, an Independent Ministry under Dr. P. Subbarayan having the support of the Swaraj Party, was formed. The Justice Party tried to unseat this Ministry by a vote of no-confidence in the Legislative Council, but the motion was defeated by the Swaraj Party. And yet the Justice Party did not lose heart. It condemned the scheme of dyarchy, demanded complete provincial autonomy and allowed its individual members to enter the Congress with the object of swamping the Congress and working on the feelings of Non-Brahmins inside the Congress. As a result of this some of the prominent Justices joined the Congress. And in the 1930 elections the Congress (both the Congress Party and the Swaraj Party) having refused to stand for the elections, it easily obtained a majority and again formed a ministry, this time headed by Sri B. Muniswami Naidu. This Ministry was succeeded in 1932 by the Ministry of the Raja of Bobbili. Meanwhile, finding from the elections that the Non-Brahmins had little to fear politically from the Brahmins, it threw open its membership to the Brahmins with a view to strengthening its organization. But it was of no avail. In the 1934 elections the Justice Party was completely defeated by the Congress Party, the Congress Party having now lifted the ban on council entry and won every seat that it contested¹. The Congress, however, did not accept office and accordingly a Justice Party Ministry under the Raja of Bobbili was again formed. During these elections effective propaganda for the Congress Party was made in Madurai by Sri Bhulabhai Desai, an All-India Congress Leader², and Sri S. R. Varadarajulu Naidu, a labour leader³. It may also be mentioned here that at the Madurai Municipal Council elections held in September 1935, twenty-one out of the thirty-six seats were captured by the Congress⁴.

It was also during this period that the Self-Respect and the Communist Movements came into existence. The former which was an avowedly Non-Brahmin Movement had the backing of the Justice Party. Originally started for the purpose of abolishing caste distinctions, it gradually drifted towards Communism and began to attack religion and property⁵. The latter which received a fillip by the visit of Sri Saklatwala, a prominent Labour leader,

¹ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 16th July 1927; dated 19th July 1927; dated 4th July 1927; dated 4th October 1934.

Madras Presidency Administration Report for the years 1920 to 1934.

G.O. No. 547, Public (Confidential), dated 3rd April 1935.

² Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 18th July 1934.

³ *Idem*, dated 18th October 1934.

⁴ *Idem*, dated 18th October 1935.

⁵ *Idem*, dated 2nd June 1923; dated 20th July 1933; dated 9th October 1934; dated 19th June 1934; dated 18th July 1934.

Madras Presidency Administration Report for 1933-34, page XIII.

to Madras in 1927, gave rise to several associations of workers. It refused to have anything to do with the Congress and denounced the Congress as "the stronghold of landlordism, capitalism and private ownership". The Congress found it impossible to conciliate the Communists (or the Socialists as they called themselves) who organized a spate of strike in Madras and elsewhere¹.

In July 1934 the Communist Party and its organizations were banned by the Government of India on the ground that they constituted a danger to the public peace. What was called the Meerut Conspiracy Case revealed to them that the party aimed at nothing less than the violent overthrow of the existing order of society. Its aims were said to be the hatred of God and all forms of religion, the destruction of private property, absolute social and racial equality, promotion of class hatred, destruction of all forms of representative government, including civil liberties such as freedom of speech and trial by jury, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat by means of a world revolution. Its objects were said to be the complete independence of India by the violent overthrow of British rule, the cancellation of all debts, the establishment of a Soviet Government, the abolition of the Indian States, the confiscation without compensation of all the lands, forests and other properties of the ruling Princes, the landlords, etc. It sought to achieve these objects, it was said, by developing a general strike of workers culminating in a general political strike, by developing a peasant movement for the non-payment of rents and taxes into an All-India agrarian revolution, by organizing a nation-wide movement for complete independence by attaching to it all the workers, peasants and petty bourgeois and by spreading revolutionary propaganda in the army and the police and inciting them to revolt against British rule². In Madras, the Government declared unlawful the Young Workers League (November 1934) which had for its avowed object the overthrow of British Imperialism by mass action, and which, it was believed, was in no sense a bona fide trade union and was in touch with the Communist International³. All this created a storm of protest in the left wing press⁴. Nor was this all. The banning of the Communist Party created a great deal of uneasiness in the Self-Respect Party which had, as has been seen, imbibed some of the Communist ideas. Sri E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, the leader of this party, thought that the Government might ban his party also, but he wished the Government to know that his was a socialist party, that it worked always within the bounds of law, that violence had no place in it, that its aim was the establishment of the British system of administration and failing that alone "a Communist system of administration"⁵.

¹ Madras Presidency Administration Report for 1926-27, pages XIII-XV.

² G.O. No. 621, Public, dated 17th April 1935.

G.O. No. 2111, Public, dated 18th December 1936.

³ G.O. No. 621, Public, dated 17th April 1935, page 7.

⁴ G.O. No. 324, Public (Confidential), dated 23rd February 1935, Pages 18, 11, 60, etc.

⁵ *Idem*, dated 23rd February 1935, pages 26-27.

His party, however, was not banned. Nor were the other socialist organizations in the State banned; though some of them like the All-India Congress Socialist Organization agitated for complete independence, no-compromise with British Imperialism, socialization of important industries, the elimination of the Princes, landlords and other classes of exploiters and the redistribution of lands to the peasants¹.

Then came the Reforms Act of 1935 by which dyarchy in the provinces was abolished and the Executive was made responsible to the Legislature, except in certain matters over which the Governor exercised individual control. In Madras the Legislature consisted of a Legislative Assembly and a Legislative Council both based on a much wider franchise than before. Strenuous efforts were now made by the Congress and the Justice Parties to increase their strength to carry on an effective propaganda for the forthcoming elections. Sri S. Kumaraswami Reddiyar and Sri S. Satyamurthi visited Madurai for these purposes in 1935 and 1936, the one on behalf of the Justice Party, the other on behalf of the Congress Party². New parties also now came into existence in the States, such as the Peoples Party and the Madras Provincial Scheduled Castes Party, while the Provincial Branch of the Muslim League was revived³. In the general elections held in 1937, however, the Congress Party won a decisive victory over the other parties. The fact that the anti-Congress vote was split made little or no difference, the Congress Party secured 159 out of the 215 seats in the Legislative Assembly and 25 out of the 46 seats in the Legislative Council⁴. The Congress Party however having refused to accept office without securing assurance against the interference in the day-to-day administration by the Governor's discretionary powers under the new constitution, an Interim Ministry was formed under Sri K. V. Reddy⁵. But in the first half of July, the Congress Party being satisfied with the assurances given by the Viceroy, accepted office and formed a ministry under Sri C. Rajagopalachari⁶.

Of all the measures introduced by Sri C. Rajagopalachari's Ministry none came in for so much opposition from his political opponents as the introduction of Hindustani (Hindi) compulsorily in certain schools as an experiment. The opposition to this measure came mostly from the Self-Respect Party led by Sri E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, but it was backed alike by the Justice Party, the Muslim League, and the Scheduled Castes Federation⁷. Meetings were held in Madras, in Madurai and in

¹ G.O. No. 324, Public (Confidential), dated 23rd February 1935, page 101.

² Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 5th September 1935; dated 18th June 1936.

³ Madras Presidency Administration Report for 1935-36, pages VIII-IX.

⁴ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 4th March 1937.

⁵ G.O. No. 835, Public, dated 16th May 1938.

⁶ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 5th May 1937; dated 23rd July 1937.

⁷ *Idem*, dated 10th June 1938; dated 24th June 1938; dated 9th August 1938; dated 29th August 1938.

other Tamil districts at which speeches were made attacking the Brahmins and alleging that the introduction of Hindi was an attempt to impose Aryan influence on Dravidian culture in order to perpetuate Brahmin domination¹. Picketing by successive batches of volunteers of the Self-Respect Party was conducted before the Premier's residence and before certain schools. More than a thousand arrests were made in the city and most of the picketers were convicted. Sri E. V. Ramaswami Naicker himself was arrested, convicted and sentenced to one year's imprisonment². But still the agitation went on; it ended only when the Congress Ministry laid down office in 1939 and the succeeding government abolished the teaching of Hindi and released all anti-Hindi prisoners³.

Notwithstanding all this political opposition, the Congress Party won popular support and became stronger and stronger, while the other parties became weaker and weaker, except perhaps the Communist Party on whose strength, there is no definite information. The Justice Party now found a new leader in Sri E. V. Ramaswami Naicker and in December 1938 elected him as its President, although he was then in Jail⁴.

But it was not so much the open agitation of the Self-Respect Party or the Justice Party as the underground agitation of the Communist Party which was rapidly becoming powerful that caused much concern to the Congress Government. It was at this period that many of the Communists under the guise of Socialists formed unions "embracing all branches of industry and husbandry" and began to foment labour troubles⁵. Between 1937 and 1939, a series of strikes, some sponsored by rightist labour leaders like Sri S. R. Varadarajulu Naidu, but others stirred up by Leftist Socialist leaders began to be witnessed in Madurai. The Madurai Mills of Messrs. Harvey & Co., the Madurai Handloom Weavers' Association, Messrs. Spencer & Company's Cigar Factory at Dindigul, the Mahalakshmi Mills, Madurai—all these became scenes of serious strikes. Some of these strikes involved picketing and violence and called for police interference, while others demanded the appointment of courts of arbitration. Rival trade unions came to be formed by the Leftists and the Rightists and the quarrel between the two often contributed to inflame the workers, harass the mill-owners and embarrass the authorities⁶. The net result was

¹ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 6th July 1938; dated 20th July 1938.

² He was, however, released after six months on medical grounds.

³ See the Fortnightly Reports from 20th July 1938 to 16th March 1940.

⁴ Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 4th January 1939.

⁵ G.O. No. 835, Public, dated 16th May 1938—See the Report of the Inspector-General of Police.

⁶ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 5th October 1937; dated 8th October 1937; dated 6th December 1937; dated 21st December 1937; dated 21st April 1937; dated 16th March 1939; dated 4th March 1939.

⁷ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 20th September 1937; dated 10th November 1937; dated 21st December 1937; dated 20th January 1938; dated 4th February 1938; dated 5th March 1938; dated 23rd May 1938; dated 10th August 1938; dated 5th September 1938; dated 3rd November 1938; dated 21st November 1938; dated 2nd December 1938; dated 31st February 1939; dated 18th March 1939; dated 4th April 1939; dated 19th May 1939; dated 3rd June 1939.

that labour became exceedingly vocal, jealous of its rights and privileges, and capable of giving trouble at the lightest provocation.

The Second World War now broke out and commenced a new chapter in the history of independence. The Congress having decided not to participate in the war, Sri Rajagopalachari's Ministry resigned in October 1939, and the Government was carried on by the Governor with the aid of Civilian Advisers¹. The moment this took place and individual satyagraha was permitted by the Congress, Madurai once more became Congress-minded. Congress leaders from Madras including Sri Rajagopalachari came on a tour to Madurai for making Congress propaganda². Satyagraha Committees were formed everywhere in the district; Satyagraha pledges were taken, anti-war speeches were made, anti-war slogans were shouted; anti-war posters were displayed in prominent places; and all this anti-war propaganda led to a large number of arrests and convictions³.

Events soon moved towards a crisis. The interminable waiting for the fulfilment of the pledges by the British, the failure of the Cripps' Mission, the danger of the conversion of India into a theatre of war by Britain and her Allies, all these induced Gandhiji and the Congress to make an all-out effort to get rid of British rule. The nation having waited long enough could not now wait any longer for independence. The Civil Disobedience Movement, or the Quit-India Movement, as it was called, was fashioned by Gandhiji in May-June 1942, was put into shape by the Working Committee by the Wardha Resolution in July and was launched by the All-India Congress Committee by its Bombay Resolution on 8th August. This resolution which was a long one demanded, in short, the immediate withdrawal of Britain from India, the setting up of a Provisional Government representing all the parties, the pooling of all resources for fighting the struggle for freedom against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism and thereby strengthening the cause of the United Nations and, after the war was over, the establishment of a World Federation of Free Nations. And, in order to secure the preliminary step, the immediate withdrawal of Britain, it sanctioned a nation-wide non-violent mass movement under the leadership of Gandhiji⁴.

This clarion call was no sooner made than Gandhiji and a large number of prominent Congress leaders were arrested and imprisoned

¹ Madras Presidency Administration Report for 1939-40, page 1.
² Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 19th October 1939; dated 17th February 1940.

³ *Idem*, dated 3rd May 1940; dated 18th July 1940—See Appendix II; dated 8th August 1940—See Appendix II; dated 19th August 1940—See Appendix II; dated 4th September 1940—See Appendix II, dated 19th September 1940—See Appendix II; dated 4th October 1940—See also the Statement; dated 14th November 1940—See Statement; dated 19th November 1940—See statement; dated 2nd December 1940; dated 20th December 1940; dated 21st January 1941—See Statement; dated 2nd February 1941—See Statement; dated 25th February 1941—See Statement; dated 4th January 1941—See Statement; dated 18th March 1941—See Statement; dated 3rd April 1941—See Statement; dated 3rd May 1941—See Statement; dated 23rd January 1942.

⁴ History of the Indian National Congress by Sri Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Volume II, 1947, pages 343-346.

and all the Congress Organizations throughout India were banned¹. This was a signal for the outbreak of a national uprising throughout India in which violence was freely used side by side with non-violence to paralyse the activities of the Government. The British Government held the Congress responsible for the violent outbreaks stating that the Congress must have known that the incitement to mass action on such a wide scale was bound to lead to violence, but the Congress held the Government responsible stating that it was the arrest of the leaders and the repressive policy of the Government that were responsible for violence². So far as Madras was concerned, Sri Rajagopalachari having by this time resigned from the Congress on the issue of Pakistan before the passing of the Bombay Resolution and the other leaders having been imprisoned, the people were more or less left to themselves and they in many places resorted to violence.

In Madurai the national uprising was mostly marked by violence. The Madurai town became "the storm centre of the movement" and called for the frequent interference of the military and the reserve police. Two public meetings were held on the evening of 9th August and on the 10th, hartal was observed, public servants were assaulted, roads were barricaded, telegraph wires were cut, and a mass meeting was held in defiance of an order under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The police tried to disperse three large hostile crowds gathered at the meeting, but were stoned with brickbats and were compelled to resort to firing. Thirty rounds were fired, killing five and injuring seventeen persons. A police inspector and a number of constables received injuries. On the 13th, Sri A. Vaidyanatha Ayyar, now chairman of the Town Congress Committee, tried to hold a meeting in defiance of the order prohibiting meetings and courted arrest. As he was getting into the police van, some of the crowd threw acid at the police. It fell on a constable, on one of the members of the crowd itself, and on Sri Vaidyanatha Ayyar's dhoti and set it on fire. On the 14th and 15th bands of youths went about putting out lights, cutting telegraph and telephone wires and stringing them across roads to form obstacles to the police patrols. They also barricaded the streets by bandy wheels, dust bins, boulders, etc., set fire to and damaged the A.R.P. equipment, attacked a municipal fire engine, burnt down a police bus, two post offices and a sanitary inspector's office. The police opened fire, in all 30 rounds, killing six and injuring eleven persons. Similar violent activities, but on a smaller scale, were kept up between 16th August and 22nd October in Madurai town and other places and on 23rd October, nitric acid in an electric bulb was thrown in Madurai at an Inspector of Police, his friend and a police constable as they were all leaving the Meenakshi temple at

¹ G.O. No. 2541, Public, dated 9th August 1942.

G.O. No. 2543, Public, dated 9th August 1942.

² Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-1943. Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi, August 1942-April 1944.

about 8-30 p.m. All the three were badly burnt in the face and neck. Thereafter the movement calmed down till it ended in December¹.

The total number of persons detained up to 31st December 1942 in connexion with the movement was 42 and the total number convicted up to the same date was 53. But it is not so much the number arrested and convicted as the rigour with which the aspirations underlying the movement were sought to be suppressed that evoked public sympathy. The Madurai Municipal Council passed a resolution on 19th August strongly condemning the action taken by the authorities for putting down the movement and courted supersession for a period of six months. The Dindigul Municipal Council condemned the "repressive policy" of the Government in its resolution passed on 18th August and suffered supersession for the same period. The Palni Municipal Council also suffered supersession for a similar period by passing a resolution on 4th September condemning the repressive policy of the Government and accusing them of lack of foresight and breadth of vision in denying independence to the country. And similarly the Madurai District Board welcomed supersession for six months by passing a resolution on 8th August strongly condemning the repressive policy of the Government, authorizing its president to utilize the facilities provided by the board for establishing a Democratic Government and ordering the closure of district board schools and other institutions².

From this time onwards there was no Congress agitation on any extensive scale in the district or in the State or in India. The political atmosphere in India, however, continued for a time to remain dark and sullen, what with the detention of the Congress leaders in jail and the unhelpful attitude shown by the Viceroys, Lord Linlithgow and Lord Wavell, and M. A. Jinnah, the implacable leader of the Muslim League. The Viceroys insisted on the solution of the communal and minority problems as a preliminary to the consideration of the grant of any reforms, while Mr. Jinnah insisted on Pakistan. Gandhiji having been released in May 1944 tried his best to solve the tangle but in vain. From 1945, however, the sky began to clear. The formation of the Labour Government in Britain, the end of the Japanese war, Lord Wavell's visit to England for consultation with the Labour Government, the arrival first of the Parliamentary Delegation and then of the Cabinet Mission to hammer out a constitution for India, all these led to a succession of rapid political changes. Then it was that the ban on the Congress was lifted, that the Congress leaders were released and that they resolved to accept the reforms offered in good faith by the British. This speedily led to the holding of

¹ District Calendar of Events of the Civil Disobedience Movement (Secret)—August–December 1942–1943, pages 73–81.

² District Calendar of Events of the Civil Disobedience Movement (Secret)—August–December 1942, pages 81–82.

the general elections, the formation of the Interim Government at the Centre consisting of Indian leaders drawn from the major political parties (1946), the convening of the Constituent Assembly, the decision of the British to withdraw from India by June 1948, the arrival of the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten (March 1947), the partition of India into India and Pakistan, the declaration of independence (July 1947) with effect from 15th August 1947 and finally, the making of the constitution and the inauguration of the Indian Republic (January 1950).

In Madras, the Governor's rule which, as has been seen, was established in October 1939, continued till the end of March 1946 when the Congress having contested and won the general elections accepted office again. During this period when the Congress Party was fighting for freedom, the Justice Party and the Communist Party pursued their own programmes. Sri E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, now the recognized leader of the Justice Party, offered support to the Adviser Government in the prosecution of the war¹ and carried on anti-Brahmin and pro-Dravidanad propaganda. He threatened to start another agitation like the anti-Hindi agitation for the removal of caste and social disabilities in temples, restaurants, railway refreshment rooms, etc.² He convened a Justice Party conference at Kancheepuram for urging the establishment of Dravidanad and at this conference, it is said, he unveiled a map of Dravidanad "comprising the areas where Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam are spoken".³ He courted the Muslim League, supported the scheme for Pakistan, inveighed against the Congress and continued to stir up anti-Brahmin feelings in Madurai and other Tamil districts⁴.

The Communist Party, on the other hand, under leaders like Sri Mohan Kumaramangalam, Sri P. Ramamoorthy, Sri M. R. Venkataraman and Sri Anandan Nambiar cast its net wider and endeavoured to secure a more permanent hold over the workers and the rising generation. It found the time and circumstances eminently propitious for its propaganda. In July 1942 the ban on the Communists was removed⁵, and in August 1942, as has been seen, the ban on the Congress was imposed. This gave the Communists a free hand and a free field to carry on their activities and their activities bore abundant fruit amidst the economic distress caused by the war, amidst the rise in prices and the scarcity of foodstuffs. The ban on the Communists was removed by the British Government, hoping that they would fully co-operate with the war effort since Russia had by then become a firm ally of

¹ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 19th October 1939; dated 18th December 1939; dated 5th January 1940; dated 17th February 1940.

² *Idem*, dated 18th March 1940; dated 4th January 1941.

³ *Idem*, dated 19th June 1940.

⁴ *Idem*, dated 18th June 1941; dated 4th May 1941; dated 18th June 1942; dated 9th September 1944.

⁵ G.O. No. 2152, Public, dated 23rd July 1942.

Britain. And indeed the Communists gave whole-hearted co-operation to the Government in all war efforts.¹ They undermined the Congress by carrying on extensive underground propaganda in all districts and seducing the workers as well as the students from the Congress, into the Communist fold.² So far as Madurai was concerned, Sri Mohan Kumaramangalam made a propaganda tour of the district in 1942, as a result of which subscriptions were collected, Communist festivals were celebrated, Communist students' cells were started, and "matha" sangams were formed for spreading Communism among women. Several strikes now broke out in the Madurai Mills and the tobacco factories at Dindigul between 1943 and 1946. The Communists also formed a trade union called the Madurai Textile Workers' Union as a rival to the Madurai Labour Union which was under the rightist labour leader Sri S. R. Varadarajulu Naidu and frequently harassed the mill authorities as well as the workers and even used violence to gain their ends. In their struggle for getting control over the workers and the students they often came into clash with the Congressmen³ until at last in 1945 they were discredited and expelled from the Congress. The Congress Party in Madurai tried its best to consolidate its position against the Communists. Congress sub-committees were formed in the district for dealing with students, kisans, food problems and industrial labour and Congress camps for training workers from all over the State were formed at Kallupatti in May 1945⁴.

Then came the general elections and Sri C. Rajagopalachari having by this time left the Congress on account of his differences with the Congressmen over the Pakistan issue, the leadership in Tamil Nad passed into the hands of Sri K. Kamaraj Nadar, the President of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee. And as soon as the Congress High Command decided to contest the elections, Sri K. Kamaraj Nadar and his followers conducted strenuous tours in all the Tamil districts, including Madurai, creating enthusiasm everywhere for the Congress. Gandhiji also about this time visited the district with Sri C. Rajagopalachari. The opposition

¹ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 21st July 1942; dated 7th August 1942; dated 26th September 1942; dated 23rd October 1942; dated 7th November 1942; dated 5th April 1943; dated 7th May 1943; dated 25th May 1943; dated 14th June 1943; dated 8th June 1945; dated 10th May 1946.

² *Idem*, dated 5th October 1942; dated 5th December 1942; dated 21st December 1942; dated 25th January 1943; dated 6th February 1943; dated 22nd February 1943; dated 24th July 1943; dated 21st December 1943; dated 6th March 1944; dated 9th October 1944; dated 6th November 1944; dated 25th January 1945; dated 9th April 1945; dated 22nd May 1945; dated 7th September 1945; dated 26th January 1946.

³ *Idem*, dated 5th February 1942; dated 21st December 1942; dated 22nd February 1943; dated 8th March 1943; dated 5th April 1943; dated 26th April 1943; dated 25th May 1943; dated 20th September 1943; dated 23rd October 1943; dated 9th December 1943; dated 21st February 1943; dated 16th August 1944; dated 20th September 1944; dated 23rd April 1945; dated 25th June 1945; dated 19th July 1945; dated 4th August 1945; dated 8th July 1946.

⁴ *Idem*, dated 8th November 1943; dated 22nd February 1946, dated 22nd May 1945.

parties now more or less disappeared from the field, save the Communist Party¹. The Congress, however, having secured an overwhelming majority in the Legislative Assembly in the elections held in March 1946, Sri T. Prakasam who was chosen as the leader of the Parliamentary Party formed a Ministry in April 1946.² His ministry was in March 1947 succeeded by the ministry of Sri O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar³ and this ministry was, in turn, succeeded in April 1949 by the ministry of Sri P. S. Kumaraswami Raja. As for the Governor, Sir Archibald Nye who had become the Governor in May 1946 continued to hold the office even after the declaration of independence till September 1948 when he was succeeded by the Maharaja of Bhavanagar. As we propose to close with the year 1950 we have to cover only a portion of the rule of the Ministry of Sri Kumaraswami Raja and the Governorship of the Maharaja of Bhavanagar.

The whole period from the acceptance of office by the Congress in 1946 down to 1950 was marked by a series of political disturbances. Freedom was born in travail and had to be protected against all sorts of exceptional dangers. The war left a legacy of high prices, hoarding and blackmarketing and unusually hard times for the poor. Pakistan left a legacy of communal hatred and bitterness among the Muslims and the Hindus. The communal hatred was not a little accentuated by the All-India Movements like the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh (the R.S.S.) directed against the Muslims and the provincial movements like the Razakars in Hyderabad directed against the Hindus and the Dravida Kazhagam or Black Shirts in Madras directed against the Brahmans. These movements were promptly put down or kept within bounds by the National Government. But not so was the Communist Movement, the activities of which in Madras during the war period we have already noticed. The expulsion of the Communists from the Congress in 1945 made no difference in their activities. On the other hand it strengthened the left wing of the Communist Party which from that time became all powerful. Shortly afterwards the death of Gandhiji at the hands of a fanatic, who claimed himself as a Rashtriya Sevak Sangh worker, removed the only man who might have opposed Communism with vigour. As soon as the Congress accepted office, therefore, the Communists all over India organized industrial and agrarian strikes, held demonstrations, made anti-government speeches, disseminated inflammatory literature, terrorized their opponents and incited the people to all sorts of violent acts against the State, against the mill and factory owners, against the zamindars, against the landlords, etc.

In Madras, too, they did this both in the city and in the districts. They opened a parliamentary office in the city to collect statistics about the grievances of the workers. They endeavoured

¹ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 8th October 1945; dated 8th November 1945; dated 20th February 1946, dated 21st March 1946.

² *Idem*, dated 5th April 1946; dated 20th April 1946; dated 10th May 1946.

³ *Idem*, dated 24th March 1947.

to organize a united front of all parties opposed to the Congress Ministry. They attacked and vilified the Government on every occasion. They tried to capture all the labour unions in the city, formed village food committees, fomented strikes in mills, factories, dockyards, and essential services, and, what is more, incited agricultural labourers to rise against the landholders making it difficult for the authorities to maintain law and order over large and dispersed areas. And whenever they were arrested and convicted they characterized the Government as reactionary and capitalistic¹. The anarchy let loose by the Communists compelled the Government to take stringent measures to preserve public peace and safeguard public interests. Early in 1947 they issued the Madras Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance (Ordinance I of 1947)² and followed it up by the Madras Maintenance of Public Order Act (Act I of 1947)³. In this Act, in order to deal with subversive activities, they provided for preventive detention, imposition of collective fines and censorship, control of meetings, processions, camps, drills and parades, requisitioning of property and control of essential services. This Act they amplified and amended in 1948⁴ and re-enacted in 1949 (Act XXIII of 1949).⁵

All this time in Madurai, the Communists went on with their activities unheeded. They started kisan agitation at Uttama-palayam⁶, at Podumbur⁷ and at Sholavandan⁸; they organized the Madurai municipal scavengers' strike⁹ and the hotel workers' strike¹⁰; and above all, they instigated strikes in several mills, and did all that they could to gain control over labour. The Textile Workers' Union, an avowedly Communist body, attacked the Madurai Mills Union, indulged in arson, looting and murder and disclosed the existence of a widespread Communist conspiracy in which prominent Communist leaders like Sri M. R. Venkatraman, Sri P. Ramamoorthy and Sri P. Balachandra Menon were involved. This led to many arrests, but still the Communists agitated with great effect in the mills, fomenting strikes and compelling the management to close down the mills¹¹. They even went to the

¹ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 20th April 1946; dated 10th May 1946; dated 1st June 1946; dated 8th July 1946; dated 24th July 1946; dated 9th August 1946; dated 30th August 1946; dated 31st August 1946; dated 27th August 1946; dated 30th October 1946; dated 19th November 1946; dated 23rd November 1946; dated 11th December 1946; dated 28th January 1947; dated 12th February 1947.

² G.O. No. 13, Legal, dated 22nd January 1947.

³ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 12th February 1947; dated 25th February 1947.

⁴ G.O. No. 26, Legal, dated 12th March 1947.

⁵ G.O. No. 199, Legal, dated 29th December 1948.

⁶ G.O. No. 173, Legal, dated 13th October 1949.

⁷ G.O. No. 183, Legal, dated 29th October 1949.

⁸ Report on the Administration of the Police in the Madras Presidency for 1947.

⁹ Idem for 1949.

¹⁰ Fortnightly Reports (Confidential), dated 12th September 1947; dated 26th September 1947.

¹¹ Idem, dated 26th September 1947.

¹² Idem, dated 22nd December 1947.

¹³ Idem, dated 25th January 1947; dated 12th February 1947; dated 24th March 1947; dated 23rd November 1947; dated 22nd December 1947.

extent of attacking public meetings convened by the Congress Committees. In 1949, for instance, they attacked such a meeting at the Manalmedu Maidan, smashing the lights, throwing stones and assaulting the speakers with aruvals (knives) and causing grievous injuries¹. Without the special laws passed against them it was quite evident that their activities would have assumed very serious proportions and led to utter chaos in the fields of Kisan and industrial labour. But it is worth remarking that the Government, though they took stringent measures to put down Communist activities, did not show any undue harshness towards the Communists. Their action in most cases of detention under the Acts mentioned above was upheld by the Advisory Boards set up to review such cases. And yet, they released all such detenus as gave an undertaking not to take part in subversive activities.² They granted allowances to the families of many of the detenus and they also released on parole a good number of detenus to attend on their sick relations, to perform obligatory ceremonies, etc.³.

While the Communists gave infinite trouble to the Government, the Black Shirts were not idle in Madurai. In 1916 they entered the Meenakshi temple, insulted the worshippers and abused the idols; they also desecrated the Vinayakar and Mariamman temples and held a Dravida Kazhagam conference under the presidency of Sri E. V. Ramaswami Naicker on the Vagai river bed in Madurai in the teeth of opposition of large crowds of people, until they were assailed by the hostile crowds and rescued by the police. All this caused communal bitterness and religious rancour and a public enquiry which did little credit to the movement.⁴ But still the movement tried to make headway. In 1919 the left wing of the Dravida Kazhagam, called the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, established a large number of units in Periyakulam taluk and this demanded constant police vigilance⁵.

¹ Report on the Administration of the Police in the Madras Presidency for 1949.

² G.O. No. 2339, Public, dated 19th July 1949.

³ See for instance—G.O. No. 1406, Public (General), dated 8th June 1948.

G.O. No. 1529, Public (General), dated 25th June 1948.

G.O. No. 2043, Public (General), dated 25th August 1948.

G.O. No. 2125, Public (General), dated 31st August 1948.

G.O. No. 2748, Public (General), dated 8th November 1948.

G.O. No. 2791, Public (General), dated 11th November 1948.

G.O. No. 3024, Public (General), dated 4th December 1948.

G.O. No. 2136, Public (General), dated 6th July 1949.

G.O. No. 123, Public (General), dated 9th January 1950.

G.O. No. 120, Public (General), dated 9th January 1950.

G.O. No. 2900, Public (General), dated 29th June 1950.

⁴ G.O. No. 1201, Public (General) (Confidential), dated 24th May 1946.

⁵ Report on the Administration of the Police in the Madras Presidency for 1949—See the Madurai District Magistrate's report.

CHAPTER V.

THE PEOPLE.

The population of the Madurai district is 2,891,817. It is distributed in the eight taluks of the district as follows: Periyakulam, Madurai and Dindigul have over five hundred and fifty thousand people; Tirumangalam has over three hundred and fifty thousand; Nilakkottai and Palni have over two hundred and fifty thousand; Melur has over two hundred thousand; and Kodaikanal has just over forty thousand. The density of population in the district is on an average 589 per square mile. During the decade 1941-1951 the population has shown an increase of 16.9 per cent as against 13.2 per cent in the previous decade. This is because the Periyar delta in the Melur taluk, the plantain cultivation in the Kodaikanal taluk, and the facilities for employment in Madurai which, next to Madras, is the largest city in the State, have attracted a large number of immigrants; nearly one hundred and sixty-one thousand, from the Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli districts.¹

In regard to the distribution of population on the linguistic basis, of the total population of 2,891,817, not less than 2,216,038 speak Tamil. Telugu is spoken by 417,447, Kannada by 150,706, Sourashtra by 64,121, Hindustani by 20,425 and Malayalam by 14,890 persons. The remaining persons speak Hindi, Marathi, English, Gujarati, Tulu, etc.² As to the distribution of population on the basis of religion, the Hindus constitute the bulk of the population, numbering as they do 2,670,241. The Muslims come next with 119,543 persons; the Christians number 101,855, while the rest consist of a few Sikhs, Jains, Zoroastrians, etc.³

In a book like this it is not possible to describe the philosophical tenets of the various religions. All that can be done is to give a general account of the people who profess these religions and a particular account of their castes, where such castes exist, and their customs. It may however be stated here that we have no up-to-date statistics showing the number of persons belonging to the different castes of Hindus, inasmuch as such information was not collected during the last two censuses.

The social and religious customs of the people have remained the same through centuries in this as in the other districts, though latterly they have been undergoing some important changes in matters like untouchability, temple-entry, etc. Several of those

who live in towns have caught a veneer of European manners and customs in dress and behaviour; and some of those who live in villages too have, to some extent, become affected by it. But the great mass of the people whether living in towns or in villages still continue to follow the ancient customs and usages in matters like dress and behaviour. And all people, whether townsmen or villagers, still continue to adhere to their ancient religious customs and practices, in matters like marriages, funerals, festivals, etc. Modern amenities, however, such as the motor cars, buses, cinemas, radio and newspapers, are enjoyed by all who can afford them and the towns have naturally become the centres of these amenities. In the towns, people do not always follow their caste or hereditary occupations, but take to all sorts of avocations. Here are to be found lawyers, doctors, officials, merchants, artisans and so on. Here again people wear all kinds of dresses, European as well as Indian; the hat, the coat, the trousers and the shoes are as commonly seen as the turban or the cap, the dhoti and the chappals. This is however not so in the villages. There, the caste avocations are more rigidly followed, and the people wear mostly the traditional South Indian dress.

In conformity with this traditional dress, the men everywhere wear white dhotis; the more respectable among them, the long dhotis in the form of panchakacham or mulakacham, while the others, the short dhotis. The former put on also shorter cloths or towels over their shoulders or wear shirts. The boys wear the small under-cloth (komanam) and a waist cloth or put on shirts and shorts. The girls wear the pavadai. The women usually wear handloom sarees or silk sarees of various colours and patterns, six to nine yards in length. There are several ways of wearing the saree and each of these has a beauty of its own. Among the Non-Brahmin castes the saree is passed round the waist and a knot is tied to keep it in place and then a fold (kusavam) is made for ornament's sake over one of the hips or in front. The saree is then passed tightly round the waist and the end of it is brought up in front of the breast, thrown over the left shoulder and tucked into the waist behind. The higher caste women show only a little of the ornamental fold, the rest being concealed beneath the saree, while the lower caste women let it drop round the hip to the length of about a foot. All the Brahmin women pass the saree between their legs, but some of them, like the Kannada Brahmin women do this by passing one corner of the ornamental fold above the lower part of the saree, pulling this up to show a part of their legs and leaving the portion of the saree passing between the legs visible; all others conceal this portion by bringing the saree again round the waist. The Smartha Tamil women make the ornamental fold on the left side, the Vaishnava Tamil women do not wear it at all, and others put it in front. The Pallar and Paraiyar women wear the saree rather above the knee; the Kallar and the Valaiyar women avoid

¹ 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai district, 1953, pages 5-6.

² Census of India (Madras and Coorg) Part I, page 25.

³ 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai district, 1953, pages 292-93.

⁴ *Idem*, page 210.

wearing dark blue sarree for fear of offending Karuppan to whom that colour is said to be sacred. The Brahmin widows who shave their heads wear white sarrees and always bring the end of the sarree over their heads. Most of the younger women nowadays wear choli, bodice and petticoats. Tattooing was formerly common among some castes, but now it is fast disappearing. All Hindu women of whatever caste or sect, except widows, wear a tilakam or kumkum while the girls prefer tilakams of "chandu". They are also fond of jewellery. The higher castes go in for a variety of ornaments like neck chains, pendants, girdles, bangles, ear-rings, nose-screws, etc., made of gold and often studded with diamonds, rubies or other precious stones. The lower classes go in for similar cheaper jewellery of silver or gilded silver and artificial stones. It was formerly the practice among the Non-Brahmin women to stretch their ear-lobes, by hanging leaden rings from the ear-holes¹, but this practice is not now much in vogue. All women love flowers and all of them, except widows, adorn their hair with them on almost all occasions. The Christian and the Muslim women do not put on the tilakam.

The food of the mass of the people consisted formerly of cholam, ragi and cumbu²; but nowadays rice has become the staple food except in villages where paddy is not grown and where the staple food continues to be cholam, ragi and cumbu. All Brahmins and some of the higher caste Non-Brahmins such as Vaisyas and Saiva Vellalars abstain from meat. Some castes, as will be shown below while dealing with the various castes, eat beef and pork. The other Non-Brahmins, the Christians and the Muslims generally eat mutton, fish and the ordinary edible birds, and the Muslims eat beef in addition. The grown-ups among the Brahmins and other higher castes generally take two meals a day, one at mid-day and the other at night, but they supplement these meals by tiffin and coffee or tea in the morning and in the afternoon. The meals among the well-to-do classes commonly consist of rice, ghee, dhal, rasam, sambhar made of vegetables, appalams, pickles, curds or buttermilk. On festive occasions these are supplemented by sweet and special savoury dishes and fruits. Orthodox Brahmin widows do not take meals at night, but take only light food like cakes of rice and blackgram. The lower classes take usually three meals, breakfast in the morning of cold rice, a lunch at mid-day of hot or cold rice and a dinner at night of hot rice, meat, soup or curry. Cold rice at breakfast is nowadays widely replaced by coffee.

A variety of indigenous games are played by the young and old of all castes and communities. The children play with dolls of different kinds and at odd and even. The boys and girls play the blind-man's-buff, the otti (tossing up and catching tamarind seeds), the kattam (a game played with pieces on a board), the

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, 1906, page 82.
² *Idem*, page 23.

pachaikudirai (a kind of leap frog), and the balchitangaadu (catching while holding breath). Marbles, kite-flying and kittipul are peculiar to boys, wane komattam and dancing are peculiar to girls. The women play various games with cowries on a board and the men play chess and cards, and sometimes take part in cock-fighting. But a game which is peculiar to the district and which was formerly played more often than today, is the jallikat or jellicut. The word literally means "tying of ornaments". On a day fixed and advertised by beat of drum, a number of cattle, to the horns of which cloths and handkerchiefs have been tied, are loosened one after the other, in quick succession, from a large enclosure amidst the furious din of drums and loud shouts from the crowd of spectators. The animals run the gauntlet down a lane formed of country carts and then gallop off widely in every direction. The game consists in capturing the cloths tied to their horns. This naturally demands fleetness of foot and considerable pluck; and those who are successful are declared the heroes of the hour. Many, as may be expected, receive cuts and bruises. The sport is peculiar among the Kallars³.

The Hindus observe a variety of festivals. The most important of these common to almost all castes and sects are the New Year's Day, the Vinayaka Chathurthi, the Saraswathi or Ayudha Puja, the Deepavali and the Sankaranti or Pongal. The New Year's Day for Tamilians falls generally in the middle of April and for the Kannadigas and Telugus in the latter part of March. Vinayaka Chathurthi falls in September and on that day all Hindus worship God Vinayaka or Ganesa by installing his image in clay in their houses. The Saraswathi Puja falls in October and is dedicated to Saraswathi, the goddess of learning. On this day the Brahmins offer worship to the books and the other castes to their tools and instruments. The Deepavali which commemorates the destruction of the demon Narakasura by Sri Krishna falls in October or November. It is observed by having an oil bath in the early morning, by putting on new clothes and by firing crackers and other fireworks. The Sankaranti or Pongal is the day on which the sun passes from Dakshinayana to Uttarayana, i.e., from Sagittarius to Capricorn. It comes in the middle of January. On this day pongal or sweetened rice is offered to the Sun and other gods. The day following this festival is called the Mattu Pongal, or the festival of the cows and oxen. On this day the animals are well washed and decked with flower garlands and their horns are painted. Of the other festivals which are observed by many may be mentioned the following: Sri Rama Navami, the birth day of Sri Rama which falls in the end of March, is usually celebrated by all Vaishnavites. Upakarmam or Avaniavittam which comes in

³ Gazetteer of the Madurai district by W. Francis Vol. I, 1906, page 82; See also Gazetteer of the Tanjore District, Volume I, 1915, pages 64-65.
⁴ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol I, 1906, pages 83-84.

August or September is observed by all Brahmins; on this day they have to put on a new sacred thread. Sri Jayanti, the birth day of Sri Krishna which comes in the latter half of August, is observed by all Vaishnavites. Navarathri and Vijaya Dasami which come in October and last for ten days and which commemorate the victory of the goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasura are observed mostly by the Brahmins. It is celebrated by the display of dolls and by the puja to Durga. The first or third Saturday of the Tamil month of Purattasi (September-October) is sacred to all Vaishnavites. Lord Venkateswara is worshipped on this day. Karthikai which occurs in the month of Karthikai (November-December) and which is sacred to Siva is celebrated by many Tamilians by decorating the front of the houses by numerous tiny oil lamps. Vaikunta Ekadasi which falls in December and which is sacred to all Vaishnavites, is observed by most classes of the people also by fasting and prayer. Maha Sivarathri which falls in the beginning of March and which is sacred to all Saivites is likewise observed by other classes as well by fasting and prayer¹. Besides these festivals there are also several other temple festivals observed by the people, and these will be described in the chapter on the Gazetteer.

(The orthodox gods of the Hindus as is well-known are Siva, Vishnu and a whole hierarchy of lesser gods who form the Hindu pantheon.) These gods, as is equally well-known, are worshipped in the shape of images as the visible symbols of an invisible Supreme. An account of such of them as are usually worshipped in the bigger temples is given in the chapter on the Gazetteer. But here we may say something about the unorthodox gods, the minor deities or the evil spirits which are commonly worshipped by the people. Among these unorthodox gods Karuppan, Aiyamar, Munian, Madurai Viran, and Mariamman occupy prominent places. Karuppan is essentially the god of the Kallars, especially the Kallars of the Melur side. In those parts his shrine is usually the Kallar's chavadi. He is said to have been "brought from the north" and is worshipped with the face turned in that direction. He was formerly offered animal sacrifices but these are nowadays forbidden. His priests are usually Kallars or Kusavars. He has many names; if his image is large, he is called Peria (big) Karuppan; if small, Chinna Karuppan; if his dwelling is in the open ground belonging to the village, he is known as Mandai Karuppan. In the Melur taluk his shrines may be made out by the hundreds of iron chains hung outside it which have been presented to him in performance of vows. He is said to be fond of bedecking himself with chains and these are usually suspended from a kind of horizontal bar made of two stone uprights supporting a slab of stone placed horizontally on the top of them. He is also said to be fond of clubs and swords and a curious collection of these is found at his shrine at the main door of Alagarkovil.

¹ Tanjore District Manual, pages 220-225.

Bells too are welcome to him and in the Tirumangalam taluk these are often hung to the trees round his abode. On the Palm side his shrine is often furnished with swings for his delectation and with terracotta elephants, horses and other animals for his nightly peregrinations round the villages. Elsewhere these clay images are a sign of a temple to Aiyamar. Aiyamar's temple is either a rude shrine or a spot marked by a trident or an image. It is heinous to remove even a twig of these groves. Besides him are usually images of his two wives, Paralai and Pudkai, and outside his shrine stand a number of huge figures of Virans and demons and terracotta animals. He is, like Karuppan, supposed to keep watch over the villages by riding on these animals at night. His shrine at Madakkulam near Madurai has the biggest size images of these animals. Munian is also called Muniandy, Pandi Muni, Jatamuni, etc., and he is said to possess young girls and married women. He is worshipped during ear-boring and hair-cutting ceremonies. Madurai Viran, the next god, is the deification of a historical person. It is said that he was the servant of one of the palayakars of Madurai, that he ran away with his master's daughter, married her and performed several daring deeds near Madurai. His image is always accompanied by that of his wife Bommanayaki and by the head of her father, whom he is said to have killed, under his feet. Even more popular than him is Mariamman, who is worshipped by almost all people as the goddess of smallpox and whose temples are scattered in numerous places. Other minor deities are Sattan (who is said to reside in trees), Ponnammal (golden lady), Muttammal (pearl lady), Gangammal (goddess of cholera), Sapta Kanniya (seven virgins) and Draupadi (the wife of the Pandavas). There are also several devils which are worshipped by some people and which go by the general name of pisasu or pei. Some of these which are said to possess women are exercised by professional exorcists who are often the pujaris of the shrines of the local goddesses.

(Tree worship and cobra worship are also not uncommon. The trees usually worshipped are the aswatha (arasu), the margosa, the odiyan and the banyan. The first two are generally worshipped by the Brahmins and other higher castes; while the last two are commonly worshipped by the lower castes.) All Brahmin women, as is well-known, also worship the tulasi plant. As to the cobra, the higher castes consider it a sin to kill it believing as they do that the man who does so will have no children. The Brahmins and the Vellalars also believe that children can be obtained by worshipping the cobra. The Vellalars and the Kallars perform the cobra worship on a Friday, the former usually after the Pongal festival. The Palliars worship the cobra by pouring milk on an ant-hill and the

* [Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 85-86. Gazetteer of the South Arcot District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 96-102.

Gazetteer of the Tanjore District, Vol. I, 1915, pages 68-69.

Valaiyars, the Paraiyars and the Pallars do so by sacrificing a fowl. Earth, cattle and water are likewise worshipped. Cattle worship is done not only at the time of the Pongal but also sometimes when the ploughing begins and the treading is done. The earth is worshipped when the seed is sown and the first ploughing of the year is begun. Water is worshipped when the first floods arrive and so are the rivers on the eighteenth day of the month of Adi when they rise. The latter festival is called the Padinettamperukku¹.

Besides worship, vows play a large part in the life of the people. Vows are made to various deities. In the Melur taluk, it is said, women who are anxious for offspring vow that if they attain their wish they will have a coconut broken on their heads by the pujari of the temple at Sendurai. We have already seen how the vows contribute to enrich Karuppan with chains, etc. In many shrines of local deities cradles are hung with small painted clay babies in them in fulfilment of the vows by those who have been blessed with children. In larger temples such as those of Palni, Tirupparankundram and Alagarkovil, silver images of the parts of the body which have been recovered from disease are presented as a result of vows. In Alagarkovil, numerous people in fulfilment of their vows carry out the first shaving of the heads of children. When cattle or sheep are sick, people vow that if they recover they will go and perform puja on the top of one or other of the several hills that are considered sacred. Gopinathaswami hill in the former Kannivadi estate is one of these; and others are the hills at Vadipatti in the Nilakkottai taluk and Settinayakkanpatti near Dindigul. Fire-walking is sometimes performed at Draupadi shrines in accordance with vows. In Palni, it is said, there is an annual feast held at the Mariamman temple at which people carry in their bare hands, in performance of vows, earthen pots with a blazing fire inside them without getting any burns².

We may now describe the various castes, their customs and ceremonies. It has been said that, although Madurai City and places like Tirupparankundram, Palni and Alagarkovil are the seats of famous Brahmanical temples, Brahmanism as such has exerted only a very small influence on the other castes. The reason for this is said to be the custom obtaining among several castes of employing their own priests, instead of the Brahmin priests in performing their ceremonies³. There is some truth in these statements in the sense that the Madurai district is not so Brahmanized as the Tanjore district. But there is little doubt that Brahmanism here as elsewhere in most of the districts has exerted a not inconsiderable influence on Dravidian customs, especially among the higher castes like the Vellalars, the Pillayars, etc. This

¹ Gazetteer of the Tanjore District, Vol. I, 1915, pages 70-71.

² Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 86-87.

³ *Ibid.*, page 84.

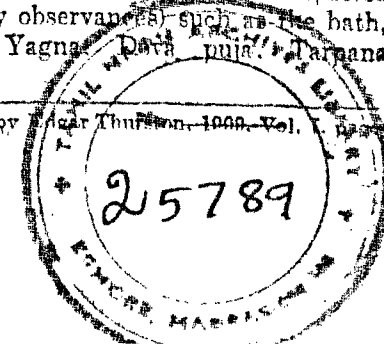
will be made evident from the short accounts of the castes that are given below:

The Brahmins, though they constitute a very small percentage of the population, occupy a conspicuous position in society. They are the repositories of Vedic knowledge, priests, purohits, astrologers, etc. They are also the persons who have made much headway in modern education and taken to all sorts of professions, medicine, law, Government service and so on, with an enviable facility and success. They are primarily divided into two well-known religious sects: the Saivites and the Vaishnavites. The Saivites are either the Saivites proper or the Smarthas. The Saivites proper believe that there is only one God Siva who is self-existent and that he is not liable to lose his personality. The Smarthas, on the other hand, recognise the Trimurtis—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, as equal manifestations of the supreme spirit and believe that the soul of man (jiva) is only a portion of the infinite spirit (atman) and that it is capable of being absorbed into the atman. Among the Vaishnavites there are two principal sects in the south—those who are the followers of Sri Ramanuja and call themselves Sri Vaishnavites, and those who are the followers of Sri Madhvacharya and call themselves Madhvas. All Brahmins, whether Vaishnavites or Saivites, have, according to the sutras, to go through the following Samskaras (rites): Garbhadanam, Pumsavanam, Simantham, Jatakaranam, Namakaranam, Annaprasanam, Choulam, Upanayanam and Vivaham. These rites are believed to purify the body and spirit, but not all of them are in practice performed at the present day. The Garbhadanam or impregnation ceremony should be performed on the fourth day of the marriage ceremonies. The Pumsavanam and Simantham are performed together during the sixth or eighth month of the first pregnancy. The Jatakaranam, Namakaranam (naming ceremony) Annaprasanam (food giving ceremony) and Choulam (tonsure ceremony) are ordinarily celebrated one after the other on the Upanayanam day. The Upanayanam is essentially a ceremony of initiation. From the orthodox point of view it should be performed before the age of eight, but in practice it is performed much later. The wearing of the sacred thread is a sign that the boy has gone through the ceremony. The Vivaham, or the marriage ceremony, resembles even to-day, that of the Vedic times in all essentials. All sections of Brahmins closely follow the Grihya Sutras relating to their Sakha. In addition to these ceremonies all Brahmins perform funeral ceremonies and the annual Sraddha (memorial rites). The Brahmins are all expected to perform the Ahanikams (or daily observances) such as the bath, the Sandhya prayers, Brahma Yagna, Datta puja, Tarpana (oblations of water), etc.¹

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by H. H. Thurston, 1909, Vol. I, page 269-272.

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The Tamil Brahmins are mostly Smarthas and Vaishnavas. Each of these sects is divided and subdivided into a number of smaller groups based on sectarian, occupational, territorial, ritualistic and other differences. Among the Smartha subdivisions may be mentioned the Vadama (the northerners), the Brahacharnam, the Ashtasahasram, the Vattima or the Maddhima, the Kaniyalar, the Cholia, the Viliya, the Kesika, the Prathamasaki and the Gurukkals. The Vadamas claim to be superior to the other classes; they worship both Siva and Vishnu but follow the Smartha customs in every way. The Brahacharanams are more Saivite and more orthodox than the Vadamas. The Ashtasahasrams are considered to be inferior to the Vadamas and the Brahacharanams; they are, however, like the Brahacharanams more Saivite than the Vadamas. The Vattimas are said to be noted for their economical habits and for their sense of corporate unity. The Kaniyalars are mostly temple servants and wear Vaishnava marks. The Choliyas are mostly temple priests and temple servants. The Viliyars are supposed to be descended from an ancestor who offered his eye to Lord Siva for want of flowers. The Kesikas or Hiranyakesikas, as they are sometimes called, closely resemble the Vadamas but are an exclusive endogamous unit and are highly orthodox. The Prathamasis follow the White Yajur Veda; they are also sometimes called Katyayanams and are considered inferior by the other sects. So also are considered inferior the Gurukkals who are temple priests. All these sects are further subdivided into smaller sects. In regard to the Vaishnavas, or Sri Vaishnavas as they are sometimes called to distinguish them from the Madhvas, they are all supposed to be converts from Smarthas. There are two distinct groups of Vaishnavas, the Vadagalais (northerners) and the Tengalais (southerners) who are easily distinguished by the marks on their foreheads. The Vadagalais put on a U shaped mark and the Tengalais a Y shaped mark. Each one of these groups is divided into the Sri Vaishnavas, the Vaikhanasas, the Pancharatras, and the Hebbaras. The Tengalai group also consists, in addition, the Mandyas. The orthodox Sri Vaishnavas are very exclusive and hold that they co-existed as a separate caste of Brahmins with the Smarthas. All Vaishnavas are expected to undergo a ceremony of initiation into Vaishnavism, after the Upanayanam ceremony. There are various points of difference between the Tengalais and Vadagalais which sometimes lead to bitter quarrels in connexion with temple worship and temple processions.¹

There are also the Telugu Brahmins, the Kannada Brahmins and the Tulu Brahmins. The first are divided into two sections, the Niyogis and the Vaidicks; the second are divided into two

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, 1909, Vol. I, pages 333-349.

other sections, the Smarthas and the Madhvas, while the third are divided into six sections, the Shivallis, the Kotas, the Kandavaras, the Haiviks, the Panchagramais and the Koteswars¹. It is not necessary to say more about these Non-Tamil Brahmins as they are not many in number in the district.

The marriage rites in vogue among the Brahmins resemble those of the Vedic times in all essentials; and, as has already been stated, each section of the Brahmins closely follow the Grihya Sutras relating to the Sakha. A marriage is usually arranged only if the horoscopes of the boy and the girl agree, if they do not belong to the same gotra, and if the girl is not older than the boy. The horoscopes are examined by professional astrologers. In former days it was usual for the bridegroom to pay a small sum of money as a bride price but nowadays the opposite practice of paying a handsome dowry by the bride's father to the bridegroom has become the rule. The marriage ceremony is performed in the bride's house, the bride's father generally bearing all the expenses. Formerly the ceremony invariably used to last for four or five days, but nowadays it is completed even in a day.

The ceremony begins with the Nischayathartham or betrothal and is followed by the performance of various vrataims consisting of oblations to the sacred fire by the bridegroom. He then dresses himself like a married man and proceeds on a mock pilgrimage called Paradesapravesam or Kasiyatra and is met and brought back by the bride's father. The bride is now brought out, decked in her wedding clothes and the pair are brought face to face and made to exchange garlands. Formerly they used to be taken up on the shoulders of their maternal uncles for the purpose of exchanging garlands. The couple then sit on a swing and married women go round them thrice carrying water, light, fruits and betel. After this the couple are conducted into the house and seated on the marriage dais. The ceremony proper now begins with the proclamation of the gotras of the bride and bridegroom so as to ensure that they do not belong to the same gotra. The bridegroom does puja to Ganapathi if he is a Saivite and to Vishwak-sena, if he is a Vaishnavite. He then performs the Ankurarpana (the seed sowing ceremony). Four earthen pans are arranged in the form of a square—east, west, north and south and a fifth pan is set down in the centre of the square. The pan to the east represents Indra, that to the west Varuna, that to the south Yama and that to the north Soma. In each of these pans are placed nine kinds of grains soaked in water and the devatas are invoked.

The next stage is the tying of the wrist thread. Two cotton threads are laid on a vessel representing Varuna and, after the recitation of Vedic verses, the bridegroom takes one of the threads and, after dipping it in turmeric paste, holds it with his left

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, 1909, Vol. I, pages 350-355.

thumb, smears some of the paste on it with his right thumb and forefinger, and ties it on the left wrist of the bride. The purohit ties the other thread on the right wrist of the bridegroom who, facing the assembly proclaims, "I am going to take the bride". He then invokes the gods Indra, Surya and Bhaga to bless the marriage. The father of the bride and the bridegroom now wash each other's feet with milk and water, after which the bride sits on her father's lap and her mother stands at her side. The father then places the bride's hand in that of her bridegroom and both the father and mother pour water over the united hands of the couple, the father reciting the sloka "I am giving you a virgin decorated with jewels to enable me to obtain religious merit". This is called the dhara (pouring water) ceremony. It forms the binding of the marriage ceremony among Telugu Brahmins and some Non-Brahmin castes. The couple then sit in front of the sacred fire and the bride's father after pouring ghee as an oblation and reciting some mantras pours some water over the hands of the bridegroom and offers him a mixture of honey, plantain fruit and ghee and, afterwards, a coconut and plantains. The bride next sits on a heap or bundle of paddy and the bridegroom invokes the gods to bless her. A yoke is now brought and one end of it is placed on the head of the bride and some mantras pronounced. The bridegroom then gives a new and costly silk cloth (Kurai) to the bride who puts it on and sits on her father's lap. This is followed by the bridegroom tying the tali on the bride's neck when all the Brahmins bless the couple by throwing rice over their heads. The couple now perform a homam. The bridegroom takes hold of the bride's right wrist and pressing the fingers passes his hand over the united fingers three times. This is called Panigrahanam. The next item is Sapthapathi or the taking of the seven steps which is generally considered the most binding part of the ceremony. In this the bridegroom lifts the left foot of the bride seven times repeating certain mantras. A homam is then made. The bride then treads on a stone thrice and some fried paddy is put into the sacred fire each time. The darbha girdle is now removed from the bride's waist when everybody disperses.

Towards evening the bride and the bridegroom sit before the sacred fire while the Brahmins recite the vedic mantras. A male child who has not lost his brothers or sisters is now made to sit on the lap of the bride and given a plantain fruit and the bridegroom invokes prosperity and progeny to bless the house. The couple are then shown Druva (the Pole Star) and Arundathi (a small star Ursa major) and these are worshipped. The Stalipaka ceremony is afterwards performed. In this the bride should cook some rice and the bridegroom should offer it as an oblation to the sacred fire. In practice, however, some food is brought and placed in the fire. The purohit now decorates a figs stick with darbha grass and gives it to the bridegroom. It is placed in the roof or somewhere inside the house near the seed pans.

On the second and third days homams are performed in the morning and evening and the Nalangu ceremony is gone through. In this ceremony the couple sit before trays containing betel leaves, arecanuts, fruits, flowers and turmeric paste, and the women sing songs. Taking a little of the turmeric paste mixed with chunam the bride makes marks by drawing lines over the feet (nalangu idal) of the bridegroom. Arathi is then offered followed by the distribution of tambulam (pansupari). On the fourth day the Brahmin priests make the couple sit beside them and, after the recitation of vedic verses, bless them. The shoulders of the couple are then smeared with turmeric paste made red with chunam and a mark is made with the same paste on their foreheads. This is called Pachai Kalyanam. It is peculiar to Tamil Brahmins, both the Smarthas and the Vaishnavas. The bride and the bridegroom are then made to exchange garlands. Towards the evening a procession called Annman Kolam is got up at the expense of the maternal uncle of the bride. The bride is dressed up as a boy and another girl is dressed up as the bride. They are taken in procession through the streets and, on their return, the pseudo-bridegroom is made to speak to the real bridegroom in somewhat insolent terms and some mock play is indulged in. The real bridegroom is sometimes treated as a thief. Among Sri Vaishnavas, after the Pachai ceremony the bridal couple are made to roll a coconut to and fro across the dais amidst the chanting of the songs of Andal by the assembled Brahmins. Tambulam (of which a little together with some money is set apart for Andal) is then distributed to all. The family priest now calls out the names and gotras of those who have become related to the couple; and, as each person's name is called out, he or she is supposed to make a present of clothes, money, etc., to the couple. Among Telugu and Kannada Brahmins, instead of the Pachai Kalyanam, another ceremony called Nagavalli is performed. In this ceremony thirty-two lights and two vessels representing Siva and Parvathi are arranged in the form of a square. Unbleached thread soaked in turmeric paste is passed round the square and tied to the pandal. The couple sit in front of the square and after doing puja cut the thread and take their seats within the square. The bridegroom then ties a tali of black beads on the bride's neck symbolically in the presence of all the gods which are here represented by a number of small pots round the fire. Close to the pots are designed the figures of two elephants, one in rice grains and another in salt. After going round the pots the couple bargain as to the prices of the animals. This is followed by a burlesque on domestic life and the introduction of the bride to her new relations by marriage and the making of the present of tambulam and turmeric.

A mock marriage is occasionally celebrated among the Brahmins when a person marries a third wife. As the third marriage is considered inauspicious, as the bride thereby is believed to

become a widow, the man is first made to marry the Arka (Erukku) plant and then the bride, so that his real marriage becomes the fourth. In orthodox fashion it is celebrated on a Sunday or a Monday when the constellation Hastham is visible. The bridegroom accompanied by the priest and another Brahmin repairs to the place where the arka plant is growing. The plant is decorated with cloth and a piece of string and invoked by the bridegroom to avert the evils of the third marriage. The bridegroom then asks the plant to marry him and become his third wife. After this all the ceremonies such as the homam, tali-tying, etc., are performed by the Brahmins as at a regular marriage. The plant is then cut down and the marriage is declared to be over.

Among the well-to-do Brahmins when a husband attains the age of sixty he and his wife celebrate his birthday by dressing themselves up as bride and bridegroom and going through the ceremony of marriage again. This is called the Shashthyabdarpoorthi. This custom is observed also by the well-to-do Sowrashtas and Chettiars.

As to the funeral ceremonies among the Brahmins, when a person is about to die, he is removed from his bed and laid on a floor. If he dies on Danishtapanchami (inauspicious) day, he is taken out of the house and placed in the courtyard or the pial. Some prayers are then uttered and sometimes a cow is presented to the Brahmin priest (godhanam) so as to render the passage of life, through the various parts of the body, as easy as possible. As soon as he is dead, his body is washed, religious marks are made on the forehead and parched paddy and betel are scattered over and around it by the son. The sacred fire is then lighted, rice is cooked in a new earthen pot and a new cloth is thrown over the corpse. A simple bier of bamboos and straw is then prepared and four bearers are selected. To each of the bearers darbha grass is given in token of his office to carry the corpse to the burning ground. The eldest son who is the funeral celebrant and his brothers, if any, are shaved and the last respects are paid by the widow and the female relations by going round the corpse three times. The funeral procession consisting of men alone then starts preceded by the eldest son carrying a mud pot containing fire. On the way to the burning ground the corpse is sometimes placed on the ground and some mantras are recited and cooked rice offered to propitiate evil spirits. At the burning ground certain mantras are again recited and rites performed, after which the body is placed on the funeral pyre and the pyre set fire to by the eldest son. He then carries a pot filled with water, having a hole at the bottom through which water trickles out on his shoulders, three times round the corpse and at the end

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. I, 1909, page 272-293.

of the third round throws it down and breaks it. Sometimes, in the case of respected elders, the son and all relations present, scatter darbha grass repeating certain vedic verses. The son then pours a little water on a stone and sprinkles himself with it and the rest follow him. After this they pass through a bundle of darbha grass held aloft by the priest and gaze for a moment at the sun. Everybody then goes to a tank and bathes. All these rites are performed and the corpse is cremated in the course of a few hours. No food is cooked in the house on the day of death.

On returning home, the son performs the rites of Nagna Sradham and Pashana Sthapanam; the former by presenting clothes, lamp and money to a Brahmin and offering balls of cooked rice to the spirit and the latter by setting up two stones, one in the house and the other on the bank of a tank. For ten days libations of water mixed with gingelly seeds and balls of cooked rice are offered to the stones. On the day after cremation, the relations assemble at the cremation ground for performing the ceremony called Sanchayanam which consists in extinguishing the burning embers and removing the fragments of bones from the ashes. These bones are taken away in a mud vessel and later thrown into a sacred river or buried in the ground. On the tenth day a large quantity of food is cooked and heaped on plantain leaves when all the female relations go round it wailing. The food is thrown into a tank and the tali of the widow is then removed. In former days her head used to be clean shaved on that day; but nowadays most of the widows do not undergo this operation. All the agnates should be present on the tenth day to perform tarpanam or oblations of water. After a bath a homam is performed. On the eleventh day a Brahmin is fed after going through Sradha rites. On the twelfth day an important Sradha like ceremony is performed; and, at the close of this ceremony, six balls of cooked rice are offered to their ancestors. The balls are arranged in two rows with some space between them and some cooked rice is placed between them. This is divided with darbha grass into three portions and each portion is arranged close to the balls of rice. A cow is now sometimes presented to a Brahmin to render the crossing of the river Vaitarani easy for the departed soul. On the thirteenth day a feast is held and domestic worship is carried out at the close of which verses composed in praise of the deceased called Charama Slokas are read. In the course of the year following the death, twelve monthly and four quarterly sradhas are performed by the son. Annual sradhas are performed thereafter; but, if the son performs the sradha at Gava, it is not obligatory upon him to perform the annual sradha. The annual sradhas consist of homam, offering of cooked rice to the pitris and the feeding of one or two or three Brahmins¹.

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. I, 1909, pages 299-305.

We now come to the Non-Brahmins who form the bulk of the population of the district. We may first say something in general about their customs and then describe separately the peculiar customs followed by each caste. Usually, among the Non-Brahmins, a boy should not marry the daughter of his maternal aunt or his paternal uncle, but he has a right to marry the daughter of his sister, his maternal uncle or his paternal aunt. Ordinarily an eldest son should not marry an eldest daughter, nor should a boy marry a girl older than himself. The bride's mother is paid a bride's price (parisappanam or mulaippal kuli or the price of suckling) by the bridegroom. Usually the dead are burnt by the higher castes and buried by the lower castes. And, usually the Karumantaram ceremony takes place on the sixteenth day. With these few general remarks we may plunge straightaway into the descriptions of the various castes.

The Vellalars, the famous cultivating classes of the Tamil country, form an important community in the Madurai district. The word Vellalar is derived from Vellanmai (vellam or water plus anmai or management), meaning cultivation or tillage. Essentially a peace-loving and industrious people, they have taken to the cultivation of rice, betel and tobacco with excellent results. Among them are to be found also merchants, shop-keepers, Government servants, etc.; but they do not generally take up any degrading avocation. They are considered to occupy the first place in the social scale among the Non-Brahmins. They call themselves Pillays, Chettiars and Mudaliars. There are among them four main divisions named after the tract of country in which the ancestors of each originally resided; the Tondamandalam or the dwellers of the Pallava country (Chingleput and North Arcot districts), the Solia (or Sozia) or men of the Chola country (Tanjore and Tiruchirappalli districts), the Pandya or the inhabitants of the Pandyan Kingdom (Madurai and Tirunelveli districts) and the Konga or the residents of the Kongu country (Coimbatore and Salem districts). Those found most in the Madurai district, the Pandya Vellalars, are subdivided into the Karkattars or the Karaikattus who, notwithstanding the legends about their origin, are probably a territorial subdivision named after a place called Karaikadu; the Nangudis and the Panjais, the origin of whom is not clear; the Arumburs and the Sirukudis, so called from the villages of those names; the Agamudaiyans who are probably recruits from the caste of that name; the Nirpusis, meaning the wearers of sacred ashes; and the Kottai Vellalars or fort Vellalars. The Tondamandalam Vellalars are subdivided into the Tuluvas who came from the Tulu country, the Poonamallee (or Pundamalli) Vellalars who came from Poonamallee and the Kondaikattis who tie their hair with a knot. The Solia Vellalars are subdivided into the Vellalar Chettiars (merchants), the Kodikkals (growers of betel vine), and the Kanakkilinnattar or inhabitants of Kanakkilinnadu. The Kongas are subdivided into the Sendalais (red-headed

men), the Padaitalais (leaders of armies), the Vellikkal (the silver hands), the Pavalamkatti (wearers of coral), the Malaiyadi (foot of the hills), the Tottakadu (ears with big holes), etc. In addition to these divisions and subdivisions of the Vellalar caste proper, there are nowadays many groups which, though they belong to quite distinct castes, pretend to be Vellalars.

The Vellalars, whatever division or subdivision they belong to, observe in common some essential customs. Their marriage ceremonies are usually performed in the puranic fashion with the Brahmins officiating as priests (except among the Konga Vellalars). They all burn their dead, observe fifteen days pollution and perform the Karumantaram ceremony to remove the pollution on the sixteenth day. Each division of them contains both the Vaishnavites and the Saivites, and contrary to the rule among the Brahmins, the differences of sects among the Vellalars are not of themselves any bar to inter-marriage. Each division has pandarams or priests recruited from among its members who officiate at funerals and minor ceremonies and some of these wear the sacred thread while the other Vellalars wear it only at funerals. All the Vellalars perform Sraddhas and observe the ceremony of invoking their ancestors on the Mahalaya days. All of them abstain from alcohol and refuse to eat in the houses of any but the Brahmins. All of them may dine together; but no member of the four main divisions and the various subdivisions may marry into another. The Karaikat Vellalars are said to have some peculiar customs. It is said that they associate freely with the Kunnnavans and can eat food dressed by them; but if a Kunnnavan is invited to the house of a Karaikat Vellalar, he must not touch the cooking utensils or enter the kitchen. It is also said that they observe a ceremony called Vilakkidu Kalyanam or the auspicious ceremony of lighting the light. It is performed by girls in their seventh or ninth year or later but before marriage and it consists in worshipping Ganesa and the Sun at the house of the girl's parents. At this ceremony her maternal uncle gives her a necklace of gold beads and coral and a new cloth, while the other relatives make other presents. The girls wear this necklace called Kodachimani (hooked jewel) even after marriage.

Some Vellalars observe the Brahmanical custom with regard to second and third marriages. A man marrying a second wife, after the death of his first, has to marry a plantain tree and cut it down before tying the tali and, in the case of a third marriage, he has to tie a tali first to the erukku plant. The idea is that the second and the third wives do not prosper and the tree and the plant are therefore made to take their places. Some Vellalar women observe a ceremony called Sevvai (Tuesday) Pillayar or as it is sometimes called Avvai Nombu, because the famous poetess Avvai observed it. This ceremony takes place twice in the year, once

on a Tuesday in the month of Thai (February-March), and again on a Tuesday in the month of Adi (August-September). It is held at midnight and no males, even babies in arms, are allowed to witness it. A number of women join together and provide the rice required; and at the house where the ceremony is to be performed, it is pounded into flour and mixed with leaves of *Pongamia glabra* and *margosa*. The mixture is then made into cakes, some flat and some conical to represent Pillayar and the rites are performed with these cakes and flowers, fruits, betel, turmeric, combs, kumkum, etc¹.

Among the mercantile classes the Nattukottai Chettiars stand foremost in Madurai. The word Nattukottai is said to be a corruption of Nattarasankottai, the name of a small village near Sivaganga; but this is doubtful, it being derived, it would appear, from Nattukottai or country fort. The Nattukottai Chettiars are mostly engaged in commerce, trade and money-lending. Their commercial concerns are to be found in Burma, Straits Settlements, Ceylon, Mauritius, South Africa, etc. In business methods and organization they are said to be unequalled by any. The simple but strict training they give to their boys, the long apprenticeship which even the sons of the richest among them have to undergo, make them very efficient in their profession and very methodical in whatever they undertake to do. In riches they are proverbial; but a small part of their earnings always go for charity and works of public utility. Several of the temples, including the Meenakshi temple, owe, for instance, their renovations and repairs of gopurams, etc., to the Nattukottai Chettiars.

They generally dwell in big houses and so long as the father is alive all the members of the family usually live together. Their habits are invariably simple and economical and their good faith and honesty are above reproach. They claim that they belong to a good caste and assert that they emigrated thousands of years ago from Kaveripattinam, as a result of an intolerable persecution. But other Chettiars deny this claim and attribute an inferior origin to them. However, they are permitted to enter the interior of the Hindu temples and approach near to the innermost doorway of the central shrine. They are divided into nine main divisions (kovils or temples) called Illayaththukudi Kovil, Mathur Kovil, Vairavan Kovil, Iraniyur Kovil, Pillaiyarpatti Kovil, Nemam Kovil, Iluppaikudi Kovil, Seenakudi Kovil and Velangudi Kovil. They resort to caste panchayats which exercise even the power of excommunication.

They perform a peculiar ceremony called Sippidi before marriage. On the Karthika day when the constellation Krithikai

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. VII, 1909, pages 361-389.

Madura District Manual by J.H. Nelson, Part II, 1868, pages 27-34.
Gazetteer of the Tanjore District, Vol. I, 1915, pages 81-82.

is in the ascendant, the youth is taken on horseback to a Pillayar temple where he worships and whisks a bag of burning charcoal tied to a long string round his head. He then burns in front of the temple a booth which has been set up and marks his forehead with its ashes. On his return home and at the entrances of Nattukottai houses which he passes, rice lamps are waved before him. Similarly every girl has to go through a ceremony called 'Thruvadhira', before marriage. On the day of the Arudradasanam festival, she is bathed and decorated and made to wear a necklace of gold beads instead of the necklace of glass beads which she had hitherto worn. She then proceeds with a silver cup to the houses where other girls are performing the ceremony and receives vegetables which when cooked are distributed. Dosais with holes made in them by married women are also then distributed.

Every Nattukottai Chettiar is said to have the inalienable right to claim the hand of his paternal aunt's daughter. The marriage ceremony commences with the giving of gold for the bride's neck. On the first day of the marriage a feast is given to the bridegroom's family and female ancestors are worshipped. On the second day the dowry is received and the presents are made. On the third day garlands are received from the temples to which the bride and the bridegroom belong. The bride's party then go to the house of the bridegroom and present him with a silk handkerchief and cloth and some money, betel, etc. This ceremony is called 'mappillai ariyappothal', or going to examine the son-in-law. The next ceremony is the 'nalkuriththal', or the fixing of the day. The bridegroom's party proceed to the house of the bride and present her with two coconuts wrapped in a blanket, betel, turmeric, etc. The bride bathed and decorated stands then by the side of her grandmother, and a Brahmin purohit taking up a few leafy margosa twigs, touches the girl's shoulders, head and knees with them and throws them away. Her glass bead necklace is then removed. At the uppu-eduththal (salt carrying) ceremony, which next takes place, the bridegroom's party carry a basket containing salt, a bundle containing nine kinds of grain and a palmyra scroll for writing the marriage contract on it, to the bride's house. The sacred fire is then lighted and a homam performed by the Brahmin purohit. An old man who has had a number of children and who belongs to a temple other than that of the bride, and the bridegroom's sister, then tie the tali string studded with jewels round her neck. Immediately after this the marriage contract is written. The bridegroom then goes on horseback to a Pillayar temple, offers worship there, and afterwards proceeds in procession to the bride's house, accompanied by his sister carrying milk in a vessel, and a person bearing a bundle of seed rice. At every Chettiar's house the procession halts and coloured lights are waved before the bridegroom. At the entrance to the bride's house, he is met by the bride whose sister-in-law

pushes the couple against each other. This ceremony is called 'mappillaiku idithukattal' or showing the bride to the bridegroom by pushing her. The couple are then conducted to a dais within the house and wristlets made of cotton cloth are tied on them by the purohit. They exchange coconuts and garlands and, amidst the blowing of the conch shell by women, the bride's mother touches the couple with turmeric, ashes, sandal, etc. On the fourth day, money called 'Veththilai surul rupai' (betel roll money) is given to the newly married couple by Chettians and the maternal uncles. A silver vessel containing betel and two rupees is thus given to the bridegroom by his father-in-law. The bridegroom usually carries on his shoulders a long purse of silk or red cloth, called Valluvaippai, into which he puts the betel and other things which are given to him. On the last day of the marriage ceremonies, toe-rings and wristlets are removed and the bridal pair eat together.

A few of their other peculiar ceremonies may now be noticed. In connexion with pregnancy two ceremonies are performed called respectively marunthidal (medicine giving) and thirthamkudiththal (drinking holy water). In the fifth month, on an auspicious day, the sister-in-law of the pregnant woman, amidst the blowing of conch shells by women, extracts the juice from the leaves of five plants and gives it to the woman to drink. In the seventh month the woman is given consecrated water (thirtham) from the temple. All the first born children go through a ceremony called pudhumai (newness). On an auspicious day, when a child is two years old, the maternal uncle of the child ties on its neck strings of coral and glass beads to which ornaments of pearls and precious stones are added. The child is then placed on an oval wooden tray which is held by the mother and her sister-in-law. They go round three times with the tray, and the child's aunt, taking it up thereafter, carries it round to be blessed by those who have assembled. Presents are then given to the child by friends and relations. On the second and third day the coral and bead ornaments are removed and on the fourth day, the child, if a male, is shaved. Whenever a death occurs among the Nattukottai Chettians the news is conveyed to the community by messengers and those who come to condole with the bereaved family are received with out-stretched hands. The head of the corpse is shaved and the corpse is washed and decorated. Then it is laid under a pandal erected when the daughters and sisters of the deceased husk paddy. On the way to the burning ground the son carries the fire. On the day following the funeral the bigger fragments of the bones are collected by a barber and given to the son who places them in an earthen pot. A pandaram then offers fruit, food, etc., to the deceased. On the eighth day a feast at which meat is partaken of for the first time since the death, is given to the relations of the deceased and thereafter their pollution is at an end. They may not now enter any temple for thirty days. On the sixteenth day after

death the final death ceremonies (karumantaram) are performed and presents are distributed to the Brahmins.

They have three mathams in which they are initiated into their religion, at Patharakkudi (or Padanakkudi) and Kila for males and Tulavur for females. They are Saivites but they also, especially their women, worship such minor deities as Aiyandar, Muneswara and Karuppan. Their men formerly used to have lobes of their ears artificially dilated; they frequently have a gold chain round the loins and wear finger rings set with diamonds¹.

The Maravars who are said to be one of the first of the Dravidian tribes that penetrated to the south of the peninsula are not much affected by Brahmanical influence. They were formerly a very warlike caste, but today most of them are engaged either in cultivation or some other peaceful avocation. The Rajas of Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga belong to this caste. It is said that in consequence of the Maravars assisting Rama in his war against Ravana, Rama gratefully exclaimed in good Tamil "Maravan" or "I will never forget" and that they have ever since been called Maravans or Maravars. The name Maravar however may be connected with the word 'maram' which means killing, ferocity, bravery and the like as pointing clearly to their warlike profession. Some even say that Maravan is derived from marani, sin; a Maravar being one who commits sin by killing living creatures without pity.

Though they are now mostly cultivators there are among them criminal classes who from a long time have given not a little trouble to the police. Among their crimes cattle lifting formerly loomed large. As village watchmen also they formerly used to levy exactions on the people and at the same time to collude with criminals and commit robberies.

There are said to be seven major subdivisions among the Maravars, namely, Sembunattu, Kondayankottai, Appanurnattu, Agattha, Orunattu, Upukatti and Karichikattu; and among these subdivisions Sembunattu is said to occupy the principal place. In one form of the marriage ceremonies among them, the bridegroom's party proceeds on an auspicious day to the home of the bride taking with them five coconuts, five bunches of plantains, five pieces of turmeric, betel and flowers and the tali strung on a thread dyed with turmeric. At an auspicious hour the bride is seated on a plank facing east when the bridegroom's sister amidst the blowing of conch shells removes the string of black beads from her neck and ties the tali thereon. The bride is then taken to the house of the bridegroom where the ceremony of warding off the evil eye is performed. This done, milk is poured over the couple and a feast is held. In another form of marriage ceremony,

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. V, 1909, pages 249-271.

the father of the bridegroom goes to the bride's house accompanied by his relatives with various articles such as betel, rice, coconuts, turmeric, sandal paste and flowers and hands them over to the bride's father. On the wedding day which comes off four days afterwards, pongal is offered to the house-god and the bridegroom is taken in a palanquin to the house of the bride and presented with betel by her father or brother. The maternal uncle of the bride then blindfolds her with his hand, lifts her up and carries her to the bridegroom. Four women now stand round the couple and pass round a dish containing a broken coconut and a cake three times. The bride and the bridegroom then spit into the dish amidst the blowing of conches. The maternal uncle next joins their hands together and the bridegroom's sister ties the tali, consisting of a ring attached to a black silk thread, to the bride's neck. Blessings are then poured on the couple. After the marriage the tali is replaced by golden beads strung on a string. In yet another form of marriage ceremony, the Brahmin priest hands over the tali to the bridegroom's sister, who in turn hands it over to the bridegroom, who ties a knot in it. The sister then ties two more knots in it and puts it round the bride's neck. After this, while the pair are still seated, the priest ties together the little fingers of the right hands of the pair which are interlocked, with a silken thread. The pair then rise, walk twice round the marriage seat and enter the house where they sit and the bridegroom receives presents from the bride's father. Their fingers are then untied. Nor is this all. If any impediment arises to prevent the completion of the marriage ceremonies, the tali is only sent and the bride is brought to the house of the bridegroom and all the ceremonies are performed at a subsequent date. Sometimes celebrations by means of proxy for the bridegroom are permitted. In such cases a stick sent by the bridegroom is set up in the marriage booth in his place and the tali is tied by some representative of the bridegroom. Widow marriage is allowed and practised except in the Sembunattu subdivision.

Both burial and cremation are in vogue among the Maravars. The Sembunattu Maravars regard the Agamudaiyars as their servants. It is the Agamudaiyar who brings the water for washing the corpse; it is also the Agamudaiyar, and not the son of the deceased, who carries the fire pot to the burial ground. The corpse is carried thither on a bier or a palanquin. The grave is dug by an Andi and salt, powdered bricks and sacred ashes are put in it and then the corpse is placed in it in a sitting posture. The Kondaiyamkottai Maravars burn their dead and on their way to the burning ground the bearers of the corpse walk over cloths spread on the ground. On the second or third day lingams are made out of the ashes or the mud from the grave (if the corpse is buried) and to these as well as to the soul of the deceased and to the crows, offerings are made. On the sixteenth day, nine kinds

of seed grain are placed over the grave or the spot where the corpse was burnt and a puja is performed by a Pandaram to five kalasas (brass vessels). Then the son of the deceased, who officiated as chief mourner, goes to a Pillayar shrine carrying on his head a pot containing a lighted lamp in the midst of flour. As he comes near the image, a screen is stretched in front of it but, as he steps a few steps backwards, the screen is removed and he is permitted to worship. He then retires walking backwards. Flour is then distributed and presents of new cloths are made to the sons and daughters of the deceased. Among the Kondaiyamkottai Maravars the corpse is carried in a recumbent position to the cremation ground with sandals tied to its feet. A little rice is placed in the mouth of the corpse and a little vessel containing some coins given by the relatives is kept beside its chest. The chief mourner walks thrice round the corpse carrying an earthen vessel filled with water in which two or three holes are pierced. He allows some water to fall on the corpse, breaks the pot near its head which lies to the south and immediately goes away and gets himself shaved. The barber then lights the pyre. On his return home, the chief mourner prostrates himself before a lighted lamp and partakes of little food that day. The next day he goes to the place of cremation, picks up some calcined bones and places them in a basket so that some day he may throw them into the sacred waters. On the eleventh or twelfth day, some grain is sown in two new broken pots in the midst of weeping. On the sixteenth day the plants, which are sprouted, are removed and put into water, again amidst weeping. The relatives then bathe and feast after which, the chief mourner is presented with a new cloth and some money by his father-in-law. On the seventeenth day the purification ceremony is performed at which a Brahmin priest presides and the chief mourner takes the oil bath¹.

The Agamudaiyars, another cultivating class, form a caste similar to the Maravars and the Kallars. The word Agamudaiyar means a householder or a landholder. The more important subdivisions among them are said to be the Aivali, the Nattu, the Kottaiyattu, the Malainadu, the Nattumangalam, the Rajabhoja, the Rajakulam, the Rajavasal, the Kallar, the Maravar, the Tuluvar and the Servaikarar. Unlike the Maravars and the Kallars they have no exogamous septs or kilais.

Their marriage ceremonies are generally very simple. The sister of the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride on an auspicious day accompanied by a few women carrying cloth, jewels, flowers, etc. The bride is then dressed up in the cloth and seated on a plank close to the wall, facing east. Betel, arecanuts and flowers are presented to her by the bridegroom's sister

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. V, 1909, pages 22-48.

Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, Part II, 1868, pages 28-42.

who also places round her neck the turmeric dyed string or garland amidst the din of conches. On the same day the bride is conducted to the home of the bridegroom and a feast is held. The more prosperous Agamudaiyars, however, celebrate their marriages according to the Puranic fashion with, of course, some variations.

The dead are either buried or cremated and, as the Agamudaiyars are Saivites, pandarams assist at their funeral ceremonies. On the second or third day after death, the son and the others go to the spot where the corpse was buried or burnt, offer food to the deceased and leave a pot of water behind. Those who are particular about performing the death ceremonies on an elaborate scale offer cooked food to the deceased until the fifteenth day and carry out the death ceremonies on the sixteenth day. Presents are then distributed to the Brahmmins, and after the death pollution has been removed by sprinkling holy water, a feast is given to the relatives¹.

The Kallars are found chiefly in this district and in the Ramanathapuram, Tanjore and Tiruchirappalli districts. The name Kallan or Kallar literally means a thief and there is ample evidence to show that until recently they constituted professional robbers and thieves. Until recently they had a regular system of blackmail called Kudikaval under which each village paid certain fees to be exempt from theft; and the non-payment of these fees invariably resulted in a series of cattle thefts and accidental fires. They had also another system of blackmail called tuppukuli, or payment for clues, under which those who paid half the price of the cattle stolen were restored their cattle by Kallar intermediaries. To-day these practices as well as the criminal proclivities of the Kallars are fast dying out, what with strict police vigilance and the adoption of the Kallar reclamation schemes. This subject will be dealt with in detail in the chapter on Law and Order. But here it must be noted that a large number of Kallars are engaged in cultivation and other peaceful avocations. Notwithstanding all this however the caste is still imbued with a love of daring and adventure.

In their manners and customs they have been, in Madurai, very little influenced by Brahmanism. They are here divided into ten main endogamous subdivisions which are territorial in origin. These are named the Melnadu, the Sivakudinadu, the Velurnadu, the Kandramanikkam or Kunnankottainadu, the Kandadevi, the Puramalainadu, the Tennilainadu, and the Palayanadu. These sections are further subdivided into exogamous sections called vaguppus. The Melnadu Kallars have three sections called terus

or streets, namely, Vadakkuteru (north street), Kilakkuteru (east street) and Terkuteru (south street). The Sirukudi kallars have vaguppus named after the gods specially worshipped by each such as Andi, Mandai, Aiyandar and Viramagali. Among the Velurnadu Kallars the names of the sections are Vengaipuli (cruel-handed tiger), Vekkalipuli (cruel-legged tiger), Samipuli (holy tiger), Sempuli (red tiger), Sammattimakkal (hammermen), Tiruman (holy deer) and Sayumpadaitangi (supporter of the vanquished army). Marriage is governed solely by the vaguppus to which the parties belong and is not affected by differences of sect or occupation.

Among the Kallars, in general, a man can claim his paternal aunt's daughter as wife and, if she is married to anyone else, it is said, he is entitled to get the same amount of dowry which the aunt received at her own marriage. When the wedding takes place, the sister of the bridegroom usually goes to the house of the parents of the bride and presents them with twenty-one coins and a cloth and, at the same time, ties a horse hair thread or a cotton thread (tali), attached to which is a triangular ornament, round the bride's neck. She then brings her and her relations to the house of the bridegroom and gives them a feast. After this, the ceremony of an exchange between the bride and the bridegroom of vallari thadis or boomerangs formerly used to be performed; but nowadays this ceremony is rarely performed. A feast is then given in the bride's house and the bride is presented by her parents with a marakkal of rice and a hen. She then goes with her husband to his house. Some variations in the marriage ceremony are observed among some Kallars. The consent of the maternal uncle of the girl is first obtained. Then, for the betrothal ceremony the father and the maternal uncle of the bridegroom proceed to the girl's house where a feast is held and the date fixed for the wedding is written on two rolls of palm leaf dyed with turmeric or red paper. These rolls are exchanged between the maternal uncles. On the wedding day the sister of the bridegroom goes to the bride's house accompanied by women carrying flowers, coconuts, betel leaves, turmeric, leafy twigs, of *Sesbania grandiflora*, paddy, milk, and ghee. A basket containing a female cloth and a tali string wrapped up in a red cloth is given to a sister of the bridegroom or to a woman belonging to his sept. On the way to the bride's house two of the women blow conch shells and, on their arrival, the bride's people question the bridegroom's party as to his sept. The bridegroom's party has then to say that he belongs to Indra kolam, Thalavala nadu and Ahalya gotra. The bridegroom's sister then passes the tali round to be touched by all present and ties it round the bride's neck amidst the blowing of conch shells. The bride is next conducted to the house of the bridegroom whence they return to her house the following day. The newly married couple now sit on a plank and coloured rice balls or coloured water are waved before them, while the women yell out " Killa, illa, illa; Killa, illa, illa "

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. I, 1909 pages 616 Madra District Manual by H.J. Nelson part II 1868, pages 42-45.

This ceremony goes by the name of Kulavi idal, and is also sometimes performed by Kallar women during the tali tying.

During the first twelve months after marriage it is customary for the wife's parents to invite the pair to stay with them a day or two on the occasion of any feast. A divorce is easily, it is said, obtained on either side among the Kallars. A husband dissatisfied with his wife can send her away if he is willing to give her half his property and a wife can leave her husband upon forfeiture of some money. It is said that as a token of divorce a Kallar gives his wife a piece of straw in the presence of his caste people; and that in Tamil the expression "to give a straw" means to divorce and "to take a straw" means to accept divorce. A widow may marry any man she fancies.

By some Kallars, on the occasion of the first menstrual period, pollution is observed for seven or nine days. On the sixteenth day the maternal uncle of the girl brings a sheep or goat and rice. She is then bathed, decorated, and made to sit on a plank while a vessel of water, coloured rice and a measure filled with paddy with a style bearing a betel leaf stuck on it are waved before her. Her head, knees and shoulders are next touched with cakes and these cakes are afterwards thrown away. A woman now conducts the girl round the plank and pours water from a vessel on a betel leaf held in her hand so that it falls on the ground at the four cardinal points of the compass which the girl salutes. On the seventh month of pregnancy a ceremony is generally celebrated for which the husband's sister prepares pongal. The pregnant woman sits on a plank and rice is waved before her; after which she stands up and bends down while her sister-in-law pours milk from a betel or pipal leaf on her back. A feast is then held. Among the Velur-nadu Kallars patterns are said to be drawn on the back of the pregnant woman with rice flour and milk is said to be poured over them. The husband's sister then decorates the grindstone in the same way and expresses a hope that she may have a male child as strong as a stone. When a child is born, the entire family observes pollution for thirty days. Among the Nattu Kallars, the children are said to be named at any time after they are a month old. But among the Puramalai Kallars a first-born female child is named on the seventh day, after the ear-boring ceremony is performed. The Puramalai Kallars also practise the rite of circumcision. The dead are usually buried among the Kallars and it is said that at funerals, cheroots are smoked by all present. The Puramalai Kallars usually burn the dead; and it is said that when a woman dies with child, the child is taken out and placed alongside her on the pyre. When a death occurs in a family some Kallars put a pot filled with dung or water, a broomstick and a fire-brand at some place where three roads meet, or in front of the house, in order to prevent the ghost from returning.

The Kallars are normally Saivites and put on sacred ashes, the usual mark of a Saivite, on festive occasions. But there are also among them Vaishnavites. The essence of their religious belief is however said to be devil worship. They worship Karuppan, Andi, Mandai, etc., but their chief deity is Alagiriswami, the god of the great Alagaarkovil. They enjoy special privileges during the festivals conducted in honour of this god. They have their own priests; they observe omens; they consult their household gods over important matters; and they, in some places, attach much importance to Friday in Adi (July-August), the Cattle Pongal Day in Tai (January-February) and Karthigai day in the month of Karthigai (November-December). They are very fond of bull baiting and it is said that their maidens used to select as their husbands men who had proved their bravery by rescuing the cloth tied to the horns of the bulls let loose in panic amidst the din of drums and music. Some among the Kallars have hereditary village headmen called Ambalakkarans, while others have a hereditary headman called Tirumala Pinnai Tevan, who decide caste matters. Some Kallars have also caste panchayats¹

The Idaiyars or the Yadavas are the great shepherd caste of the Tamils. This caste has many subdivisions of which the Kalkatti and Pasi Idaiyars are so called from their custom of wearing sixteen glass beads on either side of the tali; the Sembau Idaiyars take their name from Sambu or Siva; the Kallar Idaiyars take their name from the Kallars; the Podumattu Idaiyars claim to have come to Madurai from Tirunelveli; and the Pancharamkatti Idaiyars derive their name from the custom prevalent among their women of wearing a neck ornament called Pancha-haram or Pancharam. Among the Pancharamkatti Idaiyars widow marriage is practised and this is because it is said Sri Krishna used to place a similar ornament round the necks of the Idaiyar widows of whom he was enamoured, in order to transform them from widows into married women. The Idaiyars take a higher social position than they would otherwise do owing to the tradition that Krishna was brought up by their caste and to the fact that they are the only purveyors of milk, ghee, etc., and so are indispensable to the community. All the Brahmins, except the most orthodox, drink butter-milk and eat butter brought by them. In some places they enjoy the privilege of breaking the butter-pot on Sri Krishna's birthday; and, for doing this, they are given a new cloth and paid some money. They eat in the houses of Vellalars, Pallis and Nattamars. They either burn or bury their dead. They assume titles like Kone or Konar, Pillai, Pongadan and Karaiyalan. They consider

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. III, 1909, pages 52-91.

Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, Part II, pages 44-56.

Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 82-96.

Report on Criminal Tribes, 1924, pages 78-82, 100-109, 131-132.

Saturday as a holy day and, being Vaishnavites, they brand themselves like the Vaishnava Brahmins and observe Sri Jayanti as their important festival.

Among some Idaiyars, as among the Kallars, a man has the right to marry his paternal aunt's daughter. But, if the woman's age is much greater, she is usually married to his cousin or someone else on the side of his family. A Brahmin priest officiates at their weddings and the sacred fire is used, but the bridegroom's sister ties the tali. Caste affairs are settled by a headman called the Nattanmaikarar. This headman has the management of the caste fund which is generally utilized in the celebration of festivals of the larger temples of the district. Some Idaiyars again observe an uncommon rule of inheritance according to which a woman who has no male issue at the time of her husband's death has to return his property to his brother, father or maternal uncle. She is however allotted a maintenance the amount of which is settled by the caste panchayat. According to another odd form of inheritance observed by others among them, a man's property descends to his sons-in-law who live with him and not to his sons. The sons merely get maintenance until they are married.

The Idaiyars observe some peculiar customs in performing their marriages and funerals. It is said that when a bride enters the room decorated for the marriage ceremony, her followers pay to the sister of the bridegroom, the money called the "Bride's room gold"; and that when the bridegroom goes to the house of his mother-in-law, his young companions arrest him on the way and do not release him until he pays a piece of gold. On the third day of the marriage ceremony when the sprinkling of saffron water or the guests is over, the whole party repair to the village tank. Here the friend of the husband brings a hoe and a basket and the husband fills three baskets with earth from the bottom of the tank while the wife takes them away and throws out the earth. The couple then say "we have dug a ditch for charity". At their funerals, it is said, a Maravar who styles himself "the father of the grandfather," comes amidst the assembly and addresses it in the following enigmatical words: "the slave who intrudes himself of his own accord spreads his foot over the way and will thrust a spear into the breast of the strong ¹."

The Kaikolars or the Kaikolars are a caste of Tamil weavers. The words Kaikolan is said to be the Tamil equivalent of the Sanskrit Virabahu, a mythical hero from whom the caste is supposed to have sprung. It is also said to be derived from Kai (hand) and Kol (shuttle). The Kaikolars are also called Sengundar (red dagger). They consider the different parts of the loom to represent

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. II, 1909, pages 352-366.

Census of India, 1901, Vol. XV, Part I, 1902, page 155.

Gazetteer of the Madura district by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 96-97.

Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, Part II, 1863, pages 60-63.

various devatas or rishis. There are among them several subdivisions. In religion, most of them are Saivites and some of them have taken to wearing the libgam; but there are also Vaishnavites among them. Their hereditary headman of the caste is called Peri-dandakarar or Pattakarar and is, as a rule, assisted by two subordinates entitled Sengili or Gramani and Ural. It is said that every Kaikolar family was formerly expected to set apart one girl to be dedicated as Deva-Dasi to a temple. The Kaikolars are said to belong to the Left Hand faction but Dasis, save those engaged to the Beri Chettiers and the Kammalars, are said to belong to the Right Hand faction.

Some of the Kaikolars observe a peculiar method of selecting a bride, called 'siru tali kattu' (tying the small tali). A man who wishes to marry his maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughter, has to tie a tali, or simply a bit of cloth torn from her clothing round her neck and report the fact to his parents or the headman. If the girl eludes him, he cannot claim her, but should he succeed, she belongs to him. In some places the consent of the maternal uncle to a marriage is signified by his carrying the bride in his arms to the marriage pandal. The milk post is used in the wedding ceremony; and after the tali has been tied, the bridegroom has to lift the bride's leg and place it on a grinding-stone. Widows are allowed to remarry if they have no issue, but not otherwise. On the final day of the death ceremonies among them, a small hut is erected and inside it stones brought by the barber are set up and offerings are made to them ¹.

There is a lot of controversy over the origin and status of the Palliars or the Vanniyars. The name Palliar is said to denote their Pallava origin and the name Vanniyar is said to denote Vannikula Kshatriyas which means Kshatriyas of the fire or Agnikula race. Some of them also claim descent from the Solar or Lunar race. They regard themselves as superior to all other Non-Brahmin communities and some of them wear even the sacred thread. They are also known by several names such as Nayaka, Varma, Padaiyachi, Nayanar, Odayar and Gounder. Some of them claim to belong to the Chola race and call themselves Chembiars. These names however do not denote subdivisions or sects and all the Palliars freely interdine and intermarry. They are said to be strict in matters of caste and social customs. Their occupation is generally agriculture and trade.

They have among them several subdivisions such as Rudra Vanniar, Krishna Vanniar, Sambu Vanniar, Brahma Vanniar, Indra Vanniar, the Agamudaiyars, the Agni, the Arasu, the Naga-vandam (cobra head or ornament of that shape), the Nattumar, the Pandamuttu, the Perumal and the Kallaveli. It is stated that the

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. III, pages 31-44.

wives of the Palliars' side with the Left Hand Section, while the husbands help in fighting the battles of the Right Hand Section. They are either Saivites or Vaishnavites; but they also worship demons like Mutyalamma, Mariamma, Aiyanar, Muneswara and Ankamma. During the festivals the goddesses are frequently represented by a pile of seven pots, called Karagam, decorated with garlands. They have their caste beggars called Nokkars who receive presents at marriages, funerals, etc.

Among some of the Palliars, at the betrothal ceremony, the future bridegroom goes to the house of his prospective father-in-law where the headman of the future bride is present. The bridegroom's headman or his father then hands over betel, flowers, the bride's price (pariyam), the milk money (mulapal kuli) and a coconut to the father or headman of the bride saying "the money is yours, the girl is mine." The bride's father or the headman while receiving them says, "The money is mine, the girl is yours". This performance is repeated thrice and afterwards thambulam is distributed first to the maternal uncle and then to others. The marriage ceremony follows close on the betrothal; but if, in the interval, the girl's prospective husband dies, she may marry some one else. A girl normally, however, may not marry without the consent of her maternal uncle and, if he disapproves of a match, he has the right to carry her off even when the marriage ceremony is in progress and to marry her to a man of his selection. Among some Palliars, the bride, after her betrothal, is asked to touch the bow and sword of the bridegroom.

For the marriage ceremony the bridegroom goes with much pomp, sometimes mounted on a horse, to the bride's house. In ordinary cases the ceremony is performed in a day but in some cases it is spread over three days and performed with the puranic form of ritual. On the day preceding the wedding day, the bride is brought in procession to the house of the bridegroom and the marriage pots are purchased. On the morning of the wedding, the pots, the milk post and the light are placed on the marriage dais. The bride and bridegroom then go separately through the nalangu ceremony. They sit on a plank while five women smear them with oil and afterwards with green gram paste. Coloured water is then waved before them to avert the evil eye. They then go to bathe and, when they are bathing, five small cakes are placed on their head, knees, shoulders, etc. When the bridegroom is about to leave the bath room, cooked rice is waved before him and thrown away. The couple then go three times round the dais and offer pongal to the village gods, house gods and the ancestors. The tying of the tali is next performed before the milk post or the handle of a plough which has been set up, in the midst of a grindstone, a large pot and two lamps called kuda-vilakku (pot light) and alankara-vilakku (ornamental light). The Brahmin purohit ties the threads (kankanam) round the wrists of the bride and the bridegroom. The

tali is now passed round to be blessed by the assembled persons and handed to the bridegroom who ties it on the bride's neck, while his sister holds a light called Kamakshi Vilakku by his side. All this is done amidst music and the blowing of conches. The couple then change their seats and the ends of their clothes are tied together and rice is thrown on them. They next go round the dais and the milk post and at the end of the second turn, the bridegroom lifts the bride's left foot and places it on the grindstone. At the end of the third turn, the brother-in-law places the bridegroom's foot on the grindstone and puts on a toe ring for which he is paid some money and betel. The couple are then shown the pole star and Arundhati and milk and fruit are given to them. In the evening, after their wrist threads are removed, they proceed to a tank for a mock ploughing ceremony and afterwards worship the Pillayar. They remain in the bride's house for about a week and then go to the bridegroom's house. Before they enter the house coloured water and coconut are waved in front of them and, as the bride puts her foot within her new house, she is made to touch pots containing rice and salt with her right hand. It may be said here that widow re-marriage is permitted among the Palliars and that in such cases the tali is tied by a married woman, the bridegroom standing by the side, usually inside the house.

The dead are sometimes burnt and sometimes buried by the Palliars. As soon as a person dies his son goes round the corpse three times, carrying an iron measure (marakkal) in which a lamp rests on paddy. The corpse is then washed, while the widow bathes in such a way as to make the water fall upon it. The dead man and the widow then exchange betel three times, after which, the corpse is carried to the burning or burial ground on a bamboo stretcher. On the way thither, it is set down near a stone representing Harischandra, the guardian of the burial and cremation grounds, and food is offered to the stone. By some Palliars a two-anna piece is placed on the forehead and a pot of rice is placed on the breast of the corpse; and these are taken away by the officiating barber and the Paraiyar respectively¹.

The Kammalars, or the Visvabrahmins as they are now called, are made up of five occupational sections, namely, the Tattar (goldsmith), the Kannar (brass-smith), the Tachchar (carpenter), the Kal-Tachchar (stone mason) and the Kollar or Karumar (blacksmith). The name panchala which is sometimes used by the artisan classes has reference to these five-fold occupations. The five sections intermarry but, it is said, the goldsmiths have, especially in towns, ceased to intermarry with the blacksmiths. There are also three endogamous tribal groups among them, the Pandya, the Sozia (the Chola) and the Kongar. The Pandya Kammalars, who live principally in this district and in the Tirunelveli district,

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Volume VI, page 1-28.

are subdivided into a number of groups. Thus, the Pandya Tattars are divided into the Kanakattar, the Vambanattar, the Pannaikku-akkarayar (those on the other side of the Pennaiyar river), Mun-nuru Vittukarar (those of the three hundred families) and so forth. They are also further subdivided into exogamous septs like the Perugumani, the Musiri, the Oryanadu, the Tiruchendurai, and the Kalagunadu.

The Kammalars have adopted Brahmanical gotras and the five sections among them have five gotras called the Visvagu, the Junga, the Ahima, the Janardhana, and the Ubbendra. (the Upendra). Each of these gotras, it is said, has twenty-five subordinate gotras. In their marriages they closely imitate the Brahmanical ceremonial and their marriage ceremonies last for three or five days. But contrary to the Brahmanical custom the bride's money is paid among them and their widows are allowed the use of ordinary jewellery and betel and not required to make the usual fast.

Their dead are as a rule buried in a sitting posture but cremation is nowadays more and more coming into vogue among them. Death pollution among them, as among the other Non-Brahmin castes, is observed for sixteen days. It is usual for a pandaram to officiate at their death ceremonies. On the first day the corpse is anointed with oil and given a bath. On the third day five lingams are made of mud and of these, four are placed in the four corners at the spot where the corpse is buried and the fifth is placed in the centre. On the fifth day, food is distributed to the pandarams and the castemen. Some of them observe also sraddha ceremonies.

They profess the Saiva faith and hold Pillayar in great reverence, but their special goddess is Kamakshi Amma who is commonly spoken of as a Vritthi Daivam. She is worshipped by all the subdivisions and female children are frequently named after her. On auspicious occasions the first betel and dakshina are set apart in her name and sent to the pujari of the local temple dedicated to her. Oaths are taken in her name and caste disputes settled before her temple. Besides Kamakshi Amma, they worship also various village goddesses (grama devatas) such as Saptha Kanniar (seven virgins), Kochade Periyandavan (Vishnu) and Periyar Nayanar (a manifestation of Siva). They claim to be descended from Visvakarma, the architect of the gods, and on that account they consider themselves superior to the Brahmins, and call the latter as Gobrahmins and themselves as Visvabrahmins. Visvakarma is said to have had five sons named Manu, Maya, Silpa, Trashtra and Daivagna; and these are said to be the originators of the five castes among the Kammalars. Accordingly, some of them who do smithy work are called Manus; some who do carpentry work are named Mayas; some who do stone carving are known as Silpis; some who do metal work style themselves as Trashtras; and some who do jewellery work call themselves Visvagnas or Daivag-

nas. According to another story, however, the Kammalars are the descendants of a Brahmin and a Beri Chettiar woman. They belong to the Left Hand as opposed to the Right Hand faction. Sometimes they call themselves Achari and Paththar which are equivalent to the Brahmin titles Acharya and Bhatta and claim a knowledge of the Vedas. Their pandarams officiate at their marriages, funerals and other ceremonies. They wear the sacred thread and most of them claim to be vegetarians. Their women, unlike those of the other castes, throw the end of their sari over the right shoulder.

The Kammalars are a highly organized caste. Each of their five subdivisions has at its head a Nattamaikkarar or headman and a Karyasthar or chief executive officer under him who are elected by the members of the subdivision. Over them all is Anjivittu Nattamaikkarar (also known as Andivittu Periyathanakkarar or Anjjati Nattamaikkarar) who is elected by lot by the representatives chosen from among the five subdivisions¹.

The Pallars are mostly agricultural labourers. Their name is said to be derived from Pallam, a pit, in which low place they were said to be standing when the castes were originally formed. It is also said to be derived from low-ground or wet cultivation in which they are experts. Some say that they were the descendants of a Sudra and a Brahmin; others say that they were created by Devendra for the purpose of labouring on behalf of the Vellalars. They themselves trace their lineage to Indra and in token thereof their brides, like the Kallar brides, wear a wreath of flowers. They consider themselves superior to the Paraiyars and Chakkiliyars as they do not eat beef.

They have a number of subdivisions such as the Aiya (father), the Amma (mother), the Anja (father), the Atta (mother), the Devendra (Indra), the Kadaiyar (lowest or last), the Konga, the Manganadu, the Sozia and the Tondaman. These subdivisions are endogamous. The Aiya and the Amma Pallars are said to have exogamous septs or kilais which, like those of the Maravars and the Kallars, run in the female line. Children belong to the same kilai as that of their mother and maternal uncle and not of their father. The headman of the Pallars is called Kudumbar and he is assisted by a Kaladi and sometimes by a caste messenger called Variyar whose business it is to summon people to attend caste meetings, marriages, funerals, etc. An ex-communicated man among the Pallars is strictly dealt with and deprived of the services of even the barber and the washerman. Restoration to caste is done by a purification ceremony.

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. III, pages 106-125.

Census of India 1901 Vol. XV part I pages 159-160 Gazette of the Madras District by W. Francis Vol. I, 1906, page 99.

In one form of marriage among them the bridegroom's sister goes to the house of the bride with a tali, a new cloth, betel, flowers and fruits and ties the tali round the bride's neck. The bride then goes round a milk post and afterwards to the house of the bridegroom. Here the couple sit together on a dais when coloured water or coloured rice balls with lighted wicks are waved around them. They then go thrice round the dais with linked fingers and the ceremony comes to an end. In another more elaborate form of ceremonial, on the occasion of the betrothal, the parents and maternal uncle of the bridegroom go to the bride's house with rice, fruits, plantains, coconut, sandal paste and turmeric and hand over these articles with the bride's money to the Kudumbar or Kaladi of her village. On the wedding day a booth is erected, a milk post is set up by the maternal uncles of the bride and bridegroom, a marriage dais is made and the couple, after being bathed and tied with wrist threads (kankanam), are made to go round four betel leaves and arecanuts placed at each corner of the dais three times, saluting the betel as they pass. They then sit on the dais while two men stretch a cloth over their heads. The Kudumbar or Kaladi pours a little water on the palms and heads of the couple and waves the water vessel before them, while the maternal uncles, headmen and others garland the couple. The bride is now taken into the house and given a new cloth by her maternal uncle, and, as soon as she is dressed, she is lifted by him in his arms and carried to the dais and seated beside the bridegroom. After this the fingers of the couple are linked together beneath a cloth held by the maternal uncles. The tali is then placed on the neck of the bride by the bridegroom to be tightly tied thereon by his sister. Just before the tali is tied, the headman cries out "May I look into the bride's money and presents?" and on being answered "yes", he says thrice, "Seven bags of nuts, seven bags of rice, etc., have been brought". In some places the bridegroom is required to steal something from the bride's house when they return home after the marriage.

The Pallars, it is said, are nominally Saivites but in reality devil worshippers who perform pujas to the grama devatas. Formerly they used to indulge in animal sacrifices. Their common titles are generally Muppar, Kudumbar and Mannadai¹.

The Vannars are washermen of the community. The name is said to be rather an occupational term than a caste title. The Pandya Vannars or Vannar proper, include the Vaduga Vannars, "northern washermen", or washermen of the Telugu country and the Palla, the Pudara and the Tuluka Vannars who wash for the Pallars, the Paraiyars and the Muslims respectively. The Pandya Vannars have a headman called Periamanushar (big man) who has

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. V, pages 472-486.

Madura District Manual by J. H. Nelson, Part II, 1866, pages 57-59.

the usual powers and privileges. As to their marriage customs, a man can claim the hand of his paternal aunt's daughter and at the weddings the bride's price is paid and the bridegroom's sister ties the tali and the Nambis officiate. Divorce is allowed among them on payment of twice the bride's price and the divorcees may marry again. Their caste god is Gurunathar and they have their own pujaris. They generally burn their dead and observe the sixteenth day ceremony¹.

The Kusavars are the Tamil potters. The name kusavar is said to be derived from the Sanskrit word 'ku' signifying earth, the material in which they work, and 'avar', a personal termination. They wear the sacred thread and profess both Saivism and Vaishnavism. Their ceremonies are somewhat like the ceremonies of the Vellalars. Some of them have priests of their own caste, while others employ Brahmin priests. They have usually Velan as their title. They are divided into three territorial sections, Chola, Chera and Pandya and they say that they are descended from the three sons of Kulan, the son of Brahma. Kulan, they say, prayed to Brahma to be allowed, like him, to create and destroy things daily and Brahma accordingly made him a potter.

A Kusavar can claim the hand of his paternal aunt's daughter. Among them the bride's price is paid and the tali is tied by the bridegroom's sister. Their marriage ceremonies last for three days and one of their curious ceremonies consists in the bridegroom's sister sowing seeds in a pot. On the last day of the wedding the seedlings which have sprouted are taken with music to a river or tank and thrown into it. When the bride attains maturity, their caste priest conducts a ceremony and consummation follows on the next auspicious day. Both divorce and widow marriage are normally forbidden among them. Their special deity is Aiyanar².

The Ambattans or the Ambattars are the Tamil barbers who have been for ages also village medicine men, surgeons and musicians. Their women used to be regarded as the village midwives. They have adopted Brahmin ceremonies to a large extent and at their marriages, a Brahmin priest officiates. On the first two days of the marriage ceremony a homam is made. On the third day the tali is placed on a circular silver or brass tray and touched with the forefinger of the right hand first by the presiding Brahmin and then by other Brahmins, men of superior castes and the castemen headed by the Perithanakkarakar or the headman. It is then, amidst much music, tied to the bride's neck before the sacred fire. During the ceremony no widows are generally permitted to be present. The relations of the bride and the bridegroom scatter rice on the floor in

² Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 101.

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. IV, pages 188-197.

front of the couple, after the Brahmin priest and headman of the family. This rice is afterwards given to the Perithanakkarak. The Brahmin receives as his fee some money and a pair of silk bordered cloths. He receives also the first *pan supari*, plantains and coconuts. During the fourth and fifth day the *liomam* is completed and *shadangu*, or merry making between the bride and bridegroom before the assembled people, takes place, in which the bride sings songs. On the fifth day the removal of the *kankanam*, or the threads which have been tied round the wrists of the bride and bridegroom, is performed. Widow marriage is forbidden.

The dead among them are cremated, with the exception of children who are buried. Their death ceremonies are conducted by a Brahmin priest who is remunerated for his services with money and a cloth. Gifts of money and cloth are made to other Brahmins as well when the days of pollution are over. They also perform *sraddhas*.

They are either Saivites or Vaishnavites. The Vaishnavites among them who have been branded by their Brahmin guru with the *chank* and *chakram*, abstain from meat. Inter-marriages between the two sections are allowed and commonly practised. They belong to the Right Hand faction¹.

The Parivarams derive their name from "an army or retinue" and they are probably an off-shoot of the Maravars. The term is, however, now applied to the domestic servants of the Tottiya Zamindars. The caste, it is said, lay down that all its members should do service to its masters. The Parivarams do not generally employ the Brahmin priests and in some places the head of the Tottiyar caste conducts their ceremonies. Their titles are *Tevan*, *Maniyagarar* and *Servaigarar*. The latter title, it may be stated here, is also used by the *Agamudaivars*, the *Kallars* and the *Maravars*. The caste is divided into two endogamous sections; the *Chinna Uliyam* (little services) who are palanquin bearers and the *Peria Uliyam* (big services). The *Kombai Parivarams* are a separate community and do not intermarry with the others.

When a girl attains maturity among the Parivarams, she is kept for sixteen days in a hut which is guarded at night by her relations. This is afterwards burned down and the pots she used are broken into tiny bits, since it is believed that, if rain water collects in them, the girl would be childless. Some of their wedding ceremonies are unusual. On the first day a man takes a big pot of water with a smaller empty pot on top of it and marches three times round the open space in front of the bride's house. With him march the couple carrying a bamboo to which are tied in a yellow coloured cloth nine kinds of grain. After the third round these are put down at the north-east corner of the house and the marriage *pandal* is made by bringing three more poles of the same size. The

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. I, pages 32-41.

wrists of the couple are now tied together and they are carried to a short distance by the bridegroom's brother. They then plunge their hands in a bowl of salt. The bridegroom next takes an ordinary stone rolling pin, wraps it up in a piece of cloth and gives it to his wife saying, "Take the child; I am going to the palace." She takes it replying: "Yes, give me the child; the milk is ready". This has to be repeated three times after which the bridegroom's sister ties the tali. Divorce is allowed among them on both sides.

The Kunnnavars are the principal cultivating caste on the Palni hills. Their traditions say that their ancestors were the Vellalars of the Coimbatore district who came from the place called Kannur. Other traditions add that the *Virupakshi* and *Ayyakudi Palayakars* helped them to settle on their land in the hills which up till then had been badly cultivated by the *Pulaiyars*. The Kunnnavars thus ousted the latter and eventually, it is said, turned them into predial serfs. In every Kunnavar village there is the headman called *Mannadi* who has the usual powers. The caste is divided into three endogamous *vaguppus* (sections), namely, *Peria Kunnavar*, *Kunnavar* and *Chinna Kunnavar*. They will all eat together. Their women wear rough metal necklets, brass bangles and anklets, silver bangles on their upper arms and rings on their noses; and they knot up their *saree* in front tightly across the breasts. The claim of a man to his paternal aunt's daughter is rigidly maintained among them. Divorce is usually obtained by the party by paying bride price, but the children all go to the father. They worship the usual deities of the plains and generally burn their dead².

The *Pulaiyars* were probably the earliest inhabitants of the Palni hills and they seem to have had their own way until the arrival of the Kunnnavars. The caste has a headman called *Nattamaikarar* who is assisted by a *Servaikarar* and a *toti* or peon. It is grouped into three exogamous subdivisions called *Kuttams* which are known as *Kolan Kuppan*, *Pi hi* and *Mandiyaman* after their supposed original ancestors. Their marriages are arranged by their parents. They pay bride price, tie a tali of white beads round the bride's neck, permit divorce on payment of bride price, and allow divorces and widows to re-marry. Their favourite deities are *Mayandi* (whose shrine is generally on a knoll close to the village), *Karumalaiyar*, and a goddess called *Puvadai*. Festivals in honour of these deities are held in Chittrai when dancing by a dozen men who have sanctioned themselves by abstaining from beef for a whole year, is arranged. On the first day of the festival they formerly used to sacrifice a sheep to *Mayandi*, but nowadays animal sacrifices are forbidden. On the next day they take a *ragi* pudding in a pot to the shrine of *Karumalaiyar* and after dancing round the pot, distribute the pudding to the assembled. On the third day they begin

² Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 102-103.

Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. VI, pages 156-158.

³ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 103-104.

an eight-day fast to Puvadai at the end of which they dance once more. In fact, the whole caste is said to be extremely fond of dancing and in Panguni (March-April) both men and women dance a great deal to the sound of the drum. Pulaiyars eat beef and pork and even rats. They are fond of hunting excursions during which when an animal is killed they send its skin or some part to their nearest temple so that the deity might give them more good sport in future. They are supposed to know the powers of the medicinal flowers and herbs. Their aid is invoked in cases of demoniac possession, as it is believed that the local deities can be propitiated only through their intervention¹.

The Paliyars are a very backward caste who reside in small scattered parties amid the jungles of the Upper Palnis and the Varushanad Valley. They dwell in grass huts or caves, abstain from eating beef and live upon roots, yam and honey. They cook the roots, etc., by putting them in a pit, heaping some firewood over it and setting light to the firewood. The fire is usually kept burning all night so as to keep away the wild beasts. They are very shy and avoid other people. They make fire with quartz and steel, using the floss of the silk cotton as tinder.

Their marriages are generally arranged by the elders of the family. They do not pay bride price, but the bride receives some trifling presents from her relations such as roots, honey, beads, etc., at the time she goes to her husband's dwelling. The actual ceremony of marriage among them consists in the tying of a tali made up of a string of black beads round the bride's neck and the presentation of a cloth to her by the bridegroom. The bride also ties a similar string of beads round the neck of the bridegroom. After this, a feast is held and the young couple are severely left alone, some say for a few days, others for three or four months and some others until the first conception. Marriages are permitted between a man and his maternal uncle's daughter or sister's daughter. All other marriages among relations are prohibited. Widow marriages are allowed among them. Their dead are always buried. The corpse is not washed or prepared in any way but is placed in a grave in a recumbent position on its back. On the eighth day after death the spirit of the deceased is worshipped with offerings of roots and honey and its protection is invoked. From that time onwards the spirit is deemed to be merged in the deity. The dead are remembered however whenever Palichiammal is worshipped. In times of great distress or when a person suddenly dies, an invocation of the spirits of the departed takes place and the spirits are then said to manifest themselves through a living person present who makes revelations. This is called "the calling of the shadows".

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 104-105.

² Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 105-106. Census of India, 1931, Vol. XIV, Part I, pages 370-373.

The Valaiyars are a hunting caste who usually live by netting game in jungles and by cultivation. They are said to be experts at catching rats and jungle fowl and they have a belief that the rat tribe is still at war with them and is engaged in devising various means for harassing them. They are said to be less Brahmanized in Madurai than in Tanjore. Here they have among them four endogamous subdivisions, namely, the Vahni, the Valattu, the Karadi and the Kangu. The last of them is again subdivided into the Pasikatti, those whose women use a bead necklet instead of a tali, and Karaikatti, those whose women wear horse-hair necklets. Their caste title is Muppar, and caste matters among them are settled by a headman called Kambliyar (blanket man) who holds his court seated on a blanket. The fines imposed by him go in equal shares to him and to the caste people.

A Valaiyar has the right to claim his maternal uncle's daughter as wife, but whether he marries her or not he has to procure the consent of his maternal uncle for his marriage. At the marriage ceremony the bridegroom's sister takes up the tali and, after showing it to those assembled ties it tightly round the neck of the bride. To tie it loosely, to make it touch the collar-bone, is considered to be a breach of custom. The tali tying ceremony invariably takes place at night. The marriages generally take place from January to May and consummation is not effected till the end of the month of Adi lest the child should be born in the month of Chittrai, which is held to be very inauspicious. Widow re-marriage and divorce are permitted among them, the latter on payment of fines. It is said that, when a girl attains maturity among them, she is made to live for a fortnight in a temporary hut which she afterwards burns down. While she is living in the hut, the girls of the caste are said to meet outside it and sing a song illustrative of the charms of womanhood. The dead among them are, as a rule, buried with rites similar to those of the Kallars and the Agamudaiyars, the final death ceremonies being performed on the sixteenth day. A peculiar custom is that when a woman loses her husband, she goes three times round the village mandai with a pot of water on her shoulder. After each of the first two journeys the barber makes a hole in the pot and, at the end of the third, he hurls down the vessel and cries out an adjuration to the departed spirit to leave the widow and children in peace. They are all devil worshippers and their deities are usually Singa Pidari (Aiyanar), Padinettampadi Karuppar, Papparayar, etc.¹

The Paraiyars or as they are commonly called Pariahs, some say, derive their name from parai which means a drum, since certain sections of the Paraiyars act as drummers at marriages, funerals, festivals, etc. Others, however, question this derivation remarking that it is only some of the Paraiyars, and not all, who

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 97-98. Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. VII, Pages 272-280.

act as drummers. The term Paraiyar is said to be not found in ancient Tamil literature; instead, the term used in those days is said to be Pulayar or Eyinar. In ancient times they are said to have held a higher social status but today they rank low in society and are employed as agricultural labourers, grave diggers, village watchmen, scavengers, etc.

It is usual among them to give the father's name when distinguishing one person from another; as, for instance, Tamburan, son of Kannan. They also delight in giving nick names such as Nondi (lame), Kallan (thief), Kullan (dwarf), etc. There are many subdivisions among them. In Madurai the most prominent subdivisions are the Amma, Mottai and Sozhia. They generally live in a cheri (gathering place) or, as it is sometimes called, paracheri, away from other communities. They belong to the Right Hand faction, have priests of their own called Valluvars and a few important individuals known as Panakkarars (money men). The Panakkarars form a committee or council to decide ordinary quarrels and caste disputes, and exercise the rights of imposing fines, dissolving marriages, passing sentences of excommunications, etc. The excommunicated Paraiyars are said to go to a mythical place called Vinnamangalam.

Among the Paraiyars it is usual for a man to marry his father's sister's daughter or his mother's brother's daughter. Marriage contracts are generally made by parents and marriage presents, such as a few clothes, jewels, rice, etc., are exchanged between the families of the bride and bridegroom. Their actual marriage ceremony is very simple. The essential part of it is the tying of the tali, a turmeric-stained string, round the bride's neck. This is done by the bridegroom in the presence of a Valluvar who blesses the pair. A series of feasts are then given to all the relatives of both the parties by the parents of the couple. The bride and the bridegroom do not live together immediately, even if the girl is old enough; the exact date on which their life together should begin is decided by the bride's mother. On this occasion called Soppana muhurtham another feast is held amidst much merry-making. The dead are as a rule buried, but sometimes they are burnt. As for their funeral rites, these are also very simple. The corpse is carried on a litter of palm leaf mats and bamboos, wrapped in a new cloth and, on the third or fifth day after death, a pal sadangu, or milk ceremony, is performed when some milk is poured out by the relatives as an offering to the spirit of the deceased. The spirit is then supposed to depart to a place of respite till fate decrees that it should be reborn. This ceremony is accompanied by a family feast. On the fifteenth day the Karumantaram ceremony is held. Occasionally, for some months after death, a few flowers are placed on the grave and a coconut is broken over it. Sometimes however anniversaries are held.

The Paraiyars are nominally Saivites or Vaishnavites but in reality devil worshippers. They acknowledge the existence of a supreme, omnipresent, spiritual being, the source of all, whom they call Kadavul (He who is). But Kadavul possesses no temples, nor is he worshipped. The devatas whom they generally worship are called Amma (mothers). Sometimes the Amma are worshipped as Virgins (Kanniyamma) or the Seven Virgins. Some stones representing the Seven Virgins are placed on a little platform under a margosa tree sheltered by a wattle hut or a small brick temple. This temple is called Amman Koil. More usually they worship in a similar temple one particular mother called Grama Devata, such as Ellamma, Mungilamma, Padaiyattal or Pidariyamma. The goddesses whom they specially revere as titular deities are Ganganmal and Mariyattal. The former is considered the goddess of cholera, while the latter is considered the goddess of smallpox. Festivals are held in their honour whenever cholera or smallpox makes its appearance. Besides these goddesses they worship also a number of ghosts and goblins (pei or pisasu).

The Vedars are a Tamil-speaking, labouring and hunting caste, the members of which were formerly soldiers. The name means a hunter and they occupy a low position in society. Among them widows may marry their late husband's brother or agnates. They either burn or bury their dead. They claim a descent, like the Ambalakarars, from Kannappa Nayanar, one of the sixty-three Saiva Saints. Their title is generally Nayakkar².

Coming to the Non-Tamil castes, a Telugu caste which is characteristic of the district are the Tottiyars, otherwise known as the Kambattar or Kambalattar Nayakas. Most of them speak now Tamil, but their women commonly speak Telugu. Their usual occupation is cultivation. They are said to have originally come first from the region north of the Tungabhadra to Vijayanagar on account of Muslim persecution and subsequently come to Madurai along with the Vijayanagar armies, when the Nayaka rule was established in the country. Formerly caste matters among them were decided by a headman called Mettu Nayakkar and a priest called Kodangi Nayakkar. Nowadays they are generally decided by a public assembly the leaders of which seat themselves on a blanket upon which is placed a pot of water containing margosa leaves as an emblem of the presence of the deity. Persons charged with offences, it is said, are called before this assembly and asked to prove their innocence.

The caste is divided into three endogamous sections, Vekkili, Thokala and Yerrakolla, of which the last is held to be inferior to the other two. Each one of these has a number of septs. When

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. VI, pages 77-139.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, 1909, pages 231-235.

a girl attains maturity among the Tottiyars, she is usually kept in a separate hut for some days. A man has the usual marriage claim to his paternal aunt's daughter. Among the Yerrakollas, cumbu must be cooked on the betrothal day, and seven people belonging to seven different septs must be fed and presented with betel and some money. On the wedding day the bride and the bridegroom are seated on a plank on the marriage dais and milk is sprinkled over them by the people. A few hours later, the bridegroom takes his seat in the pandal whither the bride is brought in the arms of her maternal uncle. The Mettu Nayakar or the headman then links together the little fingers of the contracting couple and tells them to exchange rings. This is the binding portion of the ceremony and no bottu (tali) is tied round the bride's neck. At a wedding among the Vekkiliyars, two huts are constructed in an open space outside the village, in front of which a pandal is erected, roofed with leafy twigs of the pongu tree. On the following day the bride and the bridegroom are conducted to the huts, the bride being sometimes carried in the arms of her maternal uncle. They then worship the ancestral heroes who are represented by new cloths folded and placed on a tray. The bridegroom's sister next ties the bottu on the bride's neck inside her hut in front of which cumbu is scattered. Betel and some coins are then placed in the bride's lap. On the third day the bridegroom, mounted on a horse, goes accompanied by the marriage pots three times round the huts. He then enters the bride's hut and she is carried in the arms of the cousins of the bridegroom thrice round the huts. The couple now sit on planks and the consins, by order of the Mettu Nayakkar, link their little fingers together. After this, the couple enter the bridegroom's hut and perform a mock ploughing ceremony. Coming out from the hut they take up a child and carry it three times round the huts. At a wedding among the Tottiyars a fowl is killed near the marriage pots and with its blood a mark is made on the foreheads of the bride and bridegroom on their entry into the booths.

At a Tottiyar funeral, fire is carried to the burning ground by a Chakkiliyar and the pyre is lighted not by the sons but by the relations (sammandhis). The Tottiyars observe ancestral worship and their ancestors are represented by a number of stones set up somewhere within the village boundaries. Such places are called 'malai'. When a member of the caste dies, some of the bones, it is said, are buried in these places along with a coin and a stone is planted on the spot. The stones are arranged in an irregular circle.

Sati was formerly practised among the Tottiyars and their two caste goddesses Jakkamma and Bommavva are deifications of women who committed Sati. Every four years a festival is held in their honour, when a bullock race is also arranged and the owner of the winning bullock given a prize and the first betel and nut.

Their caste god is Perumal who is worshipped in the form of a grinding stone¹.

The Kappiliyars, or the Karumpurathals as they are sometimes called, are Kannada-speaking farmers whose common agnomen is Koundar or Kavandar. Some of them say that they originally came from the banks of the Tungabhadra river because they were oppressed by the Tottiyars. Others say that they came south first to Mysore, then to Kancheepuram, next to Coimbatore and finally to Madurai because they were oppressed by the Muslims. They are one of the nine Kambalam castes who are so called because at their caste council meetings a kambli (blanket) is spread on which is placed a brass vessel filled with water and decorated with flowers. They are split up into two endogamous subdivisions, namely, Dharmakattu, so called because, out of charity, they allow widows to remarry one more husband, and the Munukattu, i.e., those who permit a woman to have three husbands in succession. They are also said to have four subdivisions, called Vokkiliyar (cultivator), Muru Balayanoru (three bangle people), Bottu Kattoru (bottu tying people), and Vokkulothoru. They have a large number of exogamous septs and subdivisions; one of these exogamous septs is called Ane (elephant) and some of the sub-septs are named Hatti (hamlet), Arane (lizard) and Pulli (tiger). The affairs of the caste are regulated by a headman called Gauda.

The common emblem of married life, the tali or the bottu, is dispensed with in their marriages. On the first day of the marriage ceremonies the bride and the bridegroom are conducted towards evening to the houses of their maternal uncles. There the nalangu ceremony, or the smearing of the body with turmeric and sandal paste, is performed and the uncles place toe-rings on the feet of the couple. On the following day the bride's price is paid and betel is distributed to the villagers. On the third day the bridegroom goes in procession to the house of the bride and their fingers are linked together by the maternal uncle or the uncles. This day is called the Kai Kudukahodina or hand-locking day. A man's right to marry his paternal aunt's daughter is rigorously insisted upon among the Kappiliyars. At the first menstrual period, a girl remains under pollution for thirteen days in a corner of the house or in a hut. If a hut is used, it is then burnt down and the pots she had used are broken into atoms.

Their caste deities are said to be Lakkamma and Viru Lakkamma, but they also worship other deities such as Chenraya Timmappa, and Singara Perumal.

Their dead are as a rule cremated, but children and those who have died of cholera and pregnant women are buried. In the case

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 106-108.

Madurai District Manual by J. H. Nelson, Part II, 1868, pages 81-84.

Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. VII, pages 182-197.

of pregnant women, it is said, the child is, before burial, removed from the mother's body. Their funeral ceremonies are carried out very much on the lines of those of the Tottiyars.

The Anuppars are, like the Kappiliyars, a caste of Kannada farmers who seem to have migrated to Madurai from Mysore or South Kanara. Some of them are Saivites while others are Vaishnavites. The Brahmins are employed as priests by the Vaishnavites but not by the Saivites. They are mostly found in the Kambam Valley. They have six territorial groups called Medus which are named after three villages in the Madurai district and three in the Tirunelveli district. Over each of these is a headman called Periyadanakkarakar and the three former are also subject to a guru. These three are divided again into eighteen kilais or branches, each of which intermarries only with certain of the others. Caste panchayats among them are held on a blanket on which is placed a pot of water containing margosa leaves to symbolize the sacred nature of the meeting. The right of a man to his paternal aunt's daughter is rigorously maintained among them as among the Kappiliyars and the Tottiyars. No tali is tied at the weddings and the binding part of the wedding ceremony is the linking, on seven separate occasions, of the little fingers of the couple. Like the Kappiliyars, the Anuppars have many caste and family deities, a number of whom are women who committed *Sati*².

The Patnulkarars, or Sourashttras as they are now called, are a foreign caste of enterprising weavers who originally came from the Sourashtra country. They claim to be Brahmins and support their claim on a *sasana* issued by Queen Mangammal. It is said that in their ceremonies including those of marriage and funeral they follow more the Brahmin than the Dravidian customs. Like the Brahmins they wear the sacred thread and tack on to their names such titles as Ayyangar, Ayvar, Rao, Bhagavathar, Sastrigal and so on, though the conservatives among them still call themselves Chetti. They disallow widow marriage, worship both Siva and Vaishnava deities, and pass for pure vegetarians. A curious ceremony confirming their foreign origin is said to be performed at their weddings. Before the date of the wedding the bridegroom's party go to the bride's house and ask formally for the girl's hand. Her relations then ask them in a set form of words who they are and whence they come and they reply that they are from Surat, that they resided at Devagiri, that they travelled south to Vijayanagar and thence came to Madurai. They have their own *sabha* to manage their affairs and they are experts in silk-weaving³.

The Devangas are a caste of Kannada and Telugu weavers of the Tamil districts. They are also called Senniars and Sedars in

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 108-109.
² Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. III, pages 215-222.

³ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 109.

⁴ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. VI, pages 160-176.

Madurai. The name Devanga means "body of the gods" and the caste people say that they originally sprang from a Brahmin Rishi called Devalar or Devanga. They employ generally their own castemen as priests, but some of them also employ Brahmin priests. Some of them wear also the sacred thread. Their title is usually Chetti, but some of them call themselves by the Brahmanical titles of Sastri and Ayyar. They have several endogamous as well as exogamous septs. The majority of them are Saivite and wear the lingam. They belong to the Left Hand faction and have their own dancing girls called Seda Dasis. They have also a class of beggars of their own called Jatipillais.

Their tribal goddess is Chaudeswari, a form of Kali or Durga, who is worshipped annually at a festival in which the entire community takes part either at the temple or at a house or grove specially prepared for the occasion. Their headman is called Pattagar. Their marriage ceremonies are either carried out according to the Puranic ritual or performed with some modifications to it. The ceremony usually commences with the distribution of *tambulam* and *Vigneswara* worship. The bride is then presented with a new cloth and sits on a three-legged stool, or cloth roller (*dhonige*) when her maternal uncle puts round her neck a *bondhu* (strings of unbleached cotton) dipped in turmeric. On the first day of the actual wedding ceremony a milk post is set up and various rites are performed, which include tonsure, *upanayanam*, *padapuja*, *kasiyatra*, *dharadattam* (giving away the bride) and *mangalya-dharanam* (tying the tali or *bottu*). The proceedings then conclude with pot searching. A pap-bowl and ring are put into a pot. If the bride picks out the bowl, her first born will be a girl, and if the bridegroom gets hold of the ring, it will be a boy. On the fifth day a square design is made on the floor with coloured rice grains and between the couple and the square, a row of lights is placed. Four pots are set, one at each corner of the square and eight pots are arranged along each side of it. On the square itself two pots representing Siva and Uma are placed with a row of seedling pots near them. A thread is wound nine times round the pots representing the god and goddess and tied above to the *pandal*. After the pots have been worshipped, this thread is cut and worn with the sacred thread for three months. This ceremony is called *Nagavalli*. The dead among them are generally buried in a sitting posture. Before the grave is filled in, a string is tied to the hair knot of the corpse and by its means, the head is lifted. Over it a lingam is set up and worshipped throughout the death ceremonies¹.

The Kavarais call themselves *Baliias*. They are a Telugu trading caste who have settled in the Tamil country. The name Kavarai is said to be a corrupt form of Kauravar, descendants of Kuru of the Mahabharatha, or it is said to be the equivalent of

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. II, pages 154-166.
Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 109-111.

Gauravalu, sons of Gouri, the wife of Siva. The name Baliija is said to derive from bali (fire), jaha (sprung), i.e., men sprung from fire. They have exogamous septs like tupaki (gun), jetti (wrestler), pagadala (coral), bandi (cart), simaneli, etc. Their common titles are Chettis and Nayakkars. Some of them trace their ancestry to a chieftain called Dora Krishnamma, who ruled near Manjakkuppam, tamed a wild elephant at Tiruchirappalli and subdued Tirunelveli. Their marriage ceremonies are based on the type common to many Telugu castes, but those who belong to the Simaneli sept, and believe themselves to be the direct descendants of Krishnamma, have two special forms of ceremonial, called Krishnamma perantalu, and the carrying of pots on the heads of the bride and bridegroom when they go to the temple before the Kasiyatra ceremony. The former is performed on the day prior to the tali-tying day, and consists in the worship of the soul of Krishnamma and the presentation of a new cloth, some money and betel to a married woman¹.

The Chakkiliyans or the Chakkiliyars are the leather workers of the Tamil districts. They appear to be immigrants from the Telugu or Kannada districts and a very large proportion of them speak Telugu and Kannada. In social position they occupy the lowest rank, though there is much dispute on this point among them and the Paraiyars. The avaram plant, the bark of which is a tanning agent, is held in much veneration by them and the tali is tied to a branch of it as a preliminary to marriage. Their marriage ceremonies closely resemble those of the Paraiyars. Their widows can remarry. Divorce can be obtained among them by either party by the payment of a certain sum, usually it is said, Rs. 12-12-0, to the other in the presence of the local head of the caste. Their women are said to be handsome and it is a woman of this caste that is generally selected for the coarser form of Sakti worship. They indulged formerly very freely in intoxicating liquors. They eat any flesh, including beef, pork, etc. The men among them belong to the right hand faction, while the women belong to the left hand faction. Nominally they are Saivites but, in reality, devil worshippers. Their gods include Madurai Viran, Mariamma, Muneswara, Draupadi and Gangamma. Of these, the last is said to be the most important².

Turning to the non-Hindu communities we have to deal only with the Muslims and the Christians, as these alone among the non-Hindus constitute a fair percentage of the population of the district. The Muslims of Madurai are mostly Labbais who usually go by their title of Rawutars. The word Labbai seems to be of recent origin; formerly the Labbais were called Sonagars, meaning natives of Sonagam (Arabia). They are, in fact, partly the descendants of Arab traders or refugees who married the women

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. III, pages 263-266.

² Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. II, 1906, pages 2-7.

of this coast and partly the descendants of the Hindus who were forcibly converted to Islam by Tipu Sultan and the previous Muslim invaders. In religion they are orthodox Muslims of the Hanifi sect, but their mother-tongue is Tamil and they follow in their domestic ceremonies, in their customs of inheritance and in their methods of dress, manners which are rather Hindu than Muslim. Their marriage ceremony closely resembles that of the lower caste Hindus, the only difference being that they cite passages from the Koran and that their women do not appear in public even during marriages. Some of the Labbais, for instance, set up a bamboo as a milk post and tie a tali round the neck of the bride, while the Nikkadim is being read. Labbais are mostly traders and betel growers; the leather trade is largely in their hands. They live in amicable terms with the Hindus. They are permitted to go to the famous temple of Subrahmanya at Palni to make their offerings there, while the Hindus flock to the well-known tomb of a Muslim fakir on the top of the hill at Tirupparankundram. Both also join in the celebration of the fire walking which in this district usually follows the Moharram¹.

The Christians owe their origin to the missionary activities of the Roman Catholic Mission. The early history of this Jesuit Mission under Father Fernandez, Robert-de-Nobili and others has already been given in brief in Chapter III while dealing with the rule of the Nayaka dynasty. The last of the famous missionaries of this period were Britto and Beschi. The former was martyred in the Ramanathapuram country in 1693; while the latter who contributed not a little to Tamil poetry, died in 1746. Thereafter the Jesuit Mission languished and in 1773 it was entirely suppressed by the Pope. In the years which followed much of its work was undone. The authorities at Rome accordingly appealed to the Society of Foreign Missions, which in 1783 had succeeded the Jesuits in the "Carnatic (or Pondicherry) Mission", and in 1795 the Vicar Apostolic of that body visited the Madurai Christians. But difficulties were raised by the priests of the Goanese church and it was not till 1830 that the then Vicar Apostolic was able to send into the country a batch of missionaries, Fathers Mehay, James and Mausset. In July 1836 the Pope created the Vicariate Apostolic of the Coromandel Coast, which included the Madurai country and in December of the same year the Madurai Mission was detached therefrom and formed into a separate organization under the Jesuits. In 1838 four Jesuit Missionaries came to Madurai. In the same year, although the Pope put an end to the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Goa over the mission, many of the Christians refused to accept the new position. Up to 1847, the mission was permitted to remain under the jurisdiction of Pondicherry. In that year, however, its first Vicar Apostolic, Bishop A. Canoz, was appointed. In 1857, by a concordat signed

¹ Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston, Vol. IV, 1909, pages 198-205.

Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 79-80.

between Rome and Portugal, the Archbishop of Goa was granted authority over the Goanese Christians in the mission's field and thence arose a double jurisdiction within it. This continued till 1886 when it was ended by another concordat, by the re-establishment of the Bishopric of Mylapore and the grant to it of that part of the Madurai Vicariate Apostolic which lay within the Tanjore district. By a subsequent agreement the church of Our Lady of Dolours at Dindigul (built in 1729) and of Our Lady of the Rosary facing the Perumal Teppakulam at Madurai (erected in 1776) were left in the hands of the authorities of Goa. In the same year (1886), the Pope established the Catholic hierarchy in India and the Madurai Vicariate Apostolic was formed into the Bishopric of Tiruchirappalli. In 1928 the remnants of the Mylapore jurisdiction in the Madurai district were made over to the Bishop of Tiruchirappalli. The mission has done good work in the field of education; it maintains several schools.

Another mission, the American Mission, was established in 1834 in Madurai as an off-shoot of the Jaffna Mission in Ceylon. Its first workers were Mr. and Mrs. Todd and Mr. Hoisington. It established stations in Dindigul (1835), Tirumangalam (1838), Pasumalai (1845), Periyakulam (1848), Vattilagundu (1857), Melur (1857) and Palni (1862). The East Gate Church at Madurai was begun in 1843 and finished in 1845. For several years, the mission engaged itself mostly in educational activities, establishing free schools and boarding schools for teaching English. In 1855 English education was abandoned by the mission, several changes were made in the schools and nearly all the boarding schools were abolished. But gradually this policy was again changed with the result that to-day it maintains a first-grade college and several schools. The mission has done also much in the way of providing medical aid to the people and in Kallar reclamation work.

The third mission, the Lutheran Mission, first began its activities in the district in the second half of the Eighteenth Century, in the time of the flourishing Danish Lutheran Missions at Tranquebar and Tanjore. Congregations were established in Dindigul and other places. The care of all these was eventually transferred to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and nothing more was done for many years. It was not until 1875 that the Leipzig Lutheran Mission began its work in the district. Since then it has also done much in the field of education.

The majority of the Christians in the district are Roman Catholics; next in number come the Non-Conformist adherents of the American Mission; and last the followers of the Lutheran sect. The Christians live mostly in the Dindigul, Madurai, Nilakkottai and Periyakulam taluks and several of them have adopted Hindu manners and customs¹.

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 75-70.
Idem, Vol. II, 1937, pages 90-94.
 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai District, 1953, page 210.

CHAPTER VI.

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION.

The Madurai district has never been self-sufficient in rice and other foodgrains. Neither the Periyar System nor the Grow More Food Schemes have succeeded in making her self-sufficient, though they have contributed much to increase her food supply. The reason for this is not far to seek. A good portion of the area of the district, no less than 911,749 acres, is occupied by hills, forests and other uncultivable lands; and of the cultivable area of 1,363,351 acres, no less than 345,140 acres are cultivated with cash crops like groundnut, cotton, sugarcane and tobacco¹. It is these factors that make the district a deficit district to the tune of 17,000 tons of rice and 43,000 tons of dry grains².

The chief food crops grown in the district are paddy (normally 370,760 acres), cholam (294,000 acres), cumbu (45,900 acres), ragi (49,200 acres), korra (11,600 acres), varagu (54,100 acres), samai (49,600 acres), horsegram (17,900 acres) and redgram (5,500 acres). The chief cash crops grown are groundnuts (141,000 acres), cotton (112,460 acres), sugarcane (9,580 acres), tobacco (5,210 acres) and gingelly (26,800 acres). The chief plantation crops raised are plantains (18,700 acres) coffee (12,220 acres), coconuts (8,330 acres), chillies (8,700 acres), cardamom (3,107 acres) and citrus fruits like sathugudis, oranges and limes, and other fruits like mangoes (28,350 acres) and grapes, etc. Besides this, fodder crops, which are nowadays becoming more and more important, are grown on 9,550 acres³.

The normal cultivation seasons for paddy are June-August and September-December. During these seasons two kinds of crops, one a short crop called the Kodai and the other a long crop called the Kalam, are sown. The short crop is usually of 3½ months or 4½ months duration, while the long crop is usually of 5 or 6 months duration. The agricultural practices followed for manuring, ploughing, transplanting or broadcasting the seeds for the cultivation of both these crops are, in essence, similar to those followed in the other districts. The land is first manured; sheep or goats are penned and cattle dung, house-sweepings, leaf manure, tank silt and municipal compost or oil-cakes are then applied. In the Dindigul taluk where tannery refuse is available, it is also being used as manure. Green manure crops like kolinji, sunnhemp, daincha and sesbania and green leaf yielding plants such as Glyricidia recommended by the Agricultural Department are new

¹ Season and Crop Report of the Madras State for 1950-51, pages 49, 56-59.

² Food and Agriculture in Madras State by B. Natarajan, 1953, page 16.

³ See the Season and Crop Report for 1950-51, pages 52-59.

being increasingly raised and used as manure. In the wet lands on both sides of the Periyar main canal and its branches in Nilakottai and the Madurai taluks daincha is largely grown, while kolinji is grown in the greater portion of the single crop paddy lands of the Melur, Madurai, Palni and Dindigul taluks. In the Kambam Valley sunhemp is regularly grown and in the wet lands of the Periyakulam taluk, lab-lab is sown mixed with cumbu in May-June and the crop is allowed to grow after the harvest of cumbu and is later on ploughed in as manure. In this taluk, groundnut is also raised after the harvest of the main paddy crop and the haulms after gathering the pods are ploughed in for the next paddy crop. Green leaf manure is also obtained from the forests. Among the chemical manures advocated by the department, ammonium sulphate has become very popular, since its effect is instantaneous. Groundnut and other oil-cakes have also become equally popular, since they are both cheap and quick in action.

After manuring, water is let into the field and the manure is turned under with the plough. Country ploughs are generally used, but cheap iron ploughs like P.S.G. Nos. 5, 6, 10, 16 and 32 recommended by the Agricultural Department are slowly making headway and have become very popular in the Kambam Valley. The 'Bose' plough, a modified country plough with iron share and mould board combined, is becoming popular in the higher soils, mainly in Melur, Nilakottai and Madurai taluks. Where ploughing cannot be done on account of the slushy nature of the soil, the land is turned over with the hoe (mamutti). The field thus ploughed or hoed is then levelled by dragging over it a log called parambu and rendered fit for transplantation. Transplantation is done from the seed beds which have already been prepared. Where water from wells or tanks is available, the seed beds are raised earlier than June before the Periyar water comes down. In other places the seed beds are raised only after the Periyar water becomes available in June. The seeds are soaked in water before they are sown in the seed beds. Fifty years ago the seeds used were Senkar (red kar), Vellaikar (white kar) and Aruvadan Kodai (60 days Kodai), for the short crop, and Sirumani (little grain), Milagu (round grain like pepper corn), Varigarudan samba (stripped kite coloured rice), Kamban Samba (rice resembling cumbu), Tillai Najakam (an improved variety), and Nariyan (stunted), for the long crop. From about 1920 improved strains evolved by the Agricultural Department came to be introduced, and to-day these improved strains consist of Co. 13 for the short crop, G.E.B. 24, B.A.M. 3 and A.S.D. 5 for the $4\frac{1}{2}$ months crop and Co. 25 and Co. 19 and MTU. 19, for the long crop. These strains are more and more being used. In the alkaline lands, a new strain called S.R. 26-B has been recommended for cultivation in July-August and is becoming increasingly popular mainly in the Tirumangalam taluk. The seed rate per cent of seed bed, which was formerly very high, has also now been following the methods advocated by the Agricultural Department, reduced generally to one Madras measure for every cent in all

places where the water-supply is assured, and double this rate in all places where the water-supply is not assured. When the seedlings are sufficiently grown, they are removed and transplanted in the fields prepared to receive them. After about a month, the crop is weeded by hand and after it is ripe it is harvested and thrashed in the usual manner. Where transplantation is not possible, the seeds are sown broadcast¹.

Ragi, which is important in this district, being the staple food of the poor, is mostly grown as a wet crop like paddy. Though it can be sown practically in all months, it is generally sown here in June, July, December, January, April and May. And, though it can be grown on any lands from the very poor to the very fertile, it thrives best, here as elsewhere, on fertile land where the soil is a well drained clayey loam. The land is first ploughed two or three times and manure is applied and ploughed in. When the soil is brought to the proper tilth, the bunds and channels are formed and the fields made into beds 10 or 12 feet square and levelled. Seedlings are raised in heavily manured seed beds, the seeds being sown thinly and watered carefully to prevent their getting washed off. When the seedlings are sufficiently grown, they are transplanted into the fields. As a dry crop, the ragi seed is broadcast shortly after the first rains of the monsoons. The Agricultural Department has popularised two improved strains in this district, namely Co. 1 and Co. 2. The dry grains like cholam, cumbu, samai and varagu and the pulses are grown in the dry lands under rain-fed conditions. Improved strains of cholam, Co. 9, Co. 12, Co. 16 and K-3 and those of cumbu, Co. 1, Co. 2 and Co. 3, are being popularised by the department². Hybrid cumbu X-1 and X-2 are gaining prominence for their higher yields.

Among the cash crops, groundnut is grown generally as a rain-fed crop in the Melur, Nilakottai, Dindigul, Palni, Periyakulam and Tirumangalam taluks. It is sown after the arrival of the south-west monsoon. The land is ploughed several times and the seed is grown in lines behind a country plough. Improved strains of groundnut, T.M.V. 1 and T.M.V. 2 are being popularised by the department³. Cotton is grown both under rain-fed and irrigated conditions. For the rain-fed crop, manuring is not usually done except once in six or seven years. Tilling commences after showers in June when the land is ploughed generally three times, the ploughing being a little deeper than usual. The seed is broadcast and ploughed in. In the black soils of the Tirumangalam and Palni taluks, the Uppam and Nattu varieties formerly

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. F. F. 1906, pages 114-116. Statistical Atlas of the Madurai Province, 1910-11, Madurai District, pages 3-4. Villagers' Calendar (Tamil), 1954-55, page 82.

² Statistical Atlas of the Madurai Province, 1910-11, Madurai District, page 4. Villagers' Calendar (Tamil), 1954-55, page 83.

³ Memoirs of the Department of Agriculture, 1954, pages 163-164.

⁴ *Idem* page 218. Villagers' Calendar (Tamil), 1954-55, page 83.

grown have been practically replaced by the improved Karunganni strains. K-2 cotton is being grown in the Tirumangalam area and K-5 cotton in the Palni area. In the red soils of Melur, Periyakulam, Dindigul, Nilakottai and Palni taluks, Cambodia cotton is raised under rain-fed conditions, the important strain being Co. 2 and M.C.V. 1. Under irrigation, Cambodia cotton is grown in garden lands and the strain M.C.U. 1 has gained great popularity due to its superior quality of lint. This strain is also being raised after the harvest of first crop of paddy in wet lands from January to March especially in Periyakulam and Nilakottai taluks under irrigation.

Sugarcane is grown in wet lands in rotation with paddy and in garden lands with other irrigated crops. Soon after the harvest of the previous crop tillage is commenced and the land is ploughed four to eight times and heavily manured. The department has introduced three improved strains in this district, Co. 419, P.O.J. 2878 and Co. 421, and this has had the effect of increasing the area under sugarcane. At present, the major area is under Co. 419, which gives a high yield of cane. Co. 449 and Co. 467 have also been introduced, mainly for the sugar factory area because of their higher sugar yield. Tobacco is grown under well irrigation mostly in the alkaline soils of the Dindigul and Periyakulam taluks. For this crop, the field is deeply ploughed and well-manured. Seedlings are raised in seed-beds and transplanted into the field when they are about three to four inches high. When the lowest leaves begin to turn spotted, the plant is cut close to the ground. The leaves are then cured by an elaborate process and used chiefly for making the famous Dindigul cigars.

As to the plantation crops, plantains are commonly grown in most of the taluks, and the famous Sirumalai plantains are extensively grown not only on the Sirumalais but also on the Palnis. Orange, lime, mango and grapes are grown in the Dindigul, Nilakottai, Periyakulam and Palni taluks. Coffee and cardamoms are chief products of the Lower Palnis; but these as well as tea are also grown on the hills in the Kambam Valley. English vegetables including potato and fruits are grown on the Kodaikanal hills, and ginger and garlic are grown on the Palnis². English vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, tomato, etc., are also being grown in the plains, mainly in the Periyakulam taluk.

Turning to the activities of the Agricultural Department, ever since this department was organized and placed under a Director of Agriculture in 1906, it has gone on rapidly expanding its activities with the result that it now consists of a Director of Agriculture, three Deputy Directors of Agriculture at the headquarters, four Deputy Directors of Agriculture in charge of four

¹ Gazetteer of the Madras District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 119-121.

² Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1940-41, Madurai District, page 4.

See also the Memoir of the Department of Agriculture, 1954.

divisions, the various District Agricultural Officers in charge of the districts and several special officers engaged in research or some such special work. There is at present a Deputy Director of Agriculture, with his headquarters at Madurai having jurisdiction over Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli districts. There is a District Agricultural Officer, a special District Agricultural Officer (Crop Sampling) and an Assistant Cotton Extension Officer with headquarters at Madurai. There are also nineteen Agricultural Demonstrators (including those working in the National Extension Service and Community Project areas) in the several taluks whose work is chiefly that of demonstrating to the cultivators the advantages of improved methods of paddy and other crops cultivation, of distributing to them better strains of paddy and other seeds and agricultural implements and iron and steel required for their purposes and of offering advice to them generally on all matters connected with agriculture. The department, in addition, periodically publishes books and pamphlets, embodying the results of latest research, besides issuing a Villagers' Guide and Calendar every year in the language of the district. The department has also a model orchard at Kamakshipuram in the Periyakulam taluk for demonstrating the best methods of growing fruit trees and for selling seedlings and a small sub-station on leased lands near Periyakulam for the improvement of unirrigated Cambodia cotton.

The agricultural prosperity of the district has been considerably increased by the Grow More Food Campaign started during the Second World War. This campaign was launched in 1942 in order to overcome the scarcity of foodgrains produced by the cessation of imports of rice from Burma, Thailand and Indo-China. The problem was how to meet this shortage so as not only to enable this State to become self-sufficient but also to enable it to supply the needs of the neighbouring States by some short term planning. And the planning that was devised took two directions, first that of bringing under food crop cultivation all areas lying uncultivated or cultivated with commercial crops and of increasing double crop cultivation during off season and secondly, that of encouraging intensive cultivation by the use of improved seeds and better manuring. For achieving these objects, the Government introduced a series of measures. Free or concessional cultivation of unoccupied Government lands, such as porombokes, village and town sites, lands on the sea front, lands in panchayats and reserved forests, tank beds and railway lands was permitted. Temporary assignment of lands reserved for public purposes was made. Compounds of Government offices and quarters and institutions and backyards of houses were allowed to be cultivated. Reductions in water-rate were made and penalties for technical infringement of irrigation rules were waived. Loans were advanced on a liberal scale for bringing new lands under cultivation, for purchasing seeds, manures and implements and for deepening existing wells and

digging new wells. The assessment of water-rate on land irrigated by such wells was remitted for three years. Seeds of improved strains of paddy, millets, pulses, groundnuts and green manure crops were produced regardless of expense and sold to the ryots at fair rates. Oil-cakes were procured from the presses under legal enactments and chemical fertilizers were obtained from the Government of India and both were distributed at fair prices to the ryots. They were even distributed free to the poor and deserving ryots. The preparation of compost from town refuse, waste vegetable matter, etc., was subsidized and encouraged. The movement of manure was controlled to prevent export outside the State. Agricultural implements and steel and iron required for agricultural purposes were distributed at cost price. Pumpsets run by oil engines, petrol or electricity were supplied in large numbers for irrigating fields with sub-soil water. Tractors were hired out for clearing, levelling and ploughing lands and making them fit for cultivation. Restriction on commercial crops cultivation was imposed. Numerous plots were cultivated departmentally to demonstrate the efficacy of improved methods of cultivation. Every encouragement was given to intensive cultivation by the distribution of prizes to those who produced the best results. Every opportunity was taken at fairs and festivals to hold agricultural exhibitions. Every effort was made to encourage the growing of vegetables and fruits and the production of eggs and milk through co-operative societies. The slaughtering of sheep and goats was controlled and the export of these as well as cattle and cattle food was banned. Schemes for the increased production of fish were undertaken. Power was taken under the Defence of India Rules for acquiring uncultivated lands. Power was also taken under the Madras Estates Land Temporary Amendment Act of 1944 for permitting tenants in estates to cultivate waste lands without their acquiring occupancy rights wherever the zamindars were not permitting such lands to be cultivated for fear of conferring such rights on the tenants. Power was likewise taken by the Madras Irrigation Works (Repairs, Improvement and Construction) Act of 1943 to repair or improve at Government cost any irrigation work lying neglected in private ownership and to recover the cost from the persons concerned. And everywhere land reclamation co-operative societies were subsidized and encouraged¹.

The Madurai district enjoyed the benefits of not only these general but also some special measures. For here, with a view to encouraging the growing of Kodai crop on an additional area of 10,000 acres in the Periyar delta, the supply of water from the Periyar lake was permitted subject to the payment of the usual charge for water. Here also small plots of grass in the reserved forests of the Palnis and parts of the hills at the head of the

¹ See the Grow More Food Pamphlets of 1942 to 1947.

Kanbam Valley were leased for the cultivation of vegetables and fruits under certain conditions. Here too, lands in the Palnis were thrown open for the temporary cultivation of potatoes and the cultivation of unirrigated foodcrops was permitted in the assessed waste lands of the Periyar tract in the Melur taluk. Nor was this all. Special loans were given here to the ryots who proposed to sink new wells and the export of cotton seeds from the cotton-growing areas was prohibited for conserving cattle food¹.

The cessation of the war did not by any means put an end to the Grow More Food Campaign. The war had shown how precarious the conditions in India could become, if she were to rely on other countries for the import of foodgrains. The moment the National Government took up office, therefore, they formulated a Five-Year Plan to be enforced from 1947-1948 to 1951-1952, the object of which was to produce an additional annual four million tons of foodgrains in India by the end of the period. The Government of India generously came forward to bear a portion of the cost of the scheme in all the States and fixed a target of production of six and a half additional lakhs of tons of foodgrains for Madras. The Government of Madras thereupon propounded a Five-Year Plan for this State. They found that of the total arable area of 361 lakhs of acres, nearly 334 lakhs of acres were already under crops of several kinds and that the real problem was not so much that of increasing the cultivable area as that of increasing the food and fodder crops in the areas already under cultivation. They accordingly fixed certain targets for the production of foodgrains for each year in the five-year period and sanctioned several schemes for achieving an all-round improvement. Under wells and irrigation schemes they sanctioned the digging of over 60,000 wells, the construction of about 5,000 private tanks and of about 240 minor irrigation works. Under the works schemes, they sanctioned contour bunding (in certain districts), the supply of tractors and bull-dozer for land clearance and reclamation and of pumping installations for lift irrigation. Under supply schemes they subsidized compost making from town refuse and waste vegetable matter by municipalities and pauchayats for providing cheap manures; they requisitioned the groundnut cake from oil presses and sold it to the ryots at subsidized prices; they obtained ammonium sulphate from the Government of India and distributed it; they adopted a scheme for the increased distribution of phosphatic manures, such as super phosphate and bone meal; they introduced a comprehensive scheme for the multiplication and distribution of improved seeds of paddy, millets, pulses, groundnut and green manure to the ryots at subsidized prices; and they continued the scheme for the distribution of iron and steel required for agricultural purposes. Under miscellaneous

¹ See the Grow More Food Pamphlet, 1948.

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schemes they provided for the distribution at cost price of chemicals and sprayers to control pests and diseases of food-crops and continued the free distribution of manures and seeds to the poor ryots. Under protective food production schemes, they took special steps to increase the production of vegetables, particularly in urban areas, and for the popularization of poultry farming, bee-keeping and the production of fish, milk and eggs. And finally, under service schemes, they sanctioned the creation of an adequate supervisory staff, provided for the training of more agricultural graduates and fieldmen and aimed at the appointment of an agricultural demonstrator for each firka¹.

Very soon a greater tempo was given to the whole plan. In March 1949 the Government of India announced their decision to stop all imports of foodgrains from foreign countries from the end of 1951, and asked the State Governments to still further intensify their food production schemes in order to achieve self-sufficiency. This Government then appointed a Cabinet Sub-Committee for Food Production and a Member of the Board of Revenue as Commissioner for Food Production for co-ordinating the activities of the different departments engaged in food production. They also introduced a Two-Year Plan to intensify the several schemes sanctioned under the Five-Year Plan. The Two-Year Plan hoped to achieve the target of an additional production of 4.71 lakhs of tons of rice and millets by the end of 1949-50 and 5.87 lakhs of tons by the end of 1950-51. This Two-Year Plan was shortly afterwards converted into a Three-Year Plan which fixed the targets at 2.09 lakhs of tons in 1949-50, 3.63 lakhs of tons in 1950-51 and 5.38 lakhs of tons in 1951-52².

Madurai shared the blessings of these measures equally with the other districts. It is not necessary to go into the details exhibiting the results of these measures³. Suffice it to observe that within the ten years, 1940 to 1950, the area under cultivation in the district increased from 1,267,724 acres to 1,363,351 acres and that the area of the paddy and other food-crops cultivation increased from 906,170 acres to 949,439 acres⁴. These achievements of the Grow More Food Campaign are remarkable, but even more remarkable is the increasing popularity which it gave to the various improved methods of agriculture advocated by the department. These improved methods of agriculture are specially

¹ See the printed Five-Year Plan for Food Production in Madras in G.Os. Nos. 2535-2536, Development, dated 9th June 1947.

² G.O. No. 2723, Development, dated 20th May 1949.

G.O. No. 3694, Development, dated 11th July 1949.

G.O. Nos. 868-869, Food and Agriculture, dated 2nd September 1949.

G.O. No. 1182, Food and Agriculture, dated 18th October 1949.

G.O. No. 1192, Food and Agriculture, dated 19th October 1949.

Madras in 1950, page 23.

³ For details, see the annual reports of the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Madurai.

⁴ Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1940-41, Madurai district, page 11.

Season and Crop Report of the Madras State for 1950-51, pages 49 and 52-55

taught in the High School at Pasumalai, while agriculture as a general subject is taught in all the high schools and elementary schools¹.

As to animal husbandry which is allied with agriculture, Madurai cannot boast of any good breeds of cattle, like the Kangayams, the Hallicars, the Alambadis and the Ongoles. The Palnis have no distinctive breeds like the buffaloes of the Nilgiris. Everywhere the cattle are generally of a poor quality. Cattle-breeding is not carried on to any appreciable extent in any of the taluks, not even in Periyakulam which affords the greatest facilities for cattle-breeding. Cows are maintained for the sake of the bull-calves they bring forth and the ryots generally dispose of the calves at the earliest opportunity whenever a fair price is offered. The largest number of cows and she-buffaloes are found in the Dindigul and Periyakulam taluks. Dairy farming is almost unknown and breeding bulls are mostly maintained by the temples. The cattle are purchased usually at the weekly and annual markets and fairs, the most important of which are those held annually at Idyakottai, Attur, Nilakkottai, Sembatti, Veerapandi, Palayam, Vattilagundu, Athiroombai and Vadamadurai. They are commonly grazed on Government waste lands and porambores. From February to June they subsist on straw and live on starvation ration. Of their diseases, rinderpest carries away the largest number, in spite of the useful work done by the Animal Husbandry Department².

In order to encourage the breeding of better cattle the Government have taken several measures in this as in other districts. Pedigree bulls are distributed under three schemes. Under the first scheme, called the premium scheme, Government grants are given to owners of approved stud bulls subject to certain conditions laid down for ensuring their efficiency. Under the second scheme, the district board is given a grant for purchasing stud bulls and distributing them to the ryots, panchayat boards and co-operative societies; the animals become the property of the latter after three years, provided they are maintained in proper condition and used as stud bulls. Under the third scheme, the Animal Husbandry Department purchases and distributes young breeding bulls to the ryots and pays them a subsidy of fifty rupees per bull per year for a period of two years or until they commence serving. In addition to this, stud bulls are kept at veterinary institutions for the use of the ryots³. All these schemes and measures have, however, as has already been seen, not produced any appreciable results. The department maintains only some 27 stud bulls, the district board

¹ Report of the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Madurai, for 1949-50.

² Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1940-41, Madurai district, page 12.

³ Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 203-205.

12 and the private owners 4 under the premium scheme. Five stud bulls are, in addition, maintained in the Tirumangalam firka under the Firka Development Scheme. The department, however, maintains veterinary hospitals at Tallakulam, Periyakulam, Dindigul, Palni, Kodaikanal, Bodinayakanur and Dharmapatti and dispensaries at Nilakkottai, Kambam and Oddanchatram, besides running some mobile dispensaries. There is also a dispensary in the Tirumangalam firka¹.

Coming to irrigation, the agricultural prosperity of the district has been considerably improved since the completion of the Periyar Scheme. The idea of diverting the water of the Periyar (big river) which flows down the western slopes of the ghats through the Travancore country to the Arabian Sea and utilizing it for irrigating the arid tracts of Madurai, is more than one hundred and fifty years old. It was suggested first, as early as 1798, by Muttu Arula Pillai, the Prime Minister of the Raja of Ramnad; but it fell through for want of funds, though "the twelve intelligent men" he seems to have sent to enquire into its possibilities reported in its favour. Shortly after the district came into the hands of the English, Captain Caldwell, the District Engineer, reported (1808), after a cursory examination, that the scheme was impracticable. The matter, however, continued to be discussed until in 1867 it was brought forward by Major Ryves, R.E., in a practical form. He proposed to construct an earthen dam 162 feet high across the Periyar and turn back the water down a cutting through the water-shed. His idea was merely to divert the river and not to store its water; and his estimate did not go beyond some 17½ lakhs of rupees. From 1868 to 1870 Colonel Pennycuik, R.E., and afterwards R. Smith investigated the scheme and a complete project, estimated to cost 54 lakhs of rupees. This project involved important modifications of Major Ryves's proposals, among them the transfer of the site of the dam to a point seven miles lower down the river. Doubts arose as to the practicability of constructing so huge an embankment of earth, and it was not until 1882 that Colonel Pennycuik's proposal to build a masonry dam was accepted and he was directed to revise the plans and estimates for the whole project. The scheme he drew up included a great masonry dam across the Periyar, a huge lake and a tunnel through the water-shed. It was sanctioned in 1884, and the work was begun in 1887 and completed in 1895².

The scheme could be undertaken only after obtaining the consent of the then Travancore Government, for that Government had to agree to surrender not only the right to the water of the Periyar which flowed through their territory but also the right to some land on which the dam and the lake were to be constructed.

¹ Five Years Progress, Madurai District (Tamil), 1951, pages 14-15.

² Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 126-128. History of the Periyar Project by A. T. Mackenzie, 1899.

And this consent was obtained only after prolonged negotiations from 1863 to 1886. Eventually, by the agreement of 1886, the Travancore Government granted, on a 999 years lease to the Madras Government, 8,000 acres of land needed for the Periyar project, another 100 acres of land in the neighbourhood for erecting temporary works, and the right to carry out the Periyar works in the said lands. They also granted the right to all water of the Periyar flowing into those lands, the right to cut or fell all timber and other trees standing on those lands, the right of fishing in the water or tanks of those lands and the right of way or passage to those lands. Subject to these rights, however, they reserved to themselves the sovereign rights over those lands. The Madras Government, in consideration of the concessions so granted, allowed the Travancore Government to deduct from the tribute then payable by that Government, a yearly rent of Rs. 40,000 from the day on which the Periyar waters were to be diverted into the British territory. They also agreed to pay the Travancore Government a further yearly rent, called the acreage rent, at the rate of Rs. 5 for every acre used in excess of 8,000 acres. And both the Governments agreed that, on the expiry of the lease, it was to be renewed, if necessary, on the same terms for another period of 999 years; and that, in case of any disputes arising between them, such disputes were to be referred to two arbitrators chosen by them or their umpire¹.

The task of constructing the dam and other works was beset with great difficulties. The site was an unhealthy jungle, 3,000 feet in elevation, where rain and malaria rendered work impossible for several months in the year, where even unskilled labour was unobtainable and where everything had to be transported at great cost from a railway 76 miles off and up a steep ghat road. To meet this last difficulty, a canal was constructed from the top of the ghat to the site of the dam, and, later on, an overhead wire ropeway driven by a turbine was put up from the foot of the ghat to the head of the canal. Nor was this all. The difficulty of laying the foundations for a dam in a river of such magnitude (the discharge is said to be equal to half the average flow of the Niagara) and which was liable to sudden and heavy freshes, was immense and at first the work was swept away again and again. After, however, the foundations were laid in, a further difficulty arose in passing the ordinary flow of the river and the constant high freshes without any damage to the masonry of the dam. This was eventually effected through a tunnel or culvert in the body of the dam itself which was afterwards closed and plugged. On the left of the dam, a smaller extension 221 feet long was built to close a dip in the ground, and an escape 434 feet in length was made on the right. The dam, including its parapets, is 176 feet above the bed of the river, 1,241 feet long, 144 feet 6 inches wide at the foundation and 12 feet wide at the top. The front

¹ G.O. No. 1041, Political, dated 7th December 1886.

and rear walls are of uncoursed rubble masonry and the interior is filled with concrete in surki mortar. The lake impounded by it originally covered more than 8,000 acres and had a maximum possible depth of 176 feet. Later on, in 1910, in order to increase the storage capacity of the lake and at the same time to render the dam safe against extraordinary floods, the right bank escape was lowered by 8 feet and a regulator with 10 shutters, each 36 feet long and 16 feet high was erected across it. This increased the full reservoir level of the lake from 146 to 152 feet and raised the storage capacity by 2,361 millions of cubic feet. The present gross capacity of the lake is about 15,700 million cubic feet and the useful capacity about 9,800 million cubic feet.

The passage through the watershed consists of an open cutting or approach 5,342 feet long, a tunnel 5,704 feet long and another open cutting or debouchure 500 feet long. The approach which was originally 21 feet wide was made 26 to 34 feet wide and 7½ feet high and has a gradient of 1 in 75. It was all blasted through solid rock, machine drills driven by compressed air supplied by a turbine plant being employed. A sluice gate at the head of it controls the out-flow; and from the lower end of it the water hurls itself down the face of the hill into the Vairavanar stream, whence it flows into the Suruli and thence into the Vaigai. As the water comes down, part of it is drawn off by several ancient anicuts on either side of those rivers to irrigate about 12,700 acres in the Suruli Valley; but the mass of it is not utilized till it reaches the Peranai (big dam) anicut which crosses the Vaigai about 5½ miles due south of Nilakkottai and 86 miles from the mouth of the tunnel where the river changes its course to the south-east. This Peranai dam is an ancient work which fed a channel on the north bank of the river called the Vadakarai (Vadagarai) channel. A great deal of silt having collected above it and choked the river bed and the new main channel, it was replaced by a regulator possessing 10 vents of 40 feet each fitted with counterbalanced shutters which can be raised to allow the free passage of dangerous floods and lowered at other times to hold up water to the height required. Recently, the shutters of the regulator were raised by one foot to facilitate and maintain F.S.L. in the canal. In 1934, the crest of the old anicut was raised to a level of 634.00 by erecting a masonry wall 350 feet long as it was found during the high floods of 1922 and 1924 that the river water rose to 634.47 and entered and breached the main canal. From this regulator leads off the main canal which passes through a head sluice of 6 vents of 20 feet span. The canal runs nearly due eastwards almost as far as the town of Melur and is nearly 38 miles long, 6 feet deep and has a carrying capacity of 1,600 cusecs at the head. Twelve branches (the twelfth branch being the tail-end of the canal) take off from it and distribute the water through numerous small channels to the fields and to a large number of ancient tanks in the taluks of Nilakkottai, Madurai, Melur and parts of Periyakulam. The total length of the main canal and the 12 branch

channels is 68 miles and the area irrigable by them is roughly 130,000 acres of first crop and 50,000 acres of second crop. This increased extension of irrigation has brought about a vital change in the social and economic conditions of the Kallars of the area. It has turned many of them from their lawless habits to cultivation.

The project was opened in October 1895 by Lord Wenlock, the Governor of Madras. Its direct expenditure up to March 1897, when the construction estimate was closed, amounted to rupees 81.30 lakhs made up of 42.26 lakhs for the headworks (the dam and the tunnel), 18.43 lakhs for the main canal and branches and distributaries and 20.61 lakhs for establishment and tools and plant. A large amount has since been spent with the result that the capital expenditure on the system is now about 108 lakhs. This amount, however, fetches a return of 6 per cent¹.

The execution of the Periyar works led to an important decision of the High Court regarding riparian rights. Mr. Fischer and others who owned zamindari villages on the banks of the Vaigai below the Peranai dam objected to the raising of the bund of the dam and the widening of the Vadagarai channels by the Government, complaining that these acts had led to an obstruction of the flow and diminished their supply. The High Court (Arnold White, J. and Pinhey, J.) found that the acts complained of had neither diminished the flow nor caused any damage to the plaintiff but that, on the other hand, had actually benefited him. It asserted that one of the important duties of the Government is to construct new works of irrigation and to maintain old ones, that in discharging this duty the Government have always exercised the right of diverting the waters of the natural streams and that it has never been held that in so doing they have violated the rights of private owners of land unless the party who alleged himself to be aggrieved was able to prove that the amount of water he had been accustomed to utilize had been diminished. It also remarked that the right of the Government as distinguished from the right of private individuals is recognized by the Legislature in section 2 (a) of the Indian Easements Act wherein it is declared that nothing contained in that Act shall be deemed to derogate from any right of the Government to regulate the water of rivers and streams flowing, etc., in natural channels and of the water flowing, etc., in any channel or other work constructed at public expense for irrigation. It thus admitted the higher rights of the State and dismissed the appeals preferred by

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 127-128.

Idem, Vol. II, 1930, page 99.

History of the Periyar Project by A. T. Mackenzie, 1899.

Vaigai Reservoir Project—A Note prepared by the Public Works Department.

Administration Report of the Public Works Department (Irrigation), 1945-1946, page 7.

Mr. Fischer and others¹. The latter preferred an appeal to the Privy Council, but this was also dismissed.

Meanwhile, the Periyar System itself was thought capable of improvement. Soon after its completion it was found that a great deal of water (estimated at present at no less than 8,500 million cubic feet) surplussed every year over the Periyar lake and ran to waste in the Arabian Sea. Consequently, proposals were made from 1896 for utilizing these surplus waters by drilling an additional tunnel at a lower level, by increasing the bore of the existing tunnel, by raising the F.R.L. of the Periyar lake, etc. But nothing came of these proposals till the advent of the National Government. It was only in 1948 that the matter was taken up in earnest and detailed investigations were commenced; and it is only in 1954 that, under the Five-Year Plan, the work has been begun.

The essence of the scheme lies in depleting the Periyar lake by drawing off the water from it during the off season when water is not required for irrigation and storing it in a reservoir to be built across the Vaigai 20 miles above the Peranal regulator and 9 miles below the confluence of the Suruli and the Vaigai. By depleting the lake in this manner it will be made capable of retaining more of the monsoon water than at present, which normally would have surplussed and gone to waste. The water impounded in the reservoir will stabilise the existing irrigation under the Periyar System, irrigate an additional 20,000 acres in the Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts (10,000 acres in the Tirumangalur taluk, 3,000 acres in the existing Periyar ayacut, and 7,000 acres in the Sivaganga taluk) and make it possible to pass down whatever surplus is available to the Vaigai for the benefit of the Vaigai irrigation system below the Peranal regulator. The reservoir being intended primarily to store the Periyar water, the water of the Vaigai will not ordinarily be impounded in it, but whenever there are any excessive floods in the Vaigai, the surplus water of the Vaigai will be caught in the reservoir to be released later on for the benefit of the Vaigai ayacut. Nor is this all. The water perennially falling from the lower end of the Periyar lake tunnel from a height of about 1,000 feet into the Vairavanar below will be used for developing hydro-electric power.

The proposed dam will be 11,675 feet long of which 1,035 feet will be of masonry and the rest of earth. A spillway consisting of 7 vents of 40 feet $\times$ 15 fitted each with lift shutters will be provided in the masonry dam to pass the maximum floods. A battery of 7 sluices each 5 feet $\times$ 9 feet will be provided adjacent to the spillway and these will allow the normal flow of the Vaigai to pass uninterrupted and at the same time regulate supplies to the existing and proposed irrigation under the Periyar System. The reservoir

is expected to store 6,800 million cubic feet and the cost of the entire scheme is estimated at about rupees 300 lakhs, 265 lakhs for the headworks and 35 lakhs for the canals. The scheme is expected to yield a return of 0.89 per cent on the capital outlay¹.

The only other important irrigation work in the district is what is called the Berijam Reservoir. On the top of the Palnis about 12 miles south-west of Kodaikanal at an elevation of 7,100 feet, there was originally a swamp known as the Berijam swamp. It was about two miles long and it ran nearly north and south. The southern portion of it drained into the Varahanadhi and the northern portion of it into the Amaravathi. In 1887, it was suggested by Colonel Pennycuik that dams could be thrown across both ends of the swamp and a reservoir formed with a capacity of 77½ million cubic feet, and the water so impounded led into the Varahanadhi which was supplying water for irrigation to a number of tanks around Periyakulam. Subsequently, the scheme was enlarged to supply drinking water to the Periyakulam Municipality and completed in 1912 at a cost of Rs. 1,38,500. It brought 4,570 acres under irrigation and stabilized the supply of water to the lands irrigated by the Varahanadhi, a supply which was previously very precarious².

The other irrigation works in the district are too small to be described individually, though collectively they irrigate more than 100,000 acres. They consist of numerous tanks fed by streams with anicuts across them and are situated in the basins of the various rivers, especially of the Gundar, the Amaravathi and the Vaigai. Most of them date back to very early times. Among the dams and channels may be mentioned the Chittanai dam across the Vaigai 2½ miles below the Peranal anicut, the Nilaiyur channel which takes off from the Vaigai below the Chittanai dam, the Aiyampalle anicut across the Palar, the Kottai dam across the Varadamanadi (Varattar), the Attur dam across the Koduvanar, the Uttamuttu, the Palaiyamparavu and Chinnamanur dams in the Suruli minor basin, the Talattukovil anicut in the Periyakulam minor basin and the Ayyampalaiyam anicut in the Vattilagundu basin. The district also contains a very large number of wells especially in the Dindigul, Palni and Tirumangalam taluks. The wells in the Dindigul taluk are numerically large, but those in the Palni taluk are bigger in size and irrigate a larger extent of land. The wells assist greatly the cultivation of paddy and valuable crops like cotton, tobacco, and sugarcane; and under many of them, three crops are raised in a year. We have already seen that under the Grow More Food Campaign, a special well subsidy scheme was introduced in the district. Under the same campaign,

¹ A Note on the Vaigai Reservoir Project prepared by the Public Works Department.

² Gazetteer of the Madurai District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 125.

Idem, Vol. II, 1930, page 98.

Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1940-1941, Madurai District, page 20.

¹ Studies in Madras Administration by B. S. Baliga, Vol. I, 1949, pages 163-169.

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several minor irrigation works, like the construction of or improvements to channels, anicuts and tanks were also undertaken, but they are too small to be separately mentioned here¹.

The irrigated area in the district in 1950-51 was 136,480 acres under the Periyar System and 167,278 acres under the minor works, under the first crop, and 56,815 acres under the Periyar System and 29,177 acres under Minor Works under the second crop. The total irrigated area thus comes to 389,750 acres².

CHAPTER VII.

FORESTS.

The Reserved Forests in the Madurai district occupy an area of no less than 562 square miles¹. As has already been stated in Chapter I, they fall naturally under three main formations, the mixed deciduous, the evergreen and the grassland. These three formations may again be divided into six types, the timber forests, the low-lying sholas (evergreen), the gall-nut type, the grassland type including the high level sholas, the fuel forests and the plantations.

The timber forests are mainly confined to the Kambam valley, but they are also met with on the Kodaikanal and the Palni hills and in the valleys of the Nattam hills. They are found between elevations of 1,500 to 3,500 feet above sea level and may be subdivided into two types, the plains sub-type and the hills sub-type. The plains sub-type is found in the Vannathiparai valley at Pandarathorai, in the valley of the Vairavanar at the bottom of the Kumli ghat and along the Suruli plateau in the Kambam region and in the valleys of certain streams such as the Iruttar valley of the Kodaikanal hills, the Velankombai and Kudirayar valleys of the Palni hills and the Kalanal and the Peria-aruvi valleys of the Nattam hills. It is characterised by tall trees reaching sometimes a height of 120 feet or more with clean boles and girths up to 20 feet at breast height. Its understory is usually devoid of grass. Its chief species are *Dalbergia latifolia* (rosewood), *Pterocarpus marsupium* (vengai), *Schleichera trijuga* (kusum or puvam), *Mungifera indica* (mango), *Grewia tiliifolia* (thadasu or vazhukkai), *Terminalia arjuna* (vellamarudu), *Stephegyne parvifolia* (nirkadambai), *Stereospermum chelonoides* (poombathiri), *Anogeissus latifolia* (vekkate), *Lagerstroemia lanceolata* (ventek), *Artocarpus hirsuta* (aini), *Melia dubia* (malaivembu), *Dalbergia paniculata* (pachalai), *Cedrela toona* (chandनावembu), with bamboos in the valleys. Some of these species of forests, especially the *Dalbergia latifolia* of the Kambam valley, compare not unfavourably with the best deciduous forests in this State. The hill sub-type which is found in the northern and the southern slopes of the Palni hills is poorer in quality and its trees do not attain large dimensions. Its chief species are *tectona grandis* (teak), *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Odina woder* (odiyan), *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Shorea talura* (kungiliyan), *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Stereospermum chelonoides*, *Phyllanthus embelica* (nelli), *Buchanania latifolia* (sarai), *Grewia tiliifolia*, *Terminalia paniculata* (pillamaruthu) *Givotia rottleriiformis* (vandalai) and *Cocklospermum gossypium* (kidiraipudukuannu) and *Bambusa arundinacea* (perumungil).

¹ This figure does not include the zamindari forests which have been taken over by the Government under the Estates Abolition Act of 1947.

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1908, pages 122-125.
 Statistical Atlas of the Madras Province, 1940-1941, Madurai District, page 20.
 Administration Reports of the Public Works Department (Irrigation) for the years 1946-1955.

² Administration Report of the Public Works Department (Irrigation) for 1950-1951, pages 72-73 and the figures furnished by the Chief Engineer for Irrigation.

The low-lying sholas (evergreen type) are found in the Kambam valley and on the Palni hills at elevations between 3,000 to 5,000 feet. This type of forests is surrounded by a mixed deciduous type of forests. Its chief species are *Bischofia javanica* (malai-puvarasu), *Cedrela toona*, *Chickrassia tabularis* (agil), *Elæocarpus tuberculatus*, *Canarium strictum* (karum kungiliyan), *Myristica* species (nutmeg family), *Lagerstroemia lanceolata* and *Eugenia* species (myrtle family) with a sprinkling of *Michelia champaca* (champaka) and *Acrocarpus fraxinifolius* (neirai). There is usually a second storey of smaller trees in these forests such as *Nephelium longana* (kaorappu), *Agrostistachys longifolia* (manikulikki) and *Agrostistachys indica* (mancharai), etc. Areas belonging to this type are considered suitable for the cultivation of cardamoms.

The gall-nut type of forests is the variation of the sub-hill type of timber forests. It is met with on elevations above 3,500 feet on shallow soils which are subjected to annual ground fires. Due to the low moisture contents of these soils, these forests are naturally of a poor type with *Terminalia chebula* (gallnut) as the prominent species, and with a mixture of fire resistant species such as *Buchanania latifolia*, *Shorea talura*, *Pterocarpus marsupium* and *Phyllanthus embelica* interspersed with coarse grass and *Phoenix acaulis* (echan). The canopy of these forests is very open and the trees are small and stunted. The regeneration of these species is rather scanty on account of annual fires. These forests are found mainly on the upper slopes of the Palni hills and in small patches on the Karandamalais and on the hills of the Kambam region. They extend up to elevations about 5,000 feet and then merge into grass formations.

The grass land type is characteristic of the rolling downs of the Upper Palni plateau at elevations above 6,000 feet approximately. The Ampthill downs reserve, which is typical, is entirely composed of undulating stretches of extensive grass land through which streamlets originating in a few comparatively small 'islands' of high level shola, wind leisurely until they mingle and emerge as rivers and serve to irrigate extensive fields in the hot dry plains below. Wide areas within the grass land have been set apart as unreserves for the villages of Poombarai, Kukkal and others and in these areas, unrestricted free grazing and firing of grass is allowed. All sholas in these unreserves have practically vanished owing to the indiscriminate collection of fuel from them and to the frequent outbreaks of fires. Their existence is only indicated by a shrub growth of *Sarcococca pruniformis*, *Rubus ellipticus* (seendu) *Rubus lasiocarpus*, *Rubus latifolia* and a few reeds. Outside the unreserves and practically confined to the watershed forming the southern boundary of the plateau, there are about 250 sholas protecting the headwaters of streams flowing northwards across the plateau.

The fuel forests comprise the open deciduous forests in the lower slopes of the Palni hills, in the lower slopes of the Western Ghats and the Varushanad hills in the Kambam valley and in the plains and low hills of the east and north-east portions of the district. Their total area is 261 square miles and they constitute the fuel reserves of the town of Madurai and of the several smaller towns and villages. The most abundant species occurring in these forests are *Albizia amara* (usal), *Chloroxylon swietenia* (porasu), *Acacia latronum* (odai), *Albizia lebbec* (vagai), *Albizia odoratissima* (selvagai), *Atalantia monophyllas* (kurundu), *Cassia marginata* (senkonnai), *Hemicyclia sepiaria* (virai), *Acacia feruginea* (parambai) and *Acacia planifrons* (sithai). The less important species that occur are *Dichrostachys cinerea* (vedathela), *Gyrocarpus jacquini* (tanakku), *Givotia rottleriformis*, *Randia dumetorum* (karai), *Acacia intsia* (indu), *Euphorbia trigonus* (tirukukalli), *pterolobium indicum* (karindu), *Dodonaea viscosa* (virali), *Cassia montana* (malai avaram) and *Moringa pterygosperma* (kattu murungai). Generally the growth is satisfactory except in reserves within easy reach of Madurai, Alagar hills, Waguthumalai, Andipatti hills and Nagamalais, where it is subject to intensive illicit fellings. In most localities also, a mass of *Acacia intsia*, *Zizyphus oenoplia* (soorai) and *Barleria acuminata* (karum kurunji) have swamped much coppice regrowth, and retarded natural regeneration from seed. But the prickly pear (*Opuntia dillenii*) which formerly infested extensive areas is now no longer a threat, the cochineal insect having been responsible for its rapid extermination.

The chief plantations of the district are those of teak, eucalyptus, pine, wattle and mahogany. Sandalwood and bamboos also occur in several places in the district. The teak plantations were raised from 1937 at Surulipatti, Kumli and Iruttar and also at Velankombai where the old plantations existed. The Surulipatti plantations have not a little suffered from elephant damage. The Kumli and the Iruttar plantations are satisfactory. At Velankombai, the old plantation raised in 1870 was clear-felled and coppiced in 1937, but its coppice regeneration has been poor; and the plantations raised between 1922-27 and 1944-46 have failed. The eucalyptus plantation was raised at Gundar shola some fifty years ago. Its growth is fairly uniform, but its quality is not so good as the best quality of Nilgiri eucalyptus. The pine plantations were raised in the Gundar valley between 1906 and 1915 and they consist chiefly of *Pinus insignis*. They were affected by a disastrous fire in 1920 and a cyclone in 1930. The wattle plantations at Poombarai were first raised in 1883-1884 and their average yield per acre comes to about 20 tons. The mahogany plantation was raised in 1888 in the spring near Alagarkoil; it now contains a few trees varying in girth from 7 to 9 feet and in height from 100 to 120 feet. Sandalwood occurs in the Palni hills on both sides of the ghat road from the sixth to the eleventh mile,

and also near Keeralam, Pulathur and Pachalur as well as in the Unjalnachi and the Marudanadiar reserves. It is found on the Karandamalai plateau, on both sides of the path from Mulaiyar to Thendamedu and in the Perumalai and the Alagar hill reserved forests. There is a patch of it in the Sathiar valley and in Sorandamalai near Valayapatti and a scattered growth of it in the Endalaparai fuel series. In the Kambam region it is confined to two bits in the Kombai reserve forest. Altogether the sandal bearing area in the district amounts to about 3,544 acres. The growth of the trees, on the whole, is poor and even on the Lower Palnis where it was discovered in 1863, the trees at breast height rarely exceed 24 inches in girth. The bamboos are mainly found in the Palni hills, in Kambam valley and in the northern valley, of the Alagar hills. The species that occur are *Bambusa arundinacea* and *Dendrocalamus strictus*. They have been subjected to heavy overcutting in many localities and, unless the fellings are controlled, there is a real danger of their disappearing at no distant date¹.

The forests are liable to injuries from fire, winds, frost, fungus, parasites, drought, man, weeds, cattle, wild animals and insects. The forest fires do considerable damage almost every year to the open pole areas on the tops of the Karandamalais, the Sirumalais and the Alagar hills by killing outright any young natural regeneration of tree species. Sandalwood trees and seedlings suffer much from this source. So also suffer much from this source the upper slopes of the hills in the Kambam, Palni and Kodaikanal regions above the boundary of the fuel-felling series. The rolling grassy downs of the Palnis, a large part of which are subject to free grazing, are subject to frequent fires which singe the edges of the several sholas in their midst and ultimately tend to destroy the sholas. In 1920, over 500 acres out of a total planted area of 922 acres of the pine plantations near Kodaikanal were destroyed by fire. Fires, however, do not generally pass over fuel coupes as grass is scarce in such localities. High winds which blow eastwards during the south-east monsoon do not normally cause any appreciable damage to the fuel forests of the lower hills, but they cause a great deal of damage to the pine plantations near Kodaikanal almost every year. In May 1930, a heavy cyclone caused a devastation by uprooting or breaking the crowns of over 30,000 pine trees. Frost occurs annually between December and February on the Upper Palni plateau and causes heavy casualties among pine seedlings. Seedlings of *Acacia decurrens* (green wattle), *Acacia dealbata* (silver wattle) and *Acacia melanoxylon* (black wattle) raised as fire-belt to sholas have to be protected by a covering of bracken during the frost season. As to fungus, "Fomes" is found to be common in the pines but it is not so harmful.

¹ Working Plan for the forests of the Madurai Division, 1949-1950 to 1962-63 sanctioned in C.C.P. Mis. No. 71, dated 5th February 1953, Typescript, pages 5, 8-17.

Idem, 1936-1937 to 1945-1946, Printed pages 10-17.

Mosaic leaf disease and thrip are noticed in the cardamom and orange plantations near Tandigudi on the Upper Palnis. A parasite called *Loranthus longiflora* is commonly met with on *Acacia melanoxylon* on the Upper Palnis, for instance, in the Poombarai wattle plantation. Drought which occurs owing to uncertain and prolonged breaks between the south-west and the north-east monsoons, causes sometimes considerable damage to the seedlings which have commenced their life in June or July. Man adds to these injuries by illicit fellings and theft. Illicit fellings of timber are frequently noticed in the forests of the Kambam valley. Illicit removals for agricultural implements are sometimes met with in areas where unreserves are very far from cultivable lands. Thefts of fuel take place from reserves from which it is easy to transport fuel to Madurai, as for instance, from the Alagar hills, Kiluva malai and Vikramangalam. Illicit cutting of sandalwood occurs in the sandalwood areas of the Lower Palnis.

In regard to the weeds, prickly pear is fortunately controlled by the cochineal insects. *Acalypha fruticosa* is often encountered on the slopes in all the fuel series, but is usually browsed by cattle and is not so much a menace. The thorny climbers *Acacia intsia*, *Pterolobium indicum* and *Zizypus oenoplia* often suppress coppice regeneration in poor areas. But, the most troublesome weed is what is called *Barleria acuminata* (karumkurinji) which forms heavy thickets over large areas of fuel-coupes rendering natural regeneration difficult. The Vellakurinji is less gregarious in habit and is not so harmful. The elephant grass (bothai) increases the intensity of fires on the Suruli plateau and on the Kumli ghat and kills out the regeneration of useful species like teak, *Pterocarpus marsupium* and *Terminalia paniculata*. *Lantana* is now prevalent everywhere and is rapidly spreading. The cattle, while grazing, trample on young regeneration and expose the sub-soil where the soil is shallow and harden the soil where it is deep. The bison, which roam about in small herds on the Alagar hills, the Sirumalais and the Karandamalais, sometimes become potential dangers to "rab" regeneration in the fuel coupes and nibble away also the young bamboos. The Sambhur nibble away the growing points of seedlings of *Acacia decurrens* and *Acacia dealbata* raised as fire belts round the sholas of the Upper Palnis, and sometimes cause damage to the teak plantations also. The elephants do incalculable damage to the teak plantations at Vannathiparai and considerable damage to the teak plantations in the Kadirayar valley, in Surulipatti and in Velancombai. And finally as to the insects, the sal heartwood borer, *Hoplocerambyx spinicornis* has been noticed on *Shorea talura*, and the growth of *Melia indica* is much hampered by the drying up of the leading shoots caused almost every year by a virus disease not yet fully understood. Experiments are being made to control this disease¹.

¹ Working Plan for the forests of the Madurai Division, 1949-1950 to 1962-1963, sanctioned in C.C.P. Mis. No. 71, dated 5th February 1953, Typescripts, pages 17-41.

Idem for 1936-1937 to 1945-1946, Printed pages 17-20.

Much of the forest produce is in great demand in the district. The ryots need wood for agricultural implements, firewood for domestic consumption, leaf manure for wet cultivation, timber and bamboos for house construction, and grazing ground for cattle. The wood for agricultural implements, namely *Acacia ferruginea*, *Melia indica*, *Albizia amara*, *Acacia planifrons* and *Acacia leucophloea* (vel velam), is mostly obtained from patta lands and unreserves; but it is also sometimes stolen from the reserved forests. Fuel is obtained from patta lands and unreserves, as well as from fuel coupes. Most of the fuel coupes in the Sholavandan and Nattam forests supply the extensive fuel market at Madurai; the fuel coupes of Kodaikanal and Kambam valley supply the local demands only; the estate forests used to meet the local demand at Palni. Leaf manure from reserves is still in demand in spite of the fact that the ryots have begun to grow their own manure in their lands. The demand for timber manifests itself from thefts of teak, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, etc., from the reserves. Bamboos are in great demand; but large centres of consumption, such as Madurai and Dindigul, have not easy access to the bamboo growing localities. The demand for grazing ground is so great that out of the total area of 4,04,435 acres of reserve, only about 1,12,000 acres are permanently closed to grazing. All sandal areas are closed to grazing; fuel coupes are closed for five years after felling, and all regeneration areas for five years after planting. The timber selection working circle, and the teak conversion working circle are also closed to grazing, besides some special localities for silvicultural reasons and prevention of soil erosion. In all other areas grazing is regulated by licences issued on payment of prescribed fees which are generally 12 annas 9 pies for a buffalo, 6 annas for a cow and 3 annas for a sheep. Goats are entirely excluded from all reserves and sheep are permitted only in the Kambam, Palni and Kodaikanal forests. Penning is permitted on payment of a fee of rupee one for every 100 cattle or less. Removal of fodder grass is permitted free on head-loads from all reserves, except from areas closed to grazing on account of damage from fire. Since 1940 a system of rotational grazing has been introduced in the district. Under this system a limited number of cattle are moved from block to block within an allotted area at short intervals.

Other forest produce in demand are tamarind, thatch grass for thatching purposes, brake poles for bullock carts, the floss from the fruit of *Eriodendron anfractuosum* (white cotton tree or elavam) known as 'Kapok' for stuffing mattresses and pillows, *Mimosa edulis* (kayan or kasan) leaves for dyeing, the bark of *Cassia auriculata* (avaram patta) and wattle and myrobalans (gall-nuts) for tanning and lac and lac products for exportation to Calcutta and for making all sorts of articles, for dyeing silk; etc. Formerly there was an unlimited demand for land on the hills

of the Lower Palnis for the cultivation of plantains, coffee and tea. Formerly there was also a considerable demand for the sholas at elevations between 3,000 and 5,000 feet for the cultivation of cardamoms. But nowadays no leases are issued for these purposes so as to prevent soil erosion. Formerly again forest panchayats were formed in the several ranges in order to manage reserves as well as unreserves and to exploit them for firewood, grazing, minor forest produce and manure leaf; but recently, their working having been found unsatisfactory, they have all been abolished¹.

The Madurai forests are not by any means capable of meeting fully the demands of the people. Large quantities of teak, *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Terminalia tomentosa* (karimarudu), *Terminalia paniculata* and *Adina cordifolia* (manja kadambai) of all sizes are exported into Madurai, Dindigul and Palni from the West Coast. Teak is also imported from Burma. *Dalbergia latifolia* is utilized in Madurai for making elaborately carved tables with legs represented by elephant heads, an art characteristic of the place. Other important timber imported, mostly from the West Coast, comprise *Xylia Xylocarpa* (irul), *Dichopsis elliptica* (pali), *Calophyllum elatum* (kattu pinnal), *Dipterocarpus* species (karunjeli), *Vateria indica*, *Aglia* species, *Amoora* species, *Acrocarpus fraxinifolius* (nelrai), *Lagerstroemia lanceolata* and *Hardwickia binata* (acha). They are mostly used for bullock cart shafts and cart frames. Messrs. Spencer and Company also import *Cedrela toona* from the West Coast for making cigar boxes at their cigar factory at Dindigul. Again, Madurai town imports a considerable quantity of fuel from Ramanathapuram and Madurai and Dindigul, Palni and other places import bamboos from the West Coast, Salem, Vellore, etc.².

The forests in the district are well served by railways and roads. The metre gauge section of the Southern Railway traverses the division from east to west passing from Tiruchirappalli through Manamadurai, Ayyalur, Dindigul and Palni to Pollachi and the West Coast. A southern line runs from Dindigul to Madurai and thence to Dhanushkodi on the East Coast and to Trivandrum on the West Coast. A branch line connects Madurai and Bodinayakanur. There is also a proposal to construct a line from Dindigul to Gudalur. The Manamadurai-Tiruchirappalli chord line has brought Madurai nearer to the Ramanathapuram district and the areas comprising the former Pudukottai State. All these railways are used extensively for transporting fuel to the Madurai market. Practically the whole of the output of

¹ G.O. No. 3617, Development, dated 8th August 1951.

Working Plan for the forests of the Madurai Division, 1949-1950 to 1962-1963, sanctioned in C.C.P. Mis. No. 71, dated 5th February 1953, Typescripts, pages 42-46, 204-210.

² *Idem*, pages 46-51.

Ayyalur forests is transferred by rail to Madurai from stations between Manaparai and Dindigul. Fuel from the Virupakshi series of the Palni hills is booked to Madurai from Oddanchattram. Part of the fuel from the Sholavandan and Nattam forests also goes by rail to Madurai from stations between Madurai and Dindigul. Fuel from the Ramanathapuram district and from the areas of the former Pudukottai State is brought to Madurai by rail besides some casuarina fuel from the East Coast.

A trunk road closely follows the railway through Tiruchirappalli, Manaparai and Dindigul towards Pollachi on the west. Another follows the railway line from Dindigul to Madurai and thence southwards towards Tirunelveli, while a third runs parallel to the Madurai-Bodinayakanur section of the railway. Roads from Dindigul and Kodaikanal Road railway station pass through Periyakulam to Theni on the west. From Theni a road runs southwards into the Kambam valley and to the Periyar lake, and thence into the Kerala State. A metalled road from Kodaikanal Road railway station leads to the hill station of Kodaikanal, the ghat section of which passes through reserves for the most part. Second-class trunk roads run from Ayyalur and Dindigul towards Karur, from Oddanchattram and Palni to Dharapuram and from Madurai into the Ramanathapuram district. Minor roads that feed the trunk roads are more directly concerned with the transport of forest produce, since they pass through localities nearer to the reserved forests. Of these the most important are the road connecting Dindigul and Madurai through Nattam, the Nattam-Kottampatti-Manaparai road and the road from Manaparai to Kulitalai, all of which are useful for the exploitation of the forests on the Nattam and Ayyalur hills. The sections connecting Madurai with the Alagar temple and with Palamedu help not a little to work the Alagar hill reserve and the Waguthumalai group. There are besides these, some 46 District Board and Forest Department roads which serve the forests¹.

We may now review the past as well as the present systems of forest administration. Although the district came into the hands of the British in 1801, no attempts were made to conserve its forests till 1852. In that year, a licence to fell trees was required to be obtained from the revenue authorities, but no fee was charged for this licence, it being granted free even to the timber merchants who cut down wood wholesale and exported it to Tanjore, Tiruchirappalli and other districts. The only revenue derived from the forests was the proceeds of the leases of jungle produce and even this was forgone in 1854 when the leases were abolished consequent on the oppression of revenue underlings. In 1856 a beginning was made in forest conservancy by forbidding the shifting cultivation practised on the Palnis for growing

plantains. In 1860 a forest overseer was appointed to take charge of the more important forests of the district, including those of the Palnis, the Kambam valley and the Karandamalais and his duties were defined to be the accomplishment of strict conservancy and the supply of the demands of the Public Works Department for timber. Large areas still, however, continued to remain under the management of the Revenue Department and on account of this dual control considerable friction occurred between the revenue and the forest authorities. In 1865 a Sub-Assistant Conservator was appointed. Soon afterwards the extension of the South Indian Railway through the district led to an increased interest in the forests. From 1869 Deputy Conservators or District Forest Officers came to be appointed in the district.

In 1871 a forest establishment was sanctioned and at this time the Madurai Forest Division consisted of two ranges, the Madurai range including the Sirumalais, the Perumalais, the Alagar hills, the Nedumalais and the Nattam and Ayyalur hills and the Periyakulam range covering the upper and the lower Palnis and the forests of the Kambam valley. In 1880 on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Collector, the Deputy Conservator on special duty and the Deputy Conservator of the district, 21 blocks measuring 285 square miles were definitely selected for reservation. In 1882 the Madras Forest Act was passed into law and between that year and 1890 most of the forests in the district were demarcated, settled and notified as "reserved forests"; and nearly all of them were mapped by the Survey of India between 1888 and 1894. In 1888, the district was divided into five ranges indicated by Roman numbers; but between 1888 and 1893 these ranges were baptised Kambam, Kodaikanal, Tanguindy, Palamedu and Kanavaipatti. In 1888, as the problem of supplying fuel to Madurai town and of meeting the demands of the railway and the spinning mills was causing some anxiety, a preliminary working scheme was prepared for the Alagar hills along with Waguthumalai.

This period also witnessed some important activities. The grant of leases for the cultivation of cardamoms in the sholas (tropical evergreens) of the district was recognized by the Government as long ago as 1874. In 1887 the control of these leases was transferred from the Revenue to the Forest Department. In 1869-1870 Colonel Campbell Walker started plantations of teak at Velancombai at the northern foot of the Palnis not far from Palni town and at Vannathiparai near the foot of the ghat below the Periyar lake. In 1889, and in 1892-1893, a small mahogany plantation was started below the Holy Spring (Thirthabhotti) in the southern valley of the Alagar hills reserved forest. In 1887-1888 the Gundam shola eucalyptus plantations were commenced in the Gundam shola reserve adjacent to the reservoir that supplies drinking water to Kodaikanal. They were intended

¹Working Plan for the forests of the Madurai Division, 1949-1950 to 1962-1963 sanctioned in C.C.P. No. 71, dated 5th February 1953, Typescripts, pages 51-54

to supply Kodaikanal with fuel and thereby to save the neighbouring sholas from destruction. In 1883-1884 the Poombarai wattle plantation consisting of mainly *acacia dealbata* with a sprinkling of *acacia melanoxylon* was begun close to the village of Poombarai. In 1895, certain blocks in the Kambam forests were placed under special fire protection and goats were excluded from the reserves¹.

The same year, i.e., 1895, marks the abolition of the loose permit system and the recognition of the need for exploitation under regular working plans. In order to meet the fuel demand in Madurai, the reserves were now classified into blocks for which schemes could be prepared at once and those which had to remain unworked for a period of twenty years. But the first working plan as such for the district was prepared by Mr. Porter. It was sanctioned in 1900. It covered the Palamedu and Kanavaipatti ranges and aimed at providing fuel, small timber, manure leaves, grazing and browsing and improving the forests. It fixed the rotation at thirty years and introduced the coppice with standards system. It, however, prescribed no cultural operations and soon failed to fulfil its objects. It was, therefore, replaced in 1907-1911 by a revised working plan for the district drawn up by Mr. H. B. Bryant². This revised plan retained the system of coppice with standards, reallocated the felling series, excluding inaccessible localities, and closed the forests to all goat browsing and loppings for manure leaf but reduced the annual output of firewood in Madurai from 20,000 tons to 12,000 tons, a circumstance which soon resulted in loud complaints. Meanwhile, in 1906, with a view to growing valuable timber, Mr. Bryant started the Kodaikanal pine plantations in the south-west of Kodaikanal hill station in the Gundar valley extension reserve at elevations varying from 7,200 to 8,000 feet. In these plantations about 32 species of exotic conifers were tried and it was found that *Pinus insignis* was the best grower followed by *Pinus attenuata*, *Pinus schiriana*, *Cupressus torulosa*, *Cryptomeria japonica* and *Sequoia washingtoniana*. The seeds of various Himalayan species tried here were destroyed by fire in 1915.

Meanwhile, in 1904, the headquarters of the Kanavaipatti range was transferred from Kanavaipatti to Nattam. In 1914 the Kodaikanal and Tangundy ranges were reconstituted and the headquarters of the latter was transferred to Palni. The number of ranges was increased to six in 1916 when the Ayyalur, Sholavandan and Nattam ranges were formed out of the Kanavaipatti and Palamedu ranges. Redistribution of the ranges was made in

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 132-143.

Working Plan for the forests of the Madurai Division, 1936-1937 to 1945-1946, pages 36-37.

² B.P. No. 179, dated 7th September 1907.

B.P. No. 198, dated 8th August 1911.

1920, 1924, 1926 and 1927; and in 1935 the whole of the Manjampatti reserve and part of the Kudirayar reserves were transferred to South Coimbatore Division¹.

All this time several plans for the better exploitation of the forests were being drawn up and introduced. In 1916, the shortage of fuel in Madurai led to the adoption of the working plan for the fuel forests prepared by Cecil Claud C. C. Wilson². This plan covered all the forests in the Sholavandan, Nattam and Ayyalur ranges and prescribed the adoption of the simple coppice system in the place of the system of coppice with standards. A careful selection of all areas which might be profitably exploited for the Madurai market and a well thought out scheme of extraction roads increased the annual output of fuel from the reserves of the district from 12,000 tons to 20,000 tons. But even this increased supply, together with the additional supply of 11,000 tons from the reserves in the Kulitalai taluk of the Tiruchirappalli district, was found insufficient to meet the annual total requirements of the market which was no less than 60,000 tons. It was consequently suggested that the eucalyptus plantations at Kodaikanal should be extended. Meanwhile a timber working circle was also constituted covering the three ranges (about 10,000 acres) and worked on the coppice with standards system on a rotation of 30 years, 60 to 70 poles per acre being reserved as standards. And bamboos in the Alagar hill reserve forest were worked between 1921 and 1927 on a felling cycle of three years.

In the Palnis, Mr. Bryant's scheme of 1907 contemplated only three fuel series for the Kodaikanal range. In 1922 more series were found necessary and a revised scheme was prepared under which the number of fuel series was increased to eight. The system of working was also changed to simple coppice and the rotation was fixed at 30 years for four of the series and at 40 years for the remaining four. Blanks in felled coupes were sown with seeds of *Albizia*, *Grewia*, *Melia*, tamarind, *Anogeissus*, teak and *Pterocarpus marsupium*. As to the bamboos, a scheme was prepared by Woodhouse Adolphus according to which the bamboo area in the Kodaikanal range was divided into two series—Periyakulam and Devadanapatti, in each of which one coupe was to be worked every year on a felling cycle of three years; and in the Palni range three bamboo felling series were formed, Siruvaikad, Vennilai and Palni. The supply of brakepoles for bullock-carts going down the Kodaikanal ghat road loaded with hill produce was for the first time taken up by the department about the year 1921. Brakepoles of the required size were collected from the reserve close to Tum-tum-pari from species other than teak,—*Dalbergia latifolia*, *pterocarpus marsupium* and *Albizia lebbek*. This method was organized in 1932-1933 when the required number of trees was marked for felling beforehand over a demarcated coupe and an estimate of yield of brakepoles per tree was made, a total

¹ C.C.P. Mis. 32, dated 23rd January 1935.

² B.P. No. 136, Land Revenue (Forests), dated 31st August 1916 (Press).

output of 800 brakepoles being aimed at. At present the poles extracted by the Department are sold through the agency of a contractor who sells them at prices varying from 4 annas to 7 annas and draws a commission of one anna per pole. This was not all. A liberal policy in the grant of lands for the cultivation of cardamoms in the reserved forests was adopted in 1923-1924.

Nothing unusual was done in the plantations except in the Vannathiparai teak plantations and in the Kodaikanal pine plantations. In the former, experiments were conducted in 1928 for resuscitating the teak saplings damaged by elephants. The damaged saplings were cut and burned over a small area and in another part a fire was first run through the area and the saplings were then cut after the fire. A rope was stretched round the plantation with rags tied to it to scare away the elephants. But this experiment proved a failure. A further attempt was, therefore, made in 1931 to keep out elephants, by digging trenches across the entrances at the heads of the three valleys leading down to Vannathiparai from Travancore. This attempt too proved a failure; the elephants discovered other paths and the trenches ceased to be impassable by their sides falling in. The elephants still continue to damage the teak. In the Kodaikanal pine plantations, a disastrous fire having destroyed over 500 acres of planted area out of the total of 928 acres, the creation of a fire belt of Australian wattles was attempted between 1921 and 1929. This proved unsuccessful, but the sowing of *Acacia* seeds in lines scraped free of grass attempted in 1929 met with considerable success. Again, a severe cyclone in 1930 having blown down no less than 30,000 pine trees, it was proposed to remove all dead and wind-fallen trees, to thin the plantation over a period of eight years, to prune the side branches of all standing pines to a height of 8 to 10 feet from the ground level and to raise a fire resistant belt of Australian wattles round the periphery of the plantations. Though the entire scheme was approved, only the first and the last proposals were given effect to.

In the Kambam valley, the fuel coupes continued to be worked mainly under the prescription of the working plan sanctioned in 1912 with some deviations. Teak plantations were raised in 1920, 1921 and 1922 in the Vannathiparai valley and an experimental scheme was prepared and introduced in 1926-1927 with the object of discovering the best method of managing the superior timber areas, a method which would enable the existing trees to be exploited profitably and at the same time replaced by regeneration, natural as well as artificial. A scheme for the exploitation of the timber forests on the Surulipatti plateau was prepared in 1929, but was held in abeyance, pending the preparation of the new working plan for the whole district. It was, however, ordered that the Shorea area should be set aside for lac cultivation, that experiments in regeneration should be conducted in certain plots, that centres should be established on the banks of the perennial streams to propagate sandal and that charcoal should be manufactured from *Anogeissus latifolia* to test its economic possibilities. The bamboos in this

range were, prior to 1916, sold under the permit system. In that year the range was divided into four bamboo felling series. From 1927 to 1932 it was found that there was practically no bamboo to sell; but in 1932, on a representation from the people, the bamboo bearing area of the range was divided into three coupes, one of which was to be worked every year on a felling cycle of three years. These coupes were located in the Surulipatti, the Vannathiparai and the Suranganar valleys. Cardamoms were planted in a small area in the High Way forests in 1926, departmentally, in order to induce the local people to take up leases and a large number of leases were granted¹.

In 1933 the 'kumri' method of cultivation was tried as an experiment to regenerate the degraded types of fuel forests. A few acres of such forests in Ayyalur were felled and burnt of slash; strips were cut in this area and sown with *Acacia planifrons*, *Albizia amara*, etc., and the intervening spaces between the strips were cultivated with agricultural crops. This method was found to be quite successful². So also was found to be successful an experiment made in 1930-1933 in the Vannathiparai valley, for the cultivation of lac on *Schleichera trijuga* (kusum).³

Then came the working plan of 1936 prepared by Sri T. V. Venkateswara Ayyar which was enforced during the period 1936 to 1948. In accordance with this plan firewood, the need for which had keenly been felt, was exploited under the simple coppice system on a rotation of 30 years, the felled coupes being regenerated by the rab or the kumri methods; the timber forests were worked under a 'selection' system (selection felling of saleable trees) and under the clear felling system followed by planting; the brakepoles were supplied under a 'groupe' selection system, i.e., selection of groups for felling; bamboos were exploited on a felling cycle of three years; sandalwood was tended and its propagation centres were formed in suitable areas; the exploitation of minor produce was regulated over large units; and the experimental planting of *Eriodendron anfractuosum* for 'kapok' floss and the cultivation of lac on a commercial scale were undertaken. The plan formed nine working circles, namely, the selection working circle of 14,366 acres, the clear felling working circle of 700 acres, the fuel working circle of 167,157 acres, the brakepole working circle of 700 acres, the bamboo working circle of 110,454 acres, the sandalwood working circle of 16,000 acres, the minor forest produce working circle of 396,841 acres, the lac working circle of 2,900 acres and the protection working circle of 121,427 acres⁴. It may be noted here that during the Second World War additional fuel coupes were opened and worked to meet the increasing demand for firewood⁵, and

¹ Working Plan for the forests of the Madurai Division, 1936-1937 to 1945-1946, pages 37-42.

² *Idem*, pages 98-100.

³ *Idem*, pages 100-101.

⁴ *Idem*, pages 118 seq.

⁵ Working Plan for the forests of Madurai Division for 1949-1950 to 1962-1963, pages 105-111.

that, in 1943, in pursuance of the war effort, pyrethrum from which an insecticide used in anti-malarial operations was obtained, was grown in about 575 acres in the Ampthill down reserve on the western flank of the Berijam lake in the Upper Palnis. The pyrethrum plantation was, however, eventually converted into a wattle plantation¹.

The present working plan of the forests of the district, prepared by Sri N. S. Ghate was introduced in 1949. It will be in force till 1965. It is based on the experience gained in the actual working of the previous plan. It aims at supplying fuel to Madurai and the smaller towns and villages by attaining the highest possible sustained annual yield per acre, and for this purpose, it forms a separate working circle, called the concentrated regeneration working circle, comprising all suitable areas for raising the firewood species under the kumri method. As the timber forests have been depleted of all the best timber, it proposes to exploit the over-mature timber alone within a period of five years and to give rest to the other trees for the remaining period. As the timber forests of Vannathiparai valley and Machakal beat contain some large sized *Melia dubia* trees which are in demand for catamarans and for matchwood, it proposes to keep in reserve these trees for working as and when the demand arises. It proposes to preserve the evergreen forests which feed the numerous perennial streams by selecting suitable areas in the grassy downs of the Upper Palnis for wattle cultivation, and for this purpose it constitutes a separate working circle, known as the wattle plantation working circle. Nor is this all. It proposes to conserve and improve the sandalwood areas, to introduce artificial regeneration of sandalwood in suitable localities, to provide for a maximum production of lac on a sustained basis, and to protect generally all other areas so as to conserve water-supply and to maintain the climatic conditions of the country.

As to the method of treatment to be adopted, it prescribes as follows. In areas suitable for fuel supply, the simple coppice system with a rotation of 30 years is to be adopted, fellings being effected through the agency of contractors. Additional areas which can be worked are either to be added on to the existing series or worked as additional series. All over-mature timber, i.e., trees with a girth of 6 feet and above, for which there is a demand, occurring in the Kambam and Gudalur selection series is to be exploited departmentally under selection method during the first five years. Suitable areas in a new working circle, called the teak conversion working circle, are to be clear-felled and planted up with teak annually and closed completely to grazing. The soft wood series are to be exploited under the selection system and suitable plantations of this species in mixture with other species are to be undertaken under the kumri method in areas set apart for that purpose. Brakepoles are to be continued to be supplied by the department through commission agents for cartmen going down the Kodaikanal ghat road. As there is a keen demand for manure leaf in the

Nattam, Sholavandan and Kodaikanal ranges, provision is to be made for the supply of manure leaf by legitimate means through contractors and for this purpose a manure leaf working circle is to be constituted. Bamboos are to be extracted on a three years cycle as before under the selection thinning system, through contractors, and fresh areas are to be planted in suitable localities. With a view to conserving the evergreen forests no fresh areas for cardamom cultivation are to be leased out in those forests. *Acacia decurrens* (wattle) plantations are to be grown in the grassy areas devoid of any growth which occur between the sholas and chiefly in Ampthill downs reserved forest for supplying wattle bark for tanning and for afforesting the downs with a stable tree crop. A separate wattle plantation working circle is to be constituted for this purpose. Vannathiparai valley is to be set apart for the production of kusum lac; and in all suitable areas kusum plantations are to be raised under the kumri method. Minor forest produce such as tamarind, gallnuts and avaram bark is to be leased out as before and the plantations of *Eriodendron anfractuosum* are to be raised in suitable localities.

In order to achieve all these objects the plan constituted the following twelve working circles. The timber selection working circle covered 13,758 acres, i.e., all the ten coupes in each of the felling series, namely, the Kambam series and the Gudalur series. The teak conversion working circle included 1,470 acres; 13 acres in Surulipatti, 90 acres in Kumli (both in the Kambam range), 55 acres in the Velancombi reserved forest of Palni range and 25 acres in the Iruttar valley of Kodaikanal range. The fuel working circle comprised 155,260 acres in all the six ranges. The concentrated regeneration working circle embraced 2,645 acres in the Sholavandan range; 375 acres in the Toppu Samimalai reserved forest, 520 acres in Mogavannur reserved forest, 375 acres in Sirumalai reserved forest on the Ayyalur range and 250 acres in Kappamadai reserved forest in the Kambam range. The manure leaf working circle overlapped the fuel working circle and the Waguthumalai reserved forest in Sholavandan, Nattam and Kodaikanal ranges. The brakepole working circle consisted of 700 acres along the motor ghat road in the Kodaikanal range. The bamboo working circle comprised 110,454 acres in the Kodaikanal, Palni, Kambam, and Nattam ranges. The wattle plantation working circle covered 28,281 acres in the Kodaikanal range. The lac working circle embraced 3,586 acres in the Vannathiparai valley in the Kambam range. The minor produce working circle comprised 404,435 acres, i.e., the whole division plus the unreserves. The grazing working circle included about 290,000 acres and the protection working circle comprised 142,615 acres in all ranges, including areas not included in any working circle except the minor forest produce working circle¹.

¹ Working Plan for the forests of the Madurai Division, 1949-1950 to 1952-1963, sanctioned in C.C.P. M.S. No. 71, dated 5th February 1953, Typescripts, pages 257 seq.

¹ Working plan for the forests of Madurai Division for 1949-1950 to 1962-1963, pages 196-204.

In 1949 the National Government sanctioned a scheme for increasing the cultivation of wattle in the Upper Palnis. After the cessation of trade relations with South Africa, India began to feel great difficulty in obtaining wattle bark and wattle extract which she needed for her tanning industry, and which she formerly used to obtain from that country. She had to depend more and more on indigenous tanning materials and on 'qubraco' imported from Argentina at uneconomical prices. On the advice of the Government of India, therefore, a scheme for planting wattle in 14,000 fresh acres in the Palnis, in addition to the existing plantation of about 1,300 acres, was sanctioned and it was hoped to plant the entire area within a period of 10 years¹. In the same year the Ayyalur range was, for securing better management, transferred to the newly formed Tiruchirappalli division².

Another special scheme taken up by the National Government was that of raising fuel plantations in the district. The object of this scheme which was introduced in 1950 was to increase the firewood supply to Madurai and other towns which had become very unsatisfactory ever since the Second World War. In order to achieve this object a new range called the Periyakulam range was formed and it was proposed to grow babul on 500 acres of tank-bed lands in the course of fifteen years and casuarina on 1,150 acres of waste lands under the kumri method in the course of thirty years, ploughing being done in both cases by tractors³.

But the biggest scheme undertaken by the National Government was that of placing all the forests of the estates which had been acquired under the Estates Abolition Act of 1947, under the control and management of the Forest Department. These forests of the district occupied an area of more than 500 square miles. Even before the Second World War their condition was far from satisfactory. The war made their condition worse, owing to the extraordinary demand for charcoal for producer gas vehicles. The Government felt that the Forest Department alone could properly revive them and manage them, and as their accession meant the addition of large areas to the existing forest division, they formed two forest divisions in the district and placed each division under a District Forest Officer with headquarters at Madurai and Kodaikanal respectively. They, at the same time, sanctioned the formation of five additional forest ranges⁴. The estate forests are now being given rest and protection, but no working plans have been drawn up for them.

¹ G.O. No. 2633, Development, dated 17th May 1949.

² G.O. 4277, Development, dated 19th August 1949.

³ G.O. No. 3397, Development, dated 30th August 1950.

⁴ G.O. No. 1461, Revenue, dated 2nd June 1951.

G.O. No. 4465, Development, dated 6th October 1951.

CHAPTER VIII.

INDUSTRIES AND TRADE.

Madurai is one of the very few districts in this State in which a comparatively large portion of the population, about 37 per cent. lives by industries, trade and other avocations¹. This is no wonder, seeing that it has never had, in spite of its irrigation works, any facilities like Tanjore for absorbing the great bulk of its population in agriculture. In fact it stands next to the Coimbatore district in possessing a considerable proportion of the non-agricultural population.

Its main industries, however, are mostly centred in the Madurai and Dindigul taluks and of these the most important are the cotton spinning and weaving, the transport equipment and the tobacco and cigar manufacturing industries. Among the cotton spinning and weaving mills the most well-known are the Madurai Mills, Limited and the Pandyan Mills, Limited. They both belong to one and the same concern; they are both situated in Madurai town; they are both spinning mills, they have branches at Tuticorin and Ambasamudram, they have an authorized capital of over 175 lakhs of rupees and they employ over 430,500 spindles. Next to these comes the Meenakshi Mills, Limited, which is both a spinning and a weaving mill. It has a capital of 60 lakhs, it employs about 40,000 spindles and 144 looms and it is situated in Tirupparankundram. This is followed by the Sri Mahalakshmi Mills, Limited, with 12 lakhs authorized capital and 33,000 spindles situated at Pasumalai. Then follow the S. S. N. Lakshmanan Chettiar and Company, with a share capital of Rs. 6,00,000 and 22,500 spindles; the Sundararaja Mills, Limited, with 9 lakhs authorized capital and 18,800 spindles situated at Dindigul; the Visalakshmi Mills with a capital of Rs. 10,00,000 and 10,370 spindles; and the Rajah Mills of Mangalapuram and Sri Kothandaram Spinning Mills of Madurai, both proprietary concerns which employ 8,000 and 4,000 spindles respectively. These are purely spinning mills and besides these there are some other spinning and weaving mills in the Madurai town. All these mills together employ about 20,000 workers. The transport equipment works are 17 in number and they employ about 1,200 workers. Of these the most well-known are the Southern Roadways, Limited, and the T.V.S. Lorry Service, Limited, which ply buses and lorries in the southern districts and which owe their origin to the enterprise and ability of Sri T. V. Sundaram Ayyangar. The tobacco and cigar factories, about 20 in number, employ about 1,000 workers and of these the most well known is the Cigar Factory of Messrs. Spencer and Company, Limited, at Dindigul. The rest of the large

¹ Census of India, 1951, Madras and Coorg, Part I, Report, page 134.

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scale industries consist of 46 rice mills, 10 cotton ginning and pressing establishments, a knitting mill, 12 handloom weaving factories, a sugar factory, 3 match factories, 8 iron safe manufacture works, 20 tanneries and 3 coffee curing works; and they employ altogether 3,476 persons¹.

But it is not so much these large scale as the small scale or cottage industries that provide occupation for a large part of the non-agricultural population. Some of these industries like hand-spinning and wood carving, it is true, absorb only a few people; but others like handloom weaving and dyeing absorb a large number of people. All of them, however, have much scope for improvement; and the problem has always been how to develop them on sound lines inasmuch as upon this development depends the social and economic well-being of thousands of poor but hard working people.

Of these industries, hand-spinning which must in olden days have doubtless flourished in many places and contributed not a little to supplement the income of the agriculturists in the off-season, is today confined to a very few places in the district. Its knell was rung in the nineteenth century amidst the increasing importation of foreign cotton yarn; and until recently, it was carried on only in one village, namely, Kasipalayam, about 25 miles from Dindigul. It owed its revival there to the Nationalist Movement; it was organized by what was called the "Kaddar Development Society"; it has about 100 spinning wheels; and it got the yarn spun into cloth by the weavers of Kambarapalli village of the Tiruchirappalli district, which was only six miles away from Kasipalayam. Since the introduction of the Intensive Khadi Scheme by the National Government however in the Kallupatti Centre of the Tirumangalam taluk in 1952-53, a greater fillip has been given to hand-spinning which may, in due course, place it on a better footing. More about this scheme will be said in the chapter on Welfare Schemes².

Handloom weaving, on the other hand, has made Madurai famous throughout history. It depended in olden days on the hand-spun yarn produced in the district; and it depends today on the mill-made yarn produced locally as well as imported. There are at present no less than 80,000 persons engaged in handloom weaving or other processes connected with weaving in the district and of these the largest number belong to the Sowrashtira community. The Sowrashtiras who live mostly in Madurai town have through centuries acquired a great skill in weaving superior cotton as well as silk fabrics. Next to them come the Devangas who weave in silk and art-silk and who are to be found chiefly in the Dindigul

and Nilakkottai taluks with Chinnalapatti as their centre. The other weaver classes are the Sedas, the Kaikolars, the Sengunda Mudaliars and some Christians, Muslims and Harijans. They are distributed all over the district, their important centres being Dindigul, Palni, Sedapatti, Takkampatti, Andipatti and Manarapuram and certain places in the Madurai and Nilakkottai taluks. As to the fabrics generally manufactured in the district, pure silk saris come mostly from Madurai town, art-silk saris from Madurai, Dindigul and Chinnalapatti, lace-cloths, dhotis, and cotton saris from Madurai, lace turbans and dhotis from Dindigul, cotton saris of cheap variety from Nilakkottai, Palni, Sedapatti and Andipatti, and towels and coarse white cloths from Tirumangalam. Silk is obtained by local dealers from Kollegal and Bangalore, art-silk from Madras and Bombay and cotton yarn of superior counts from Madras and of ordinary counts from the local mills. The cotton yarn in use varies from 20s to 120s, the finer counts being used mostly in Madurai and Dindigul. The weavers get their requirements of silk and yarn from the local dealers.

The majority of the weavers, in spite of the efforts that have been made by the Government to improve their condition, are still in the clutches of the capitalists. These capitalists are usually yarn merchants who supply yarn, silk and lace and take back the finished goods, leaving a small margin of profit to the weavers. There are also among them merchants who sell yarn, etc., generally on the credit system charging interest on over-due payments made beyond the stipulated period. There are also a few master workmen who engage the weavers on piecework basis and pay them wages according to the rates agreed upon. All these capitalists, as may be expected, not only make middlemen's profits but also get a complete grip on the weavers by making them advances for marriages, ceremonies and other domestic expenses.

The capitalist employers supply prepared warps to the weavers, and the weavers get these warps sized by a special class of people called Nayakars. In Madurai town the warps in use are shorter ones, just sufficient to weave one or two fabrics of 16 yards long, whereas, in other places, the warps in use are usually 100 to 120 feet long and are sized in the streets by 20 to 24 persons working at them. There is every kind of warping in Madurai from peg warping to beam warping and women as well as boys assist men in weaving. In Madurai town even women do weaving, unassisted by men. There are over 31,000 looms in the district of which a fair proportion are fitted with fly shuttle slay. Except, however, in Madurai and Dindigul, very few looms are fitted with dobbies. Frame looms are more in evidence in Madurai and Dindigul but elsewhere pit looms are in vogue.

In Madurai town itself there are about 12,400 looms. Their number is said to rise even to 15,000 during marriage and festival seasons. These looms produce not only pure silk fabrics but also

¹ 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai district, 1953, page 9.
Statement of Cotton Mills in the Madras State for 1953-54 in Periodical No. 9 A.1/54 of the Director of Industries.
² G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report pages 1-3.
Administration Report of the Rural Welfare Department for 1952-53 pages 72-73.

cotton fabrics of exceptional fineness and beauty, saris of various colours, lace cloths, men's upper wear, veils, scarfs, etc. They also produce art-silk fabrics such as napkins, table cloths, wall hangings, etc., and saris of lower counts with lace border for conversion into chungadi (sungadi) red cloths, for which Madurai is noted. Cloths worth several lakhs of rupees are exported from Madurai to Ceylon, Malaya, Singapore, Burma and many parts of this State. Dindigul is famous for lace upper cloths and rumals (lace turban cloths). The latter are usually 90 inches by 90 inches and are manufactured on big looms which require two men to work them; and both are largely exported to Bombay, Calcutta and several parts of Northern India. The yarn used for them (100s to 120s) is obtained from Madras and lace from Surat and Pondicherry¹.

Madurai town is one of the largest centres for dyeing in South India. In olden days when it used to employ vegetable dyes its dark reds were famous and were admired by all lovers of art. It is said that they were more sober, more pleasing to the eye, more permanent and therefore more beautiful as well as more durable. From what little information is available it would appear that the substances used for dyeing in olden days were Kusum (safflower), stick lac, chay-root and red sanders for red, vertangi (saffron wood chips) for orange, parasam flower or the seed of the Jabra plant for yellow and orange, turmeric and Kasa leave for yellow, indigo and pala for blue, indigo and turmeric for green and Annabedi (sulphate of iron) for black. It would also appear that the substances used for mordants were appalakaram, alum, tagara virai, chunam, gal-nut, pista (tree gall), sheep's dung, gingelly, milk hedge, lime juice and soda. But dyeing with vegetable dyes is now no longer in vogue. Ever since the importation of alizarine and aniline dyes from the second half of the last century, all the dyers have taken to chemical dyes². But, even in dyeing with chemical dyes Madurai town has acquired a reputation for its fine and fast dyeing, especially in red and dark red. There are here several dye houses large and small as well as a number of individual dyers, about 2,000, who carry on dyeing in their own homes. It has been said that more than half the quantity of dyes imported into this State are used in Madurai town alone; and the water of the Vaigai is said to be especially suited for dyeing. The quantity of yard dyed in Madurai amounts to hundreds of bales per month and, besides being locally

¹ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, pages 6-11.

G.O. No. 2295, Development, dated 26th September 1940.

G.O. No. 447, Development, dated 2nd March 1943, pages 82-84.

² Cyclopaedia of India by Edward Balfour, 1885, Vol. I, page 589, Monograph on Dyes and Dyeing in the Madras Presidency by Edwin Holder, 1896, pages 1-8.

Monograph on Cotton Fabric Industry of the Madras Presidency by Edgar Thurston, 1897, pages 6, 7, 16.

Proceedings of the Central Committee for the Exhibition of the Industry and Art of all nations held in London in 1851, pages 75 and 105.

Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-1918, page 184.

consumed, it is exported to the districts of Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Tiruchirappalli, etc.

The main dye-stuffs used now are naphthol, alizarine red, and indanthrene blue; other vat and aniline dyes are also used. The colours in use are direct colours, basic colours, vat colours, sulphur colours and acid colours. The methods adopted in dyeing depend upon the kind of dye-stuffs employed which again depend upon the style of goods required and the varieties of the fibres used. First in importance, taken according to the bulk treated, comes grey cotton, next mercerised cotton, then silk and lastly artificial silk. The styles of goods manufactured are saris with and without gold thread, dhotis, silk bordered, with or without gold thread, turuans with gold thread, saris and dhotis with mercerised yarn, saris and dhotis with art-silk used chiefly for weft and pure silk saris. The chief dye used for cotton or mercerised dyeing is blue and a very bright blue is obtained from indanthrene blue. Sulphur black is also largely used for dyeing cotton owing to its cheapness. Superior cotton saris are dyed with naphthol red, while inferior cotton saris are dyed with alizarine red. Chrome yellow and chrome orange dyes are used for obtaining yellow and orange colours. For art silk fabrics the colours used are mostly red, blue, yellow, orange and green; and for silk fabrics the colours used are blue, red, black, yellow and pink. These colours used for art-silk and silk saris are mainly basic, acidic and direct.

Two varieties of dyed cloths for which there is a great demand in South India are manufactured at Madurai, and they are the "Sungadi Saris" for women and "Saya Vaishties" for men. The processes employed in dyeing these are laborious. Pieces of cloth produced on handloom or mill pieces of foreign make are first dipped into an emulsion of groundnut oil and alkaline earth and trodden under foot for a number of times and allowed to remain wet for two or three days. They are then washed in the river and dried in the sun. This process is repeated for about a week after which they are again washed in the river and put in the dyeing vat containing a solution of alizarine red and kasa leaves. They are finally steamed and dried. For sungadi saris knots are tied along the lines marked in the cloths with red pigment, so that when the cloths are put in the vat the knots prevent the colours from going into the knotted portions. The knotted portions thus remain white and appear as white specks on a coloured background. The saya vaishties are also not completely dyed; they are provided with a white space in the middle by firmly tying that portion into a knot before they are put in the dyeing vat¹.

A few persons in Madurai town and at Periyakulam practise the art of wax printing, an art which was formerly more widely prevalent. It consists in printing designs in wax with wooden blocks on the cloth previously dipped in myrabolam solution and after the

¹ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, pages 23-25.

cloth is dried in immersing it in the dyeing vat. The designs in wax remain unchanged, while the other portions take the dye. The wax is finally melted by plunging the cloth into hot water, when the designs appear white on a coloured background.

Madurai town was once famous for the manufacture of gold and silver threads (called lace) which figure so largely in the borders of costly saris and turbans. But this industry is now practically non-existent, the weavers having taken to French and English lace exclusively. There are, however, still a few Muslim families who make lace to supply the demands of Tirunelveli and Malabar districts where that lace is used for bordering towels. They prepare silver thread by melting silver and lead in a crucible, by casting the alloy so produced in thin bars, by hammering the bars thinner and thinner and finally by drawing them through a series of holes of gradually diminishing size. They prepare the gold thread by beating the silver bar of a cubit long into $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thickness, by covering it with gold plates and by hammering it thinner and thinner and then by drawing it, as in the case of silver thread, through holes of diminishing size. It is said that the apparatus used for drawing the threads is satisfactory, but that some less elaborate method should be devised for hammering the bars to the required thinness and for winding the threads over silk and cotton cloths².

Blanket making is carried on by the Kurumbars in a few villages in the Palni, Periyakulam and Nilakkotai taluks. The wool is usually cut twice a year, in January and July, and cleaned and spun by spindles and woven into blankets. Very little attention is paid to this industry. The sheep are not properly tended; the whole work is done generally by womenfolk, and the blankets produced being coarse and rough have only a local market³.

Nor is any attention paid to the tanning industry which as a cottage industry is carried on by several families of Chucklers at Kothapatti in the Dindigul taluk. The Chucklers can afford to purchase only poor quality hides in the local market. They have no capital to buy better quality hides; nor have they any facilities for procuring proper tanning materials or for drying the skins in shelter. Tanning as a large scale industry, however, is carried on successfully in the tanneries by the Labbai merchants⁴.

Kora mat weaving is done on a small scale in the Palni and Melur taluks. The industry is mainly in the hands of Muslims and it produces only coarser varieties of mats. The right of collecting Kora grass on the beds or banks of tanks, channels, etc., is

¹ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, page 25.

² *Idem*, pages 58-59.

G.O. No. 2295, Development, dated 26th September 1940, page 11.

Gazetteer of the Madras District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1908, page 148.

³ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, pages 29-30.

G.O. No. 2295, Development, dated 26th September 1940, page 9.

⁴ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, 84.

leased out by the Public Works Department and the lessees collect and sell the grass to the workers at an arbitrary price. The industry, however, has considerable potentialities for expansion. It is said that it can be made a suitable occupation for both agriculturists and non-agriculturists, if only suitable arrangements can be made to supply raw materials at cheap rates, to collect the finished goods and to market them. Mats can also be woven out of the leaves of "thalai" (screwpine), growing so widely and abundantly in almost every village where irrigation channels are available¹.

Tobacco manufacture has grown from a cottage industry to a large-scale industry in the district. Before the railway came to the district, a large quantity of the tobacco grown in the district used to be sent to Tiruchirappalli, which was then the main centre of cheroot trade, and the rest of it was manufactured into cheroots locally. The first firm for the manufacture of better quality cheroots in the district was started in about 1850. Some years later a military officer of the Indian army entered the trade and made some improvements by copying the shapes of the Havanna and Manilla cigars and by packing the cigars in wooden boxes. About 1890, Messrs. Spencer & Co. entered the field and since then they have practically monopolized the cigar trade in the district. The tobacco required for the cigars is obtained from the neighbourhood of Dindigul town, especially from Veda sandur and Vadamadurai firkas. Besides Messrs. Spencer & Co. factory there are, as we have already seen, several other tobacco factories in the district. There are also a number of individual workmen who carry on the cheroot industry in their own homes as a cottage industry. They manufacture, however, only cheap cheroots that have mostly a local market. The tobacco used for the cheroots is usually dipped for a night in pots of fermented jaggery water to which some salts are added. It is taken out the next morning and dried in the shade so as to render it soft for working. It is then wrapped up in gunnies and kept under press for a short time before it is made into cheroots. For country cheroots leaves of locally grown tobacco are used as wrappers, but, for superior quality cigars, leaves of Java and Sumatra tobacco are used as wrappers. Cigars and cheroots have to face competition with cigarettes, but beedies manufactured here as elsewhere being cheaper than cigarettes have no competition to face. Beedies are manufactured in the district mostly by Muslims and among them, mostly by women. There are two varieties of beedi leaves called Deechberry and Singareni; the former is smaller in size than the latter. For making 1,000 beedies three or four bundles of leaves of the bigger size and five or six bundles of the leaves of the smaller size and $3\frac{1}{2}$ palams of tobacco are required. A woman in a day can roll about 1,000 beedies. The industry, however, suffers for want of sufficient supply of beedi leaves which

¹ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, pages 30-31 and 35.

G.O. No. 2295, Development, dated 26th September 1940, page 10.

have now to be imported from distant places; and the only way to supply this want is to grow them in the local forests.

Oil pressing is an ancient industry carried on mainly by Vaniyars. The chief oils extracted are those of gingelly and groundnut; oil from neem, castor and iluppai is also extracted to some extent. Oil pressing is done in wooden mills called *chekkus* driven by a pair of oxen. The *chekku* is of the common pestle and mortar type consisting of a wooden mortar inside which revolves a wooden pestle. Pressure is regulated by attaching a weighted wooden lever to the pestle and to this lever are yoked the bullocks which, as they turn in circles, revolve the pestle in the mortar and crush the seeds into oil. The *chekkus* are slowly being replaced by power-driven oil mills, but it is believed that the oil produced in the *chekkus* has not only a better flavour but has also better nutritive value than the oil extracted by the mills¹.

Metal industry flourishes in many parts of the district. In Madurai town the merchants dealing in metalware supply the necessary raw materials to the workers and take back the finished articles at a rate which is less than the prevailing market rate. The workers have no capital of their own but they show good workmanship and, besides making other articles, cast bell-metal *kujas*, tumblers, and *kuthuvilakku* (lamp stand). The industry is also carried on at Dindigul, Tirumangalam, Silamalai near Peraiyur, Nilakkottai, Periyakulam, Uttamapalayam and other places. Dindigul town is famous for the manufacture of bell-metal *kujas*, and iron-safes and locks. The former are made by metal workers in their own homes, whereas the latter are made chiefly in factories. For making a *kuja* four parts of copper and one part of tin are mixed and the whole is melted in a locally prepared crucible and poured into the mould (through a hole) wrapped with wax and coated over with clay. The molten fluid takes up the space occupied by the wax and thus takes the shape of the vessel. When cooled, the mould is broken and the vessel formed is carefully finished in a lathe and polished. There are also many families of Asaris in Madurai town who make artistic works in brass, silver, ivory and horn inlaid with silver. Of these the most well-known are various kinds of insects which find a ready sale at the time of festivals; they are also sent to the Victoria Technical Institute².

The district was once famous for stone carving, a work which was done by the Visvabrahmins, the Naiks and the Maravars. Several of the ancient temples in the district, and notably the

¹ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, pages 71-72.

G.O. No. 2295, Development, dated 26th September 1940, page 11.

Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 149.

² G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, page 82.

Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Kriahnaswami, page 295.

³ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report, pages 62, 68-69 and 78-79.

G.O. No. 2295, Development, dated 26th September 1940, page 11.

Meenakshi temple of Madurai, testify to the exquisite skill and excellent workmanship of the stone carvers. It is said that the black stone used for carving was obtained from Thummanachanayakanur, while the white stone was obtained from the Buthumalai hill in Tirupparankunram and the copper coloured stone from Aruppukottai¹. But this industry is now practically dead. Pottery, however, is still carried on extensively by the Kammalars and the Kusavars in many parts of the district, the earth required for it being obtained from the tanks in the villages free of cost. The earth found in Manamadurai gives a better glaze to the red pottery made there and makes it distinctly superior. About 100 potters of this place not only supply the local demand but also export their pottery to places like Karaikudi and Devakottai. The potter here, as elsewhere, turns his pots on the old primitive wheel which he has to rotate with his hand².

Madurai town had a high reputation for wood carving in ancient times. Here were attracted craftsmen from far and near and here they produced a blend of styles which soon became characteristic of the place. This mixed style was noted for its boldness of form, for its delicate tracery on flat surfaces, for its fine panels decorated with scenes from the Mahabharatha and for its excellent modelling of Gods and Goddesses. This is exemplified in the Kalyanamahal of the Meenakshi temple, by the temple cars belonging to it as well as by some of the wood work still found in ancient houses. But this industry has now almost completely disappeared; wood carving is now done only by a few workers and they make only artistic tables, elephant heads, etc. These artistic works are none the less beautiful and find a sale at Madurai and in the Victoria Technical Institute³. Besides these, wooden toys are made at Iravandanallur, a village situated two miles away from Madurai town. Here a few families of carpenters get the 'palai' wood from the Alagarkoil, Sirumalai and Natham forests and make toys such as balls, saffron cups, kolattam sticks and cradle gratings. These toys are made by turning wood on the lathe while it is green and moist, and they are dyed with lace, saffron and other colours⁴.

There is some scope for starting a couple of new industries in the district. There is an abundance of coconut here the husks of which can, with advantage, be turned into coir as in Malabar

¹ Monograph on Stone Carving and Inlaying in Southern India by Alexander Rea, 1906, page 12.

² G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—see Special Officer's Report, pages 80-81.

³ Wood Carving in Southern India by Edgar Thurston, 1903, page 11.

G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—see Special Officer's Report, pages 78-79.

⁴ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—see Special Officer's Report, page 74.

G.O. No. 1056, Development, dated 23rd May 1930.

G.O. No. 2295, Development, dated 26th September 1940, pages 11-12.

G.O. No. 645, Development, dated 25th March 1942.

There is also on the Sirumalais a spontaneous growth of lemon grass, the oil of which is in great demand¹.

Most of these cottage industries are suffering from one drawback or another. They need finance, organization, improved technical knowledge and greater facilities for procuring raw materials, for storing finished goods and for marketing them. The Government have been quite alive to these drawbacks which are existing not only in this but also in all other districts. They have been trying to set right these drawbacks through the Industries, the Co-operative and the Rural Welfare Departments. What the Co-operative and the Rural Welfare Departments have done will be shown in the chapters on Co-operation and Welfare Schemes. But what the Industries Department has done is indicated here.

The first attempt at developing the industries in this State was made in 1906 by the appointment of Mr. Chatterton as the Director of Industrial and Technical Enquiries. In 1908, as a result of an Industrial Conference held at Ootacamund, endeavours were made by the Government to reorganize the Industries Department, but these endeavours were knocked on the head by Lord Morley, who was then the Secretary of State for India. It was not till 1914 that the Department of Industries which is now called the Department of Industries and Commerce was reorganized and a Director of Industries with an adequate number of officials under him were appointed. Since then this department has made many attempts to improve the cottage as well as the large-scale industries in the State, by organizing periodical exhibitions, by instructing the weavers in the improved methods of weaving, etc., by opening industrial and commercial museums, by setting up technical institutes for providing industrial training, by rendering financial assistance to private industrial schools and by giving grants-in-aid to industries under the State-aid to Industries Act of 1922 (Madras Act V of 1923). This Act which has been amended several times, provides now for the grant of financial aid to new or nascent industries, cottage industries and even old industries (for special reasons). The aid may take the form of loans, guarantee of cash credit, overdraft or fixed advance with a bank, subscription of shares or debentures and guarantee of a minimum return on part of the capital in the case of a Joint Stock Company and also subsidies which, in the case of cottage industries, may be given for any purpose and in the case of other industries, for the conduct of research or purchase of machinery. The maximum value of the loans is 50 per cent of the net value of the assets of the industrial enterprise. Other forms of aids may consist of grants of land on favourable terms and of raw materials, firewood, water or electricity at concessional rates. The Act has provided for a statutory Board of Industries whose business it is to advise the Government in the matter of the

¹ G.O. No. 451, Development, dated 1st March 1930—See Special Officer's Report

G.O. No. 2205, Development, dated 26th September 1940.

granting of loans. Loans up to Rs. 500 in the case of cottage industries, however, can be granted by the Director of Industries and Commerce¹.

The district is in charge of the Assistant Director of Industries and Commerce, Madurai, who is assisted by a Supervisor and an Inspector of Industries. The department has, in Madurai a Polytechnic with an Industrial School attached to it, and an Industrial and Commercial Museum. The school was originally started by the District Board in 1890 under the name of the Madurai Technical Institute. It imparted instruction in art works, such as wood and ivory carving, repousse work, casting of images and making of ornaments. In 1904 it began to teach also aluminium and chrome work. It soon became very popular but before long the District Board found it difficult to manage its growing activities and therefore transferred its management (1910) to the Government. In 1920 the Government changed its name to the Madurai Industrial Institute, provided it with necessary buildings and a hostel, converted it into a quasi-commercial undertaking and made it a centre for training apprentices in engineering, including motor car repairs and carpentry. The school subsequently came to be called the Madurai Industrial School². In 1932 a revision of its syllabus was made, and it began to provide for a cabinet-making course and a general mechanics course, both extending over a period of five years and a systematic workshop's training³. In 1936 an electric wiring course was included in its syllabus⁴ and in 1944 a toy-making course was introduced. During the Second World War it trained military personnel as fitters, turners, mechanics, electricians, etc.,⁵ and, soon after the war, it took up the training of demobilised and disabled military personnel⁶.

Meanwhile the National Government came and, under the Five-Year Plan, started in 1946, five Polytechnics in this State, on a regional basis, at Madras, Madurai, Coimbatore, Kozhikode and Mangalore, in order to meet the growing demand for technicians⁷. In Madurai (as in the other districts), the Industrial school now came to be attached to the Polytechnic. The Madurai Polytechnic which was first called the Dravida Polytechnic and which is now called the Tamilnad Polytechnic⁸ serves the needs of the southern

¹ See the Administration Reports of the Department of Industries from 1910, Monthly Digest of Economics and Statistics, Madras State, January 1951, pages, 1-6.

² G.O. No. 1320, Revenue, dated 29th July 1920.

³ G.O. No. 195, Development, dated 5th February 1923, pages 4-8.

⁴ Administration Report of the Department of Industries for 1930-1931, pages 59-61.

⁵ G.O. No. 1343, Development, dated 30th September 1935.

⁶ G.O. No. 510, Development, dated 28th March 1936.

⁷ G.O. No. 699, Development, dated 18th February 1944.

⁸ G.O. No. 3421, Development, dated 6th September 1946.

⁹ G.O. No. 5186, Development, dated 7th November 1947, page 45.

¹⁰ G.O. No. 2395, Development, dated 5th May 1949.

districts. It trains students for the award of diplomas in engineering, viz., civil engineering, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering and for the award of Industrial School-Leaving Certificates in auto-servicing, blacksmithy, cabinet-making, composing and proof-reading, fitting and erection, moulding, mechanists and turners, electric wiring, machine-mending, electric and gas welding, toy-making and general mechanics. It may be stated here that the scheme for training demobilised and disabled military personnel has now been replaced by a scheme for imparting technical training to adult civilians at these institutions¹.

The Industrial and Commercial Museum at Madurai was opened in 1939 for the display and advertisement of the industrial products of Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts and, in order to increase its usefulness, it was linked up with the Central Museum established at Madras in the same year². In 1947 both the central and the district museums, of which the Madurai museum was one, were reorganized by the National Government. In accordance with this reorganization, the Madurai and other museums are run by the Industries Department and the direction of their affairs is entrusted to a committee consisting of the Collector of the district, two members of the Legislative Assembly and one member of the Legislative Council representing the region, three representatives of cottage and small scale industries in the region and an officer of the Industries Department³.

The department also gives financial aid to the following private institutions in the district: the Pasumalai Trades School, Madurai, which imparts instruction in carpentry, printing and general mechanics; the Arts School, Madurai, which teaches drawing, designs and painting; the C.S.M. Industrial School, Dindigul, which provides training in carpentry, fittings and blacksmithy; and St Joseph's Girls' Industrial School, Madurai, which coaches pupils in needlework and embroidery⁴. Nor is this all. Under the scheme for the revival of village industries by the establishment of model centres started by the National Government in 1950, the department purchases and distributes implements and gives technical instruction to the artisans belonging to Gandhigram, a private industrial institution of Ambathurai⁵. And under the scheme for the revival of important cottage and small scale industries through Regional Boards, initiated by the Government, also in 1950, the

¹ Administration Report of the Department of Industries and Commerce, 1949-1950, page 8.

² *Idem* for 1950-1951, page 8.

³ *Idem* for 1939-1940, pages 27-28.

⁴ *Idem* for 1948-1949, page 21.

⁵ *Idem* for 1949-1950, page 11.

⁶ G.O. No. 37, Firms Development, dated 10th January 1950.

Administration Report of the Rural Welfare Department for 1952-1953, pages 77-78.

D. No. Pd. 27-K/32 of the Office of the Director of Industries and Commerce page 428.

department is entrusted with the work of assisting and improving the leather goods manufacture industry of the Dindigul area¹.

So much about industries. Turning now to trade, we have no trade statistics compiled for each district and therefore it is not possible to give any figures regarding the imports and the exports of the district. Most of the trade of the district is carried on through railways and lorries. The railways connect most parts of the district as well as Madras and other districts; and there are nearly 500 lorries registered in the district itself². Its exports by rail and road consist of the hides, skins and leather, dyes and tans, cotton and silk fabrics, grains and pulses, groundnuts, sugar, jaggery, cotton, onions, cardamoms, tea, garlic, bamboos and other forest produce. Its imports consist of yarn, textiles, silk lace, dyes and tans, sugar, hides, skins and leather, salt, jaggery, rice, pulses and chillies. As to the important fairs or shandies held in the district, shandies are held on every Sunday and Thursday in Madurai, every Monday in Thenur, every Friday in Appan Thirupatti and every Saturday in Valayankulam³.

Prior to the Second World War there was no restriction on the internal movement of any commodities in the districts. But as a result of the war and the acute scarcity of several essential commodities, controls of various kinds were introduced in this State by the Government for fixing fair prices, for preventing hoarding and black-marketing and for ensuring an equitable distribution of the essential commodities. Among these measures, the most important was the compulsory procurement of foodgrain, especially rice, through Government agency and its rationing through co-operative societies and other authorized dealers. Madurai, being more or less self-sufficient in the matter of rice and dry grains, was left out of the scheme of compulsory procurement introduced in 1942 in the surplus districts. Rationing in urban areas was, however, introduced in Madurai in 1944 and procurement and informal rationing in rural areas in 1946. In December 1947 rationing (both urban and rural) was discontinued in the whole State; but in January 1949, it was again introduced in Madurai as well as in all other districts (except Tanjore), on account of the extraordinary rise in prices. On 15th June 1952, however, the position having improved, both procurement and rationing were abolished in the whole State. It may be noted that almost throughout this period restrictions were also imposed on the movement and distribution of various articles like sugar, jaggery, kerosene oil, groundnut, groundnut and other oils, onions, chillies, etc.

Coming to the weights and measures, the ordinary table of weights in the district is 6 tolas (4114 oz.) = 1 palam (nearly 24 oz.); 20 palams = 1 viss (about 3 lb.); 6 visses = 1 tulam (about

¹ Administration Report of the Department of Industries and Commerce for 1949-1950, page 33.

² Report on the Administration of the Motor Vehicles Act., etc. for 1952, page 7.

³ 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai District, 1953, page 8.

18½ lb.); 8 visses = 1 maund (about 25 lb.). In addition to this, certain special weights varying from place to place were formerly used for weighing cotton, jaggery, etc. The usual grain measure is 135 tolas of rice (heaped) = 1 measure; 4 measures = 1 marakkal, and 12 marakkals = 1 kalam. Liquids such as curds, buttermilk and so on are sold by sub-multiples of the ordinary grain measure. English acres and cents are commonly used as land measures. The old land measures of the district which are sometimes met with are kuli (a square of 160 feet) which is equivalent to .5877 acre and kani which is equivalent to 1.32 acres. Inch, foot and yard are usually used; in olden days distances were counted in naligais and kadams, a naligai (24 minutes) being equivalent to 1½ miles and kadam being equivalent to 7½ naligais or 10 miles. For time also the English style is common. The old method of counting time was 60 vinadis = 1 naligai (24 minutes); 3½ naligais = 1 muhurtam; 2 muhurtams = 1 jamam; and 8 jamas = 1 day. The highest coin in use in Madurai before the Muslim conquest was the pon which was equivalent to 10 kali-panams (16½ of which made a star pagoda) or slightly more than 2 rupees. This coin was subsequently superseded by the Star Pagoda or pu-varahan as it was called. The table then became 80 cash = 1 panam; and 45 panams = 1 star pagoda = 3.35 Sicca rupees (or 3½ British rupees). The present currency has displaced all the old currency but not long ago panam and duddu were used in small transactions, the table of these coins being 2 pies = 1 dugani; 4 pies = 1 duddu; and 10 duddus = 1 panam.

CHAPTER IX.

CO-OPERATION.

Co-operation has come to play an increasingly important part in the present century, alike in agriculture, in industries and in other economic and social activities. It has, indeed, been hailed as a sovereign remedy both for curing the ills of Capitalism and for achieving the ideals of Communism, aiming, as it does, at the establishment of a new economic order under which wealth, instead of being appropriated by the few, is shared and enjoyed equally by the many. As is well known, it aims at the achievement by joint endeavour of what is difficult of achievement by individual endeavour, especially by individuals of limited means. And, nowhere is joint endeavour more necessary than in agriculture and industries which employ mostly men of very limited means. But co-operation has its uses not only for the poorer but also for the middle classes, inasmuch as it can provide them too with better facilities and greater amenities. It is the gradual realization of this that has slowly but steadily spread the co-operative movement in our country.

Agriculture has always stood in need of credit and the agriculturists have always found it necessary to borrow for meeting cultivation expenses, for maintaining their families and, if they are indebted, as they generally are, for paying the ever-increasing interest on their debts. The only source from which they have been accustomed for ages to borrow are the money-lenders and the money-lenders have not only charged them exorbitant rates of interest but very often, deprived them of their lands and ultimately, turned them into mere agricultural labourers. It was estimated in 1935 that more than 90 per cent of the credit requirements of the agriculturists were met by money-lenders¹. The All-India Rural Credit Survey Committee report has revealed that the private credit agencies taken together (excluding commercial banks, but including professional money-lenders, agriculturist money-lenders, relatives, traders and landlords) supplied about 93 per cent of the total amount borrowed by cultivators.

The Government have from time to time taken several measures to afford credit facilities to the agriculturists and to free them from the clutches of the money-lenders. Of these, the formation of the agricultural co-operative credit societies is one of the most important measures. But, before we deal with the co-operative societies, we may mention here something about the other measures too that have been designed to assist the agriculturists. In 1883 the Government passed the Land Improvement Loans Act (India Act XIX of 1883) under which long-term loans repayable in 20 to 30 years

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 52-53.

¹ Report on Agricultural Indebtedness by W. R. S. Sathianathan, 1935, page 43. Monograph on Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 356-361.

can be granted at cheap rates of interest for making such improvements to the land as would increase its letting value, like the construction of wells, tanks, irrigation channels, etc. In 1884 they passed the Agriculturists' Loans Act (India Act XII of 1884) under which short-term and medium-term loans can be granted for the purchase of seed grain, manure, cattle, fodder, pump-sets, etc. In 1918 they acquired power under the Usurious Loans Act (India Act X of 1918) to stop recovery of usurious rates of interest. In 1935 they passed the Madras Debtors' Protection Act (Madras Act VII of 1935) which fixed a reasonable maximum rate of interest and prescribed an improved system of keeping of accounts by money-lenders for the benefit of small debtors who borrow sums below Rs. 500. In the same year they amended the Agriculturists' Loans Act (Madras Act XVI of 1935) so as to permit the grant of loans to agriculturists for discharging their debts and for scaling down their debts by amicable adjustment with the creditors through Special Loans Officers. In 1936 they passed the Madras Debt Conciliation Act (Madras Act XI of 1936), which provides for voluntary and amicable settlement of debts by bringing together the agriculturist debtors and their creditors through the medium of Special Conciliation Boards. In the same year they amended the Usurious Loans Act in order to make it more effective (Madras Act VIII of 1937). Finally, in 1938, they passed the Madras Agriculturists' Relief Act (Madras Act IV of 1948) for according substantial relief to indebted agriculturists by scaling down their existing debts, by reducing the rate of interest on their future debts and by writing off their arrears of rent due to zamindars, janmis and other landholders. Experience has, however, shown certain defects in the working of these Acts, which have, to some extent, nullified the intentions of the Government. The Takkavi Loans granted under the Acts of 1883 and 1884 are stated to have failed to become popular because of the delays and irksome enquiries, because of the insufficiency of the loans granted and because of the rigour with which they are collected as arrears of land revenue. The Debtors' Protection Act of 1935 has been found to be defective, inasmuch as the creditors have been required to render accounts only, if asked for by the debtors. The Agriculturists' Loan Amendment Act of 1935 and the Debt Conciliation Act of 1936 are said to have given only an infinitesimal relief to the agriculturists on account of the voluntary element involved in them. Even the Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1938 is stated to have not attained its object, as it has tended to curtail rural credit, to drive the agriculturists, as before, to the money-lenders and to drive the money-lenders to devise various ways for circumventing the Act¹.

In industries too the conditions have been no better. Most of the cottage and small-scale industries have gradually come into the grip of capitalists, money-lenders, master weavers, and master

workers². Most of the workers, as a rule, have neither facilities for obtaining credit, nor facilities for purchasing raw materials at cheap rates and marketing their finished goods at competitive prices. The State Aid to Industries Act of 1922 (Act V of 1923) under which loans are granted is said to have failed to touch even the fringe of the problem of industrial credit. Nor have the various attempts made to improve industries by opening industrial schools and museums and by rendering technical aid by demonstrations removed the need to devise some machinery for procuring and distributing raw materials and arranging for the sale of finished goods³.

It is in this context that the value of the co-operative organizations which the Government have encouraged becomes evident. As early as 1892 they appointed Sir Frederick Nicholson as a Special Officer to enquire how far the methods of co-operation adopted in Europe could be adopted in Madras to relieve rural indebtedness. He recommended the formation of rural co-operative societies on the lines of the Raiffeisen Societies of Germany for the provision of rural credit on reasonable terms and for the encouragement of thrift among the rural population. Nothing came of this, but within a few years the Government of India appointed a committee on co-operation with Sir Frederick Nicholson as one of the members and, on the recommendations of that committee, passed the Co-operative Credit Societies Act (Act X of 1904). This Act envisaged the formation of "small and simple co-operative societies for small and simple folk with simple needs and requiring small sums only" for short periods. Under this Act the Madras Central Urban Bank and two district central banks were registered with the object of financing the co-operative credit societies and several such co-operative credit societies soon came into being. This Act was, however, replaced in 1912 by another Act (India Act II of 1912), which was more comprehensive and which made provision for the formation of central credit societies and co-operative institutions of all types and for all purposes. Under this Act central banks were formed in one district after another as well as urban banks and societies of various types other than agricultural credit societies, such as the marketing societies, the weavers' societies and the consumers' stores. Then came the First World War and close upon its heels the provincialization of the subject of co-operation under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, and a period of agricultural prosperity, of rapid expansion of the co-operative movement. In 1917, in order to finance the central banks and to co-ordinate their activities, the Madras Central Urban Bank was converted into the Madras Provincial (now State) Co-operative Bank. And, as these banks could not grant long-term loans to agriculturists, the formation of land mortgage banks on

¹ Chapter VIII—pages 174-175.

² Monograph on Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 311-312.

³ Report regarding the possibility of introducing land and agricultural banks into the Madras Presidency, 1895, Vols. I and II. G.O. No. 1576, Revenue, dated 27th April 1893. G.O. No. 701, Revenue, dated 13th October 1899.

⁴ Monograph on Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 363-364, 366-374.

co-operative basis was sanctioned in 1925 for granting such loans. These banks were authorized to float debentures on the security of the lands mortgaged to them by individual borrowers. But, as each one of these banks issued its own series of debentures and caused confusion and reluctance on the part of the public to purchase them, in 1929, on the recommendation of the Townsend Committee, the Central Land Mortgage Bank was organized for the centralised issue of debentures and for financing the primary land mortgage banks. The economic depression which then began set the clock back for a time and ushered in a period more of consolidation and of reconstruction of the existing societies than of formation of new societies. This period, however, witnessed several happy auguries. It witnessed the expansion of land mortgage banks and non-credit societies. It witnessed the passing of Act VI of 1932 which remedied the defects noticed in the Act of 1912 and the passing of Act X of 1934 which regulated the working of the land mortgage banks. It also witnessed the appointment of a special committee (Vijayaraghava Achariar Committee) in 1939 which made several suggestions for the improvement of co-operative societies. Co-operation was thus put on a better footing, but its chance for an unprecedented expansion came only with the outbreak of the Second World War when, owing to the rise in prices and the scarcity of foodstuffs, the introduction of controls and rationing and the need for settling ex-servicemen in profitable avocations, several new types of co-operative societies came into existence and several old types of co-operative societies began to undertake new work. And the introduction of total prohibition in this State gave also not a little fillip to co-operation, since it made it necessary to absorb the ex-toddy tappers in useful industries and other avocations and provide the ex-addicts with all sorts of amenities. Meanwhile, the Government of India appointed two committees, the Agricultural Finance Sub-Committee (Gadgil Committee) and the Co-operative Planning Committee (Saraiya Committee) for suggesting post-war development of co-operation and their recommendations were considered by the conference of the Registrars of Co-operative Societies held in Madras in 1947. All these recommendations as well as the Post-War Reconstruction Schemes drawn up by the Adviser Government in 1945 were examined, and, where necessary, modified and implemented by the National Government¹.

Turning to the various types of co-operative societies, the structure of co-operative credit gradually built up at different times now consists of the Madras State Co-operative Bank and the Madras Central Land Mortgage Bank at the apex for securing the needs of the whole State and the various central banks, the urban banks, the primary land mortgage banks, the agricultural credit

¹ Madras Co-operative Manual 1952, Vol. I, pages 4-11.

Monograph on Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 364-369, 375-378.

Post-War Reconstruction and Development Schemes of the Government of Madras, 1945, pages 5, 53-58, 69-70.

societies, the employees' credit societies and other miscellaneous credit societies at the base for securing the needs of the districts. The Madras State Co-operative Bank obtains its funds from Government loans, from borrowings from the Reserve Bank of India and the Imperial Bank of India and from deposits, and passes on these funds to the central banks which, in turn, pass them on to the primary agricultural credit societies, urban banks, etc. It normally borrows at a concessional rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest and lends to the central banks at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest and the central banks lend to the agricultural credit and other societies affiliated to them at about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest¹. The Central Land Mortgage Bank raises funds from the public in the shape of 20 years debentures guaranteed by Government (up to 7 crores) at rates consistent with the prevailing market conditions, retains a margin of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and lends the funds to the primary land mortgage banks which, in turn, lend them to the agriculturists on the security of their lands².

The agricultural credit societies form the most numerous as well as the most important of the primary societies. They obtain their funds chiefly from borrowings from the central banks. Each one of them is organized on the collective guarantee of the agriculturists of the village with unlimited liability and limited dividends. Credit is obtained on the joint security of the members who are all generally residents of one village. The societies are managed on the democratic principle of one member, one vote. The general body of the society elects a panchayat in which is vested the executive administration and the panchayatdars elect a president and a secretary from among themselves. The by-laws of these societies permit not only the granting of the loans but also the taking up of a wide variety of functions. Normally, however, the societies are largely confining their attention to the granting of loans, credit being the crying need of the ryots. But, during the Second World War, when rationing and controls were in force, many of these societies undertook the purchase and distribution of essential commodities. And recently, since February 1949, under a scheme introduced by the National Government³, several of them have undertaken multi-purpose activities such as the supply of agricultural, industrial and domestic requirement of the members, the marketing of their produce, the collection and sale of milk

¹ See the pamphlet entitled the Co-operative Movement by J. C. Ryan, 1954, page 1.

Monograph on Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 368-369.

The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 94-138.

² See the pamphlet entitled the Co-operative Movement by J. C. Ryan, 1954, pages 2-3.

Monograph on Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 375-378.

The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages, 138-174.

Co-operation in Madras State, a pamphlet published by the Director of Information and Publicity, 1954, page 9.

³ G.O. No. 5613, Development, dated 12th November 1948.

and the promotion of social and recreational activities. They have also taken part in the food production measures launched by the Government by distributing chemical manure, iron and steel, by arranging to get fallow lands on lease for cultivation and by encouraging the members to dig pits for making rural compost¹.

The non-agricultural credit societies, the urban banks, the employees' societies and the other miscellaneous credit societies are situated in the towns and cater to the credit needs of the middle class and lower middle class people such as the artisans, traders, public servants, mill hands, etc. The urban banks raise funds chiefly by obtaining deposits from the members and non-members and sometimes by borrowing from the central banks. They issue loans on personal security, on the mortgage of immovable property, on the security of non-agricultural and industrial produce, on agricultural produce where there are no marketing societies, on jewels and on insurance policies other than those coming under the Pension-cum-Provident Fund Scheme of the Government. Special permission is given by the Registrar to good urban banks having fully qualified paid secretaries and a working capital of over Rs. 1 lakh to discount cheques of their members after adopting by-laws prescribed. The employees' societies raise funds chiefly by borrowing from central banks, collect compulsory thrift deposits from the members, issue loans to the members and recover the dues by deduction from the pay bills, if necessary².

In Madurai, there are all these co-operative credit organizations, the central banks, the urban banks, the land mortgage banks, the agricultural credit societies and the employees' and other credit societies. There is a central bank at Madurai with branches at Dindigul and Theni. It finances all the societies in the district such as the wholesale stores, the sale societies, the weavers' societies, the urban banks and the agricultural rural credit societies. But it does not finance the Kallar co-operative credit societies, as these are financed by the Kallar Common Fund, the Kallar Co-operative Trust Fund and the Government loans. In 1953-1954³, it had 1,256 members and a paid-up share capital of Rs. 11,30,922; and it issued loans amounting to Rs. 1,40,35,611 and earned a net profit of Rs. 1,16,759. There are also seven land mortgage banks in the district situated at Madurai, Periyakulam, Sholavandan, Uttamapalayam, Melur, Tirumangalam and Talni and a large number of agricultural credit societies. In 1953-1954, there were 1,025 agricultural credit societies with a membership of 82,164 and a share capital of Rs. 15,54,290; and they issued loans

¹ The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 13-70.

Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 366-368.

Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the State of Madras, 1950, pages 31-34.

Pamphlet on Co-operation in Madras State, 1954, pages 6-8.

² Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the State of Madras, 1950 page 35.

The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 71-90.

³ Figures for 1951-1952 are not available.

to the extent of Rs. 27,44,400. Among these, there were 39 societies exclusively for the Harijans and 282 societies exclusively for the Kallars. The former had 3,709 members and a share capital of Rs. 63,280, while the latter had 12,894 members and a share capital of Rs. 95,724. All these agricultural credit societies served no less than 981 villages. Besides these societies, there were in 1953-1954, 406 non-agricultural credit societies like urban banks, employees' credit societies, etc., of which a large number were multi-purpose co-operative societies. Some of these multi-purpose co-operative societies sold domestic requirements, chiefly, rice, others encouraged thrift, especially among ex-addicts by distributing hundi boxes, others again provided recreational facilities like reading rooms, libraries, radios, games, etc., while some others provided godowns for storing produce till the markets should become favourable. The membership of all these societies amounted to 61,052 and their share capital to Rs. 16,47,726¹.

So much about the co-operative credit organizations. As to the non-credit organizations, there are in the Madurai district, as elsewhere, two types of such organizations, namely, the agricultural and the non-agricultural societies. The agricultural societies in the district consist chiefly of the sale or marketing societies, the milk supply unions and the milk supply societies and an apiary society. The sale or marketing societies are intended to enable the agriculturists to market their produce profitably, holding it over, if necessary, until the prices rise. They generally advance loans to the members on the security of their produce, own or rent godowns for storage and deal in a wide variety of produce. They obtain their finances from the central banks not only on the security of their share capital, but also on the security of their produce. During the Second World War, they were utilized for distributing manure and agricultural implements in connexion with the Grow More Food Campaign. Since the year 1948-49, the National Government have given a great fillip to these societies as well as to the rural credit societies by granting subsidies to the extent of 50 per cent of the cost of godowns put up by them². In 1953-1954, there were seven sale or marketing societies in the district, including the Madurai Marketing Federation. They had 18,670 members and they purchased goods to the value of Rs. 14,56,931 and sold goods to the value of Rs. 14,07,635³.

Of these sale societies, the most important are the Theni Co-operative Sale Society and the Dindigul Co-operative Sale

¹ Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-1954.

² Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the State of Madras for 1949, pages 45-47.

Idem for 1950, pages 52-53.

Idem for 1951, pages 41-42.

Idem for 1952, pages 47-48.

G.O. No. 1807, Development, dated 2nd April 1949.

The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 177-216.

³ Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-54.

Society. The Theni Society which was started in 1936 has introduced with much success what is called the controlled credit scheme. Under this scheme, the loan given to a member is recovered out of the income obtained by the application of the loan, i.e., the loan given for cultivation expenses is collected from the sale proceeds of the crops raised. The member has to execute an agreement to sell his produce through the marketing society to which the co-operative credit society is affiliated; and the marketing society deducts the amount of the loan from the sale proceeds of the produce and remits only the balance to the member¹. The Theni Society has introduced this scheme in the case of chillies and selected 6 rural credit societies to work it out. In 1953-1954 it had nearly 400 acres under cultivation and it issued loans to the ryots to the extent of Rs. 52,500. Besides working this scheme, the society also supplies to the ryots chemical fertilizers, agricultural implements as well as pesticides for the protection of cardamoms and chillies. It has proposed to start processing activities such as cotton ginning, oil crushing, paddy hulling and bone milling. The Dindigul Sale Society, started in 1932, has introduced the controlled credit scheme in the case of groundnuts. In 1953-54, it granted loans to the extent of Rs. 4,050 to one society for cultivating 97 acres of land. And, under a special scheme sanctioned by the Government for authorizing the co-operative societies to export directly 10 per cent of the surplus of certain commodities like chillies and onions, it exported in 1953-1954, 100 tons of onions to Malaya².

The milk supply unions and societies are started with the object of collecting milk under sanitary conditions from the producers in the country parts and distributing it to people living in towns and cities and to public institutions like hospitals, jails, etc. The first milk supply society was formed in Madras in 1926-27. The success of this society led to the formation of similar societies in other towns and the Second World War gave them a great fillip. They have received an added impetus under the Three-Year Plan inaugurated by the National Government. Under this Plan, the Government have given interest free loans to the unions and societies to purchase milch cattle, lorries and vans. The Government have also provided them free veterinary assistance. Nor is this all. Under the Dairy Development Scheme initiated by the Government in 1948, the milk supply unions have received technical assistance for hygienic milk production, for the feeding of animals, for the improvement of their breed and for the establishment of dry stock farms. These unions and societies have done much to

¹ The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, page 37.

² Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-54. D. Dis. No. 7225-1/49 of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Madras, pages 111-112.

³ Report on the Working of the Co-operative Societies in the State of Madras for 1952, page 48.

provide employment to the ex-toddy tappers and counter-attractions to drink, to the ex-addicts. The societies borrow the funds required by them from the unions to which they are affiliated, from the central banks and from the Government. They give loans to the members for the purchase of milch cattle, buy and maintain breeding animals for their use and buy or rent the machinery required for the preparation of by-products¹. In Madurai, there were three milk supply unions, namely, those of Madurai, Kodaikanal and Dindigul, and several milk supply societies. In 1953-54, there were 44 milk supply societies attached to the three unions and 15 independent milk supply societies. In that year, the unions and societies sold milk to the value of Rs. 7,73,197. In the same year, the Madurai Milk Supply Union converted the surplus milk into kowa, curd, ice-cream and cool drink, distributed cattle feed to the value of Rs. 20,693 and issued advances for the purchase of cattle feed to the value of Rs. 25,411; and the Kodaikanal and Dindigul Milk Supply Unions, in addition to selling milk to the public, supplied milk under special contract to the Government hospitals to the value of Rs. 6,882 and to the child welfare centres to the value of Rs. 282. The Kodaikanal Milk Supply Union has proposed to install a cheese manufacturing plant to manufacture cheese out of the surplus milk, during the off-season².

The apiary societies are formed for encouraging bee-keeping as a side line to agriculture. They supply hives to the members, collect the honey from them and market it³. There was only one apiary society in the district at Usilampatti in 1953-54, and it produced honey worth Rs. 526⁴.

Coming to the non-agricultural societies, a wide variety of them are found in the district. There are here the consumers' stores, the students' stores, the handloom weavers' societies and cottage industries societies such as sheep breeding and cumbly weaving societies, metal workers' societies, rope and tape makers' societies and jaggery manufacturing societies. There are also here the building societies, the house building societies, the house construction societies, a rural housing society, the fishermen's societies, the labour contract societies and a co-operative printing press.

¹ Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the State of Madras for 1949, pages 50-56.

Idem for 1950, pages 58-61.

Idem for 1951, pages 45-50.

Idem for 1952, pages 52-56.

The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 217-258.

G.O. No. 5930, Development, dated 2nd December 1948.

² Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-1954.

³ Report on the Working of Co-operative Societies in the State of Madras for 1950, pages 68-69.

⁴ Annual Administration Report of the Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies of Madurai for 1953-1954.

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The consumers' stores (or the primary co-operative societies) aim at eliminating the middlemen in trade by purchasing wholesale and distributing the consumers goods to their members at reasonable prices. Ordinarily they are expected to raise the funds required by them from their share capital, but they are not precluded from borrowing from central banks. They were started in this State as early as 1905 but, with the single exception of the Triplicane Stores, all of them proved unsuccessful. They have, however, assumed not a little importance since the Second World War, since the procurement, the rationing and the controls began. During the war, they purchased and sold all kinds of goods and rationed articles like mill-cloth, kerosene and sugar, not only to the members but also to the general public. Since the conclusion of the war and the abolition of controls, their activities have naturally become restricted; but still they are occupying an important place and selling goods not only to the members and the public but also to the hospitals, jails, devasthanams, hostels, etc.¹. In 1953-54, there were in the district, 89 stores with a membership of 43,111 and a share capital of Rs. 39,76,533. They purchased goods to the value of Rs. 67,84,701 and sold goods to the value of Rs. 57,25,892. As to the students' co-operative stores, there were 13 of them in the district with a membership of 639 and a share capital of Rs. 1,473; and they supplied books and stationery to the value of Rs. 41,906².

In order to assist the primary stores in obtaining their supplies at economical prices a wholesale co-operative stores, the first of its kind in this State, was organized at Madurai in 1930. Its membership includes not only the primary stores but also individuals. It makes bulk purchases from supply or production centres at the proper time and functions as a central distributing agency for its affiliated primary stores. The latter, however, are at liberty to make their purchases from other sources, whenever it is advantageous for them to do so. The wholesale stores serves not only the Madurai district but also the Ramanathapuram district. In 1953-54, it had 382 members and a share capital of Rs. 1,86,750; and it purchased goods worth Rs. 56,61,109 and sold goods worth Rs. 57,40,067³.

The most important organizations of the cottage industries type are the weavers' co-operative societies formed principally for providing raw materials like yarn, or small cash advances, to weavers and for finding markets for their finished goods. These societies started in the earlier days were not very successful owing to several reasons such as periodical slumps in the handloom trade,

indebtedness among the weavers, etc. Their chief difficulty lay, of course, in marketing, since they had to compete with cheaper mill made cloth of all sorts. In 1935, however, they received an impetus under the Government of India subvention scheme¹ which made it possible to organize a central co-operative society for the State, called the Madras Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Society. This State society, to which all primary weavers' societies are affiliated, purchases and distributes raw materials and appliances required by the societies, arranges for marketing their finished goods and gives them financial as well as technical assistance when required. The weavers' societies received a temporary fillip during the Second World War period when there was scarcity of cloth, but very soon, owing to the scarcity of yarn and loss of export markets, they received a set back. The societies raise funds by borrowing from the central banks, purchase yarn from the State Co-operative Society and distribute it to the weaver members specifying the varieties of cloths to be produced and receive the finished goods. The cloth is mostly sold by the societies locally, but such of it as cannot be sold by them is marketed through the State Society and its numerous emporia and sales depots not only in this State but also outside the State. The State Society maintains also one printing factory and some dyeing factories. A co-operative spinning mill has also been registered. A spinning plant is expected to be set up shortly. In order to relieve the distress caused among the weavers by the slump in the handloom industry, the Government have reserved several items of cloth to be produced exclusively by the handlooms and granted interest-free loans to the weavers to join the co-operative societies. They have also exempted handloom cloth from sales tax and given a rebate of 1½ to 2 annas in a rupee in the amount of the goods sold. They have likewise set up a State Handloom Committee consisting of representatives of handloom weavers, cloth merchants, yarn dealers and mill owners to advise them on the steps to be taken to help the handloom industry in all possible ways². All this has considerably helped the handloom industry. In 1953-54 there were in the district 61 weavers' societies with a membership of 7,769 and a share capital of Rs. 3,28,137; and they produced goods to the value of Rs. 16,20,771 and sold goods to the value of Rs. 38,40,742³.

The other co-operative cottage industries societies, though still in their infancy, hold out much scope for rural reconstruction. But co-operation in their case is greatly handicapped for want of finance. The central banks are very chary of giving loans to these

¹ G.O. No. 368, Development, dated 8th March 1935.

² The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 288-310.

Monograph on Rural Problems in Madras by S. Y. Krishnaswami, 1947, pages 382-383.

Reports on the Working of the Co-operative Societies for 1950, 1951 and 1952.

G.O. No. 446, Development, dated 6th February 1947.

³ Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-1954.

¹ The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 329-372. See also the Reports on the Working of the Co-operative Societies for 1950, 1951 and 1952.

² Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-1954.

³ Idem.

societies composed generally of poor and illiterate workmen with no tangible assets¹. Realising, however, the importance of encouraging these cottage industries societies, the Adviser Government in 1945 drew up a Five-Year Plan for their development². The National Government, after much consideration, replaced this plan by a one-year plan in 1949 and placed a lumpsum grant at the disposal of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies for subsidizing deserving cottage industries by giving grants for the purchase of tools and equipment and for meeting part of the establishment and contingent charges. Since then a lumpsum grant has been, year after year, placed at the disposal of the Registrar for subsidizing the industries. The Government have also constituted a Cottage Industries Board consisting of officials and non-officials to devise ways and means for the intensive development of cottage industries. This Board aims at reviving and developing the cottage industries in such a manner as to make full use of all the manpower, all the traditional artistic skill and workmanship and all the raw materials available in the rural areas. It also aims at achieving the economic self-sufficiency of the villages, at raising the standard of living of the villagers, and at establishing, where possible, mechanised cottage industries based on modern technique³. A great deal, however, yet remains to be done. In Madurai, in 1953-54, there were only ten cottage industries societies formed for purposes like sheep-breeding and cumby weaving, metal working, coir and tape making, stone carving and leather work. Of these, the most well-known is the Gandhiniketan Village Industries Co-operative Society which is engaged in the manufacture of charkas, leather goods and agricultural implements and which is owning a tenancy of its own. Mention may also be made here of the Soundararajan Sheep Breeding Society which has received subsidies from the Government and which is making cumblies of improved quality with the help of persons specially trained at Government expense. In 1953-54, the total membership of all the cottage industries societies was 2,038, and their total share capital was Rs. 2,55,940⁴.

Palm jaggery manufacturing co-operative societies are formed for providing alternative employment to ex-toddy tappers who have been thrown out of work by the introduction of prohibition. For the organization and supervision of these societies the Government have, at their own cost, appointed a special staff of Senior Inspectors; and for teaching the members of these societies in the manufacture of refined jaggery as well as for developing the

¹ The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 310-328.

² Post-War Reconstruction and Development Schemes of the Government of Madras, 1945, pages 53-54.

³ Report on the Working of the Co-operative Societies for 1950, page 96.

Idem for 1951, pages 74-75.

Idem for 1952, pages 79-80.

⁴ Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-54.

industry in general, they have also appointed a State Palm Gur Organizer with his headquarters at Madras. Under a scheme approved by the Government in 1949 several candidates were trained for a period of four months in the Instructor's Course at the Central Palm Gur Training School, Cuddalore, conducted by the Government of India, and these candidates, after training, were appointed as Palm Gur Instructors and sent to the districts for giving training to the members of the societies. The manufacture of jaggery being a seasonal occupation, the members of the societies have been encouraged to take to subsidiary occupations like dairy farming during the off-season¹. There were in 1953-54, six palm jaggery manufacturing societies in the district. These societies have been instructed by the Palm Gur Instructors in the construction of improved furnaces and in the preparation of palatable palm gur and ice-cooled neera².

The building societies, the house building societies, the house construction societies and the rural housing societies are of recent growth. The first three are intended for the benefit of the people in the urban areas, while the last is intended for the benefit of the people in the rural areas. The building societies advance long-term loans to the members for the construction of houses on sites owned by the members, while the house building societies generally apply to the Government for the acquisition of sites selected by the housing committees, divide the land among the members and construct houses for them as their agents. The house construction societies acquire sites, construct houses on a proprietary basis and rent them out to the members on the hire purchase system under which the tenant will become the absolute owner only after he has paid off the entire value of the site and the building. The rural housing societies advance loans to the members for the construction of houses with durable materials likely to last for at least 20 years. In the case of Urban Co-operative Societies loans up to a maximum of Rs. 10,000 and in the case of Rural Housing Societies loans up to a maximum of Rs. 5,000 are granted by the Government³. In 1953-54 there were 11 building societies, nine house building societies, two house construction societies and one rural housing society in the district. They had a membership of 3,096, a share capital of Rs. 8,65,634, and they built, on the whole 747 houses⁴.

The fishermen's co-operative societies are formed with the object of improving the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen and promoting the technical and commercial aspects of the fishing

¹ Report on the Working of the Co-operative Societies for 1950, pages 125-126. The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 383-386.

² Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-1954.

³ The Madras Co-operative Manual, 1952, Vol. I, pages 403-435.

⁴ Pamphlet on Co-operation in Madras State, 1954, pages 21-22.

⁵ Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-1954.

industry. Their members are mostly drawn from the fishermen community, Harijans and other backward classes. Considering the helpless condition of these societies, the Government have given them leases of inland fisheries at reasonable rates¹. There were, in 1953-54, two fishermen's societies in the district which had a membership of 106 and a share capital of Rs. 1,170².

There were also in the district, in 1953-54, two labour contract societies and a co-operative printing press. The press supplies books and forms to the co-operative institutions in the Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts³.

Besides assisting all these societies the Co-operative Department has taken not a little interest in organizing new societies in selected firkas under the Rural Welfare Scheme and in providing counter-attractions to drink under the Prohibition Scheme, both schemes recently introduced by the National Government. These matters, however, will be dealt with in the chapter on Welfare Schemes.

The district has, for administrative purposes, been divided into two circles since 1950, namely, the Madurai Circle and the Dindigul Circle. Each of these circles is under a Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies and the two Deputy Registrars are assisted by a number of subordinates. In 1953-54 they had under them 11 Sub-Registrars, 56 Senior Inspectors, 64 Junior Inspectors, 1 Dairy Assistant and 2 Palm Gur Instructors⁴. The chief function of the Deputy Registrar is that of organizing new societies and auditing and guiding the existing societies and banks. It is needless to state that they are placed under the control of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies who is the head of the department. The Registrar is assisted in his work by three Joint Registrars and several Deputy Registrars on Special Duty and other technical officers.

¹ Report on the Working of the Co-operative Societies for 1950, page 110.

² Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-1954.

³ *Idem*.

⁴ G.O. No. 803, Food and Agriculture, dated 28th April 1950.

Report on the Working of the Co-operative Societies for 1950, pages 33-34.

⁵ Annual Administration Reports of the Deputy Registrars of Co-operative Societies of Madurai and Dindigul for 1953-1954.

CHAPTER X.

WELFARE SCHEMES.

Nothing is more interesting than the emphasis that is being increasingly laid on the welfare schemes in modern States. No State, still less a democratic State, can fail to attach importance to its welfare schemes; and of the various welfare schemes initiated in this State, none is perhaps more comprehensive, none more calculated to improve all round the condition of the rural population than what is called the Rural Welfare Scheme.

The idea of reviving the corporate life of the villages which had become almost extinct under foreign rule and of making them self-sufficient in the matter of food, clothing and other necessities and, at the same time, of inducing the villagers to take an active and intelligent interest in all affairs affecting their welfare, is to be traced to Gandhiji. In formulating a constructive programme for the villages he said: "My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for its adults and children. Then, if more land is available, it will grow useful money crops, thus excluding ganja, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean water-supply. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis." And considering that more than 80 per cent of the people in India live in villages, he remarked that, "if the village perishes, India will perish too" and with her will perish "her own mission in the world"¹. Imbued with his ideas, the National Government, as soon as they came to power in 1946, took up his programme in right earnest and formulated what is called the Firka Development Scheme or the Rural Welfare Scheme². This scheme envisaged many reforms for the regeneration of the villages. It envisaged the construction of roads, the improvement of water-supply, sanitation and health, the development of agriculture, livestock and cottage industries, the introduction of electricity, the encouragement of khadi, the provision of basic education, the formation of co-operative societies and the reorganization of the panchayats. As, however, it could not be implemented in all villages at once, the

¹ G.O. No. 65, Rural Welfare, dated 1st August 1950, page 7.

² Community Development in Madras State issued by the Director of Information and Publicity, 1955.

³ G.O. No. 575, Food, dated 10th September 1946.

G.O. No. 4501, Development, dated 14th December 1946.

Government selected for its implementation, in the first instance, 34 firkas in the various districts, where some pioneer work had already been done by non-official agencies, where the villagers manifested enthusiasm or where the general backwardness of the villages called for urgent attention. In the Madurai district they selected first the Tirumangalam firka consisting of 60 villages and later on two more firkas, the Kallupatti firka consisting of 39 villages and the Pannikundu firka consisting of 38 villages².

The Collector of each district was placed in direct charge of the scheme in the selected firkas in his district and under him were appointed for each firka, a Firka Development Officer of the rank of a Deputy Tahsildar and a few Grama Sevaks of the rank of Revenue Inspectors, each in charge of a group of five or six villages. In order to co-ordinate the work in the various firkas and to attend to the technical aspects of the scheme, a Provincial Firka Development Officer, later called the Director of Rural Welfare, of the status of a Head of a Department, was also appointed, with two Regional Firka Development Officers to assist him. And, as the essence of the scheme consisted in enlisting the co-operation of the villagers, committees consisting of officials and non-officials were constituted in each firka to implement the schemes drawn up. The drawing up of the schemes was entrusted to a State Firka Development Board formed at Madras consisting of the Heads of Departments and influential constructive workers, and this Board was assisted by a Standing Advisory Sub-Committee. Publicity and propaganda work was, at the same time, entrusted to a Central Publicity Committee set up at Madras³.

From the very inception of the scheme the problem of finding suitable persons to work it successfully engaged the attention of the Government. For generations the villagers had lost their initiative and had become accustomed to look to the Government for even small things which they could easily and quickly do by themselves with a little co-operation. It was no easy task to change this mentality and to make them conscious of their duties and responsibilities as citizens of the State. It demanded a great deal of patience and tact and, what is more, an ability to win the confidence of the villagers. A number of persons who had already taken part in public affairs were, therefore, selected as Firka Development Officers and Grama Sevaks and given special training in the principles and practice of rural reconstruction⁴.

The scheme is only a few years old. It was initiated towards the close of 1946 and for some time much spade work had to be

done, including the training of selected officers. And yet, its achievements till 1951, the year with which this book closes, were not inconsiderable.

One of the important measures that has been initiated under the scheme is the construction of roads for linking up the villages to the main roads leading to the towns. This provides not only better facilities for communication but greater facilities for trade. By 1951, in the three firkas in Madurai, 31 miles of new road were laid, some existing roads and cart-tracks were improved and 12 culverts and 5 dams over roads and channels were constructed¹.

Public Health being the very foundation upon which all other activities depend, particular attention has been paid to the improvement of sanitation and water-supply and the provision of medical aid. Clean drinking water is not generally available in the villages, nor are proper drains and latrines to be found in them. The digging of drinking water wells and the construction of sanitary latrines and drains have therefore been given priority. A sanitation squad has been formed in each village under the guidance of the Grama Sevaks for giving necessary advice to the villagers, for supplying cheap disinfectants, for providing sanitary latrines, dust bins, soak pits and drainage. Maternity and Child-Welfare Centres and dispensaries have also been opened. By 1951 in the three firkas of Madurai, 53 new wells were sunk, 68 old wells were repaired and 51 latrines of the Wardha type and 209 latrines of other types were constructed. Besides this, 3,401 insanitary pits were filled up, 225 manure heaps were removed outside the dwelling places, 219 cess pools were made, 21 public bath rooms were erected and about 9 miles length of drainage were constructed. In addition, 7 first-aid units were formed and 4 dispensaries and 4 maternity centres were opened².

In order to make the villages self-sufficient in the matter of food, much attention has been paid to agriculture and irrigation. Attempts have been made to increase the productivity of lands by the supply of better seeds and manure, by the protection of crops against pests and diseases and by the use of better implements and better cattle. Agricultural implements have been distributed at half the cost price to the poor cultivators and the importance of preparing and using compost manure has been emphasised through the Grama Sevaks. Several Grow More Food concessions such as the hiring out of pump sets, the distribution of improved seeds of paddy and chemical manures at cheap rates, the supply of iron materials like cart tyres and grants of interest-free loans for the purpose of seed and manure, have also been extended to the cultivators. Nor is this all. Encouragement has been given to the cultivation of subsidiary food crops like sweet potato, tapioca and

¹ G.O. No. 65, Rural Welfare, dated 1st August 1950, page 8.

² Administration Reports of the Firka Development and Rural Welfare Department for 1949, 1950 and 1951.

³ G.O. No. 65, Rural Welfare, dated 1st August 1950, pages 8-11.

⁴ *Idem*, pages 12-14.

¹ Administration Reports of the Firka and Rural Welfare Departments for the years 1949, 1950 and 1951.

² *Idem*.

vegetables. Model agricultural farms have been started in some places, while in others, demonstration plots have been laid out in private fields. Editors have been made to bring under cultivation as much waste land as possible. Special steps have been taken to improve the minor irrigation works and the investigation of some major schemes have also been undertaken. The Madurai firkas have naturally received the benefits of all these concessions and facilities granted by the Government. In the three firkas by 1951, 3,291 manure and compost pits were dug, 1 agricultural farm and 10 agricultural demonstration plots were started, 7 stud bulls and 31 rams were supplied to the ryots and 195 acres of waste land were brought under cultivation. As to irrigation, 1 kudimaramat work was completed, 4 ponds were constructed, 3 channels, 1 sluice 20 minor irrigation works and 2 major irrigation works were repaired *.

In regard to industries, in 1946, an elaborate scheme was drawn up for the development of cottage industries in the selected firkas. The main features of this scheme were the establishment of demonstration-cum-training units, the reorganization of industrial and commercial museums and the provision of financial aid to cottage industries. Under this scheme 40 training units were established in the various firkas. It was, however, soon found that the training of artisans was not so important as the production of utility articles of improved quality and accordingly a revised scheme was drawn up in 1948 by which demonstration and training units were to be transferred to non-official agencies like co-operative societies and the Government were only to assist them in procuring raw materials, in obtaining technical advice and assistance and in marketing the products. The units were to be confined to 25 firkas and to six basic trades, namely, wood-work, blacksmithy, light metal casting, sheet metal work, tanning and leather goods manufacture. But, as private agencies failed to come forward to take up the demonstration-cum-training units, 13 out of the 40 units were by 1950 converted into production-cum-training centres in the six basic trades as well as in bamboo and rattan work. As a complement to the scheme two model centres of village industries were opened, one of these in the present Andhra State and the other at the Tamilnad Grama Sevak Vidyalayam, Kallupatti. The centres were placed in charge of officers who had undergone a year's training at Maganwadi, the headquarters of the All-India Village Industries Association in Wardha. By 1951 they were able to give training to selected village artisans only in oil-pressing, bee-keeping, paper making and Maganchula making ².

¹ Administration Reports of the Firka and Rural Welfare Departments for 1949, 1950 and 1951.

² Rural Welfare in Madras, 1952, pages 27-29.

Administration Reports of the Firka and Rural Welfare Departments for 1949, 1950 and 1951.

G.O. No. 4591, Development, dated 14th December 1946.

Electrification of the firkas has been given priority with a view to providing power for agricultural, for industrial, as well as for domestic purposes. Even where electrification schemes are not remunerative according to the departmental standards, they have been pushed through with the help of subsidies from the Government and, in this manner, many of the villages have been provided with electricity. In the three Madurai firkas, by 1951, 10 electric schemes were sanctioned costing Rs. 9,10,540; and 13 villages were supplied with electricity and 181 wells were given electric connection at a cost of Rs. 6,74,260 ¹.

In order to attain self-sufficiency in cloth, the Government formulated in 1946 an intensive Khadi Scheme and in 1949 an extensive Khadi Scheme. Under the intensive Khadi Scheme which has been introduced in a few centres (8 centres till 1951) it is aimed to provide at least one charka for each family by the supply at cost price of charkas and carding and slivering equipments. In the case of the poor, payment in instalments is permitted. The spinners are encouraged to grow their own cotton and to gin, card and sliver it themselves but, where they cannot grow cotton, it is supplied to them by the authorities. A subsidy is also given to the spinners to make use of the cloth spun out of their yarn. Under the extensive Khadi Scheme which has been introduced into many firkas it is aimed to supply at concessional rates, where necessary, 1,000 charkas a year in each of the firkas. Arrangements have also been made under this scheme for supplying cotton and ginning and carding equipments and for giving subsidies to spinners who use cloth produced by their own yarn. The idea is that the extensive Khadi Scheme should pave the way gradually for the intensive Khadi Scheme. The entire Khadi Scheme serves to provide an ideal subsidiary occupation to the agriculturists in the off season. Having been included in the list of the Post-War Development Schemes, it became eligible for financial assistance from the Government of India, and for the first three years it received such financial assistance to the extent of Rs. 11.85 lakhs. Till 1950, the All-India Spinners' Association guided the activities of the scheme, but since then the Association having withdrawn its men, the Government have appointed their own staff. In order to encourage Khadi, the Government have ordered that it should be used for all State purposes and that all officers except those in the Police Department of the Government who have been enjoined to use uniforms should wear Khadi uniforms ².

¹ G.O. No. 65, Rural Welfare, dated 1st August 1950.

Administration Reports of the Firka and Rural Welfare Departments for 1949, 1950 and 1951.

² G.O. No. 125, Firka Development, dated 15th March 1948.

G.O. No. 963, Firka Development, dated 22nd October 1949.

So far as Madurai is concerned, the extensive Khadi Schemes was introduced in the Tirumangalam firka in 1949, and the intensive Khadi Scheme was introduced in Kallupatti in 1952-53¹.

In the sphere of education, the old type of education which lays emphasis on learning from books has been replaced by the new type of education, called the basic education, which lays emphasis on learning by doing. The old types of schools that exist have been, wherever possible, converted into basic schools and new basic schools have also been opened. Night schools for the benefit of adults, libraries, reading rooms, cinemas and radio sets for the benefit of all have been provided. The object is nothing less than the speedy liquidation of illiteracy and the quick dissemination of general knowledge. By 1951 in the three Madurai firkas, 22 elementary schools, 2 basic education schools, 47 night schools, 42 adult schools, 17 reading rooms, 1 central library and 63 branch libraries were opened. Besides this, several school buildings, libraries and reading rooms were either newly built or improved and 6 radio houses were constructed and 6 radio sets were installed².

Co-operative societies have been formed in many firkas coming under the scheme. In 1950 the Tirumangalam firka was specially selected as one of the three firkas in this State for developing multi-purpose co-operative societies and by 1951 the three firkas in Madurai had 1 land mortgage bank (at Tirumangalam), 97 multi-purpose co-operative societies, 3 co-operative stores, 5 weavers' societies, 3 milk supply societies, 3 Kallar societies, 2 cottage industries societies, 1 sale society, 2 Harijan house-site societies, 3 ex-tappers societies and 1 building society. Besides these there were also 4 poultry units and 1 milk supply unit³.

The panchayat system, which is an ancient institution and which had fallen into decay under foreign rule, has been revived in all the villages under the scheme, including the villages in the three firkas of Madurai. The panchayats have evinced a keen interest in rural welfare work and their activities have embraced almost all the activities of the firkas. In addition to these panchayats, Grama Seva Sanghams have been formed in several villages. There were in 1951 no less than 177 such Sanghams in the three firkas of the district⁴.

¹ Administration Report of the Firka Development Department for 1949, pages 32-33.

² Administration Report of the Rural Welfare Department for 1952-53, page 72.

³ Administration Reports of the Firka and Rural Welfare Departments for 1949, 1950 and 1951.

⁴ *Idem*.

In some other miscellaneous directions too the villagers of the several firkas have shown considerable interest. In the Tirumangalam firka by 1949, they constructed street drains in 11 villages at a cost of Rs. 23,700 and levelled streets in 13 villages at a cost of Rs. 11,900. A large part of this expenditure was borne by the villagers themselves. The villagers of this as well as the other two firkas in the district also planted 7,933 trees and introduced 1,185 charkas by 1951¹.

Since 1951, the year with which this book closes, the Rural Welfare Scheme has been merged in what is called the National Extension Service and a new rural development scheme, called the Community Project Scheme, has been introduced in this State. The aim of both these schemes is, in essence, the same; the improvement of agriculture, irrigation, animal husbandry, sanitation, water-supply, education, means of communications and co-operation in rural areas. But the Community Project Scheme envisages a higher standard of development than that envisaged by the National Extension Service, and accordingly demands a higher scale of expenditure. The Community Project Scheme sponsored by the Government of India under the Indo-U.S. technical co-operation agreement was started in October 1952 in four selected areas in this State, one of which was the Periyar Project area. This area with Gandhigram as its headquarters comprises parts of the Melur, Nilakkottai, Madurai and Dindigul taluks; and in 1953-54 it covered 324 villages having a total area of 576.11 square miles and a population of 485,218. The National Extension Service was started in October 1953 in 28 blocks covering all the areas in which the Rural Welfare Scheme was then in operation; and in the Madurai district three National Extension blocks came to be formed, one at Tirumangalam, another at Kallupatti and the third at Usilampatti. These blocks covered, in 1953-54, 274 villages having a total area of 713 square miles and a population of 374,465. Adequate machinery has been provided to work both the schemes with success. At the State level there is a Rural Development Board consisting of the Chief Secretary to Government, Members of the Board of Revenue, Secretaries to Government and certain heads of departments to review the progress made; a State Development Committee to consider the suggestions of the various departments and to draw up a comprehensive plan of development; and the Director of Community Development and the Director of Rural Welfare to execute the development programmes. At the district level there is the Collector of the district who is primarily responsible for the execution of district programmes; and he is assisted by the Project Executive Officer or the Block Development Officer who, in turn, is assisted by a number of technical officers of the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Public Works Departments. There are also in the district, a Project Advisory Committee and Village Development

¹ Administration Reports of the Firka and Rural Welfare Departments for 1949, 1950 and 1951.

Councils consisting of representatives of the people and Grama Sevaks¹.

While the rural development schemes have for their primary object the improvement of the economic condition of the people in the villages, prohibition has for its primary object the amelioration of not only the economic but also the moral condition of the people, not only in the villages, but also in the towns. Temperance reform, the forerunner of prohibition, was hailed as a blessing by all thinking persons in India, from the very dawn of political consciousness. The Indian National Congress had it at heart from the very beginning. As early as 1889 the Congress welcomed the endeavours made by the British temperance leaders to reduce drunkenness in India and in 1900 it appealed to the Government "to pass measures like the Maine Liquor Law of America and Sir Witham Wilfrid Lawson's Permissive Bill or the Local Option Act and impose an additional tax upon intoxicants not intended to be used as medicine²". From that time onwards the temperance movement gathered momentum under the impulsion of the national leaders. But it became a formidable force in Madurai and elsewhere only from the time of the Non-Co-operation and the Khilafat movements. In Madurai, as we have seen, picketing of liquor shops and auction sales of toddy licences assumed serious proportions in 1922 and 1923. All this led to immense losses of revenue to the Government³. In 1921-22, for instance, the excise revenue in the State fell from Rs. 546.46 lakhs to Rs. 486.23 lakhs, thus resulting in a loss of no less than Rs. 60.23 lakhs⁴.

The agitation entered in the Legislature itself where the Government were again and again urged to pass law for the gradual introduction of prohibition. Between 1921 and 1927 one Temperance Bill and two Local Option Bills were brought forward with a view to introducing prohibition in all areas where the majority of the people were in favour of it. These attempts, however, failed chiefly because the Government were not prepared to forego the excise revenue before finding alternate sources of revenue and also because the Government held that Madras had already gone far ahead of the other Provinces in the field of temperance by placing as many restrictions as possible in the way of getting drink by reducing the

proof gallons and by eliminating road-side liquor shops, etc.¹. But the agitation outside the Legislature still went on. In the 1930-31 Civil Disobedience Movement, large-scale picketing of toddy shops was launched by the Congress in Madurai as in other districts; and, in Madurai, as we have seen, it led to incendiarism, police firing and serious loss of revenue². The cause of prohibition was also at this time not a little strengthened by the issue of two important pamphlets by Sri C. Rajagopalachari, entitled the Indian Prohibition Manual in English and Ur Kattu Padu in Tamil. The former dealt with all aspects of drink and its evils and stressed the need for prohibition, while the latter pointed out that the most effective way to achieve prohibition was by forming caste compacts in the villages for ostracising all those who indulged in drinking³.

The British Government were throughout sceptical of the sincerity of the Congress. They thought that the whole campaign was designed to cripple their revenues and to make political capital out of the financial distress of the State. They even thought that it was a grand stunt skilfully engineered for discrediting them, for encouraging lawlessness and for holding out the hope of millennium to the masses under the Congress regime⁴. But in this they were completely mistaken. The moment Sri C. Rajagopalachari formed the first Congress Ministry in 1937, he took up prohibition with ardour and introduced it boldly by a special Act (Madras Act X of 1937) first in the Salem district and then in the Cuddapah, Chittoor and North Arcot districts⁵. Other districts would have also soon come under the prohibition but for the resignation of his ministry in 1939. There is evidence to show that the measure proved a success in all the four districts. It was reported that it was "a real boon to that large class of the population who lived on the border line of want", that it had improved their standard of living and put an end to drunken brawls and domestic quarrels, that their women, one and all, had welcomed it, and that it had on the whole led to better home life, better outlook on life and better building up of character⁶. But, as soon as the ministry resigned, popular enthusiasm for prohibition began to wane, illicit distillation began

¹ G.O. No. 2040, Revenue, dated 15th November 1922.

G.O. No. 1103, Revenue, dated 21st July 1923.

G.O. No. 521, Revenue, dated 19th March 1927.

G.O. No. 587, Revenue, dated 26th March 1927.

G.O. No. 1457, Revenue, dated 28th July 1927.

G.O. No. 1029, Revenue, dated 10th May 1928.

² See pages 78-79 of Chapter IV.

³ G.O. No. 126, Public (General) (Confidential), dated 21st January 1932.

⁴ G.O. No. 1103, Revenue, dated 21st July 1923.

⁵ Excise and Temperance in Madras by D. N. Strathie, 1922, pages 59-62.

⁶ G.O. No. 197, Legal, dated 1st October 1937.

Report on the Administration of the Excise Revenue for 1937-38, pages 18-23.

Idem for 1938-39, page 19.

Idem for 1939-40, page 19.

⁷ Report on the Administration of Excise Revenue for 1937-38, pages 21-22.

Idem for 1938-39, page 23.

Idem for 1939-40, page 23.

¹ Madras in 1952, Part I, pages 121-122.

Madras in 1953, Part I, pages 101, 110-113.

Madras State Administration Report for 1952-53, Part II, pages 196-199.

Community Projects in Madras State, 1953.

Community Development in Madras State, 1955.

² The History of the Congress by B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, 1935, page 81.

³ See pages 78-79 of Chapter IV.

⁴ Excise and Temperance in Madras by D. N. Strathie, 1922, page 60.

G.O. No. 1103, Revenue, dated 21st July 1923.

to increase and the Adviser Government suspended the Prohibition Act in all the four districts. In 1944 the toddy shops were opened and in 1945 the arrack shops were also opened¹. This was, however, a passing phase. When the National Government came to power in 1946 they introduced prohibition again not only in the four districts but also in all other districts, so that by 1948 the whole State went dry².

In Madurai prohibition was introduced from 1st October 1947 by extending the Prohibition Act of 1937 to that district³. All dealings in liquor and intoxicating drugs were prohibited, except for medical, scientific, industrial or such like purposes. Permits for possession and consumption of liquor were issued only in exceptional cases. They were issued to a few persons who were accustomed to take foreign liquor, to non-proprietary clubs for sale to such of their members as held permits and to the church authorities for sacramental wine. Licences were also prescribed for the possession and sale of denatured spirits and rectified spirits, for the possession and sale, on prescription, of brandy and medicated wines by chemists, for the possession of brandy in hospitals for medicinal purposes and for the tapping of trees for sweet toddy for making jaggery. Opium was issued on permits to opium addicts, but no permits were issued for ganja and bhang. On the recommendation of the Madras Prohibition Enquiry Committee, the quantity of opium issued to addicts was directed to be reduced annually from 1st October 1949 by 20 per cent and the issue was ordered to be completely stopped after a period of five years. The enforcement of prohibition was entrusted to the Police department⁴.

A series of measures were, at the same time, taken in the district to provide counter-attractions to drink and employment to ex-toddy tappers. A special staff was appointed under the Collector consisting of a Special Development Officer, an Assistant Development Officer and a ballad singer in every Revenue division, and a Rural Welfare Officer and a village guide in every taluk, to organize ameliorative work. A number of tea shops and refreshment stalls were opened, first by the Government and later by private persons. The Indian Tea Market Expansion Board, through their mobile canteens, distributed tea and light refreshments at concessional rates throughout the district. Taluk and Village Committees and a District Advisory Council were constituted to help the enforcement machinery to detect offences. Grama Sanghams were formed to undertake various kinds of rural uplift

¹ Madras in 1942, page 46.

Madras in 1943, page 56.

Madras in 1944, page 33.

Madras in 1945, page 17.

² Madras in 1946, page 12.

Madras in 1947, page 17.

Madras in 1948, page 22.

³ Madras in 1947, page 18.

⁴ Excise Revenue Administration Report for 1937-38, pages 18-19.

work. All kinds of games, tournaments, ballad singing parties, bhajanas, kadiaprasangams, cinema shows, dramatic performances, public readings of the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha as well as rural uplift schools and thrift schemes were organized on a wide scale. The unemployment of ex-toddy tappers in this district did not assume any serious proportions. There were some 1,700 ex-tappers; but, as many of them had also other avocations such as agriculture and petty trade even before the introduction of prohibition, they were all absorbed without difficulty by January 1948, either in agriculture or in trade, or in the newly formed milk supply societies, egg marketing societies or jaggery manufacturing societies¹.

As may be expected, illicit distillation and smuggling followed in the wake of prohibition. Illicit distillation which was formerly practically unknown in the district was carried on now on a considerable scale, especially in the Palni and Dindigul taluks². In 1949-50, cases of illicit distillation and possession of arrack in the district numbered 147³; in 1950-51, they remained stationary⁴; but in 1951-52 they rose to 392⁵. Smuggling was carried on to some extent on the Ramanathapuram border and on the Travancore border. The former disappeared on the introduction of prohibition in the Ramanathapuram district in 1948, while the latter was brought under control by organized and systematic police vigilance⁶. The total number of prohibition offences in the district, however, rose from 854 in 1949-50⁷ to 2,403 in 1952-53⁸. This is undoubtedly a blot, the removal of which is called for. But, all the same, according to all accounts, prohibition in the district has effected a general improvement in the moral and material condition of the people. It has been again and again stated that prohibition has chased away drunken brawls and affrays from the streets and made the homes of many, peaceful, cheerful and contented⁹.

Harijan Welfare, another important social reform, had its origin in the resolution moved by the Hon'ble Sri Dadabhai Navroji in the Imperial Legislative Council on 16th March 1916. It has since 1920 formed an important plank in the Congress programme. Of all the reforms urged by the Congress none was more dear to

¹ Madras Information, 15 July 1948, pages 14-21.

² See the Monthly Reports on the working of the Prohibition Act recorded in the G.Os. e.g., G.O. No. 183, Revenue, dated 28th January 1948, G.O. No. 993, Revenue, dated 28th April 1948 and G.O. No. 937, Revenue, dated 6 April 1949.

³ G.O. No. 2822, Revenue, dated 25th November 1948—See the Deputy Superintendent of Police's report.

⁴ Report on the Administration of the Madras Excise and Prohibition Department for 1949-50, page 16.

⁵ *Idem* for 1950-51, page 16.

⁶ *Idem* for 1951-52, page 15.

⁷ G.O. No. 756, Revenue, dated 23rd March 1949.

⁸ Report on the Administration of the Madras Excise and Prohibition Department for 1949-50, page 10.

⁹ *Idem* for 1951-52, page 10.

¹⁰ See the Monthly Reports on the working of the Prohibition Act recorded in the G.Os. of 1948, 1949 and 1950.

Gandhiji than the removal of the social, economic and religious inequalities of the Harijans. He called the "Untouchables", the "Depressed Classes" or the "Scheduled Castes" as the Harijans, "God's Children", a name which has since stuck to them everywhere. He made untiring efforts to remove untouchability, an evil which has been for centuries responsible for keeping down socially, morally as well as economically all the suffering millions of the Harijans. He believed with a conviction not to be shaken that "swaraj was a meaningless term" without the removal of the taint of untouchability. And, as every one knows, he undertook on behalf of the Harijans the epic fast of 1932 which for the first time impressed in a manner not to be forgotten, the importance of Harijan uplift. As soon as the Congress Ministries came to power, therefore, they introduced various measures for securing the welfare of the Harijans.

Not that the previous Government were unconcerned about the Harijans. In Madras, Mr. Paddison was appointed as a Labour Commissioner as early as 1920¹. As a result of the resolution of the Imperial Legislative Council of 1916 and on his recommendation, several steps were taken to improve their condition. Steps were taken to relieve congestion in Harijan quarters by allotting to the Harijans house-sites either by assignment or by acquisition, the cost of acquisition being advanced by the Government as a loan to be recovered in instalments. Steps were also taken to provide them with sanitary amenities such as wells, pathways and burial and burning grounds. Steps were likewise taken to open schools for them and to award scholarships to them, in order to encourage their education. But notwithstanding all this, the Harijan uplift movement never assumed the same importance as it did under the Congress and National Governments.

The credit for passing legislation for the removal of the civil and social disabilities of the Harijans belongs to the first Congress Ministry presided over by Sri C. Rajagopalachari. During the period of this Ministry, two Acts called the Removal of Civil Disabilities Act (Madras Act XI of 1938) and the Temple Entry Authorization and Indemnity Act (Madras Act XII of 1939) were passed. The first enactment removed several disabilities of the Harijans, their inability to have access to public streams, rivers, wells, tanks, pathways, sanitary conveniences and means of transport, as also their disability to be appointed to public offices². The second enactment indemnified and protected the officers of the Government, trustees, etc., of the Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple in Madurai as well as six other temples, including the Sri Brahadeswarar temple in Tanjore, against legal action for having

¹ G.O. No. 748, Revenue, dated 29th March 1919.

² G.O. No. 271, Revenue, dated 2nd February 1920.

³ G.O. Nos. 227-229, Legal, dated 21st October 1937.

G.O. No. 43, Legal, dated 3rd February 1939.

permitted the Harijans to enter those temples and offer worship and, at the same time, permitted the trustees of other temples also to throw open the temples to the Harijans, provided the worshippers were not opposed to the measure³. Madurai may indeed boast of being the first district, and the Sri Meenakshi temple, the first notable temple, to welcome the temple entry reform in this State⁴.

The two Acts mentioned above were further modified and amplified by three more Acts passed by the National Government in 1947 and 1949 (Madras Act XI of 1947, Madras Act V of 1947 and Madras Act XIII of 1949). The first of these Acts prohibited all discrimination against the Harijans in secular institutions like refreshment rooms, hotels, boarding and lodging houses, laundries, hair dressing saloons, etc., and forbade all dealers from refusing to sell to the Harijans any goods kept for sale⁵. The second Act which repealed the earlier Act of 1938 conferred on the Harijans the right of entering any temple which is open to the general Hindu public and to offer worship in the same manner and to the same extent as other classes of the Hindus⁶. And the third Act enabled the Harijans even to enter and offer worship in temples meant for special communities⁷. The Constitution of India, which was soon afterwards passed, gave even greater facilities to the Harijans. It declared that the educational and economic interests of the Harijans (the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) should be promoted with special care and that the Harijans should be protected from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. It also reserved seats for the Harijans in the Legislature for a period of ten years, gave them special preference in the matter of appointments to services and provided for the appointment of a special officer to look after their welfare⁸. It is needless to say that the Harijans of Madurai enjoy all the benefits granted by these Acts and the Constitution.

Nor is this all. As soon as the National Government came to power in 1946, they set apart one crore of rupees as a special fund for ameliorative work among the Harijans (in addition to the expenditure incurred from general revenues) and appointed a State Harijan Welfare Committee for formulating a Five-Year Plan and acting as a standing advisory committee on all questions connected with Harijan Welfare work⁹. Since then, a separate department, called the Harijan Welfare Department, under a Director of Harijan Welfare, has been organized⁹. The Collectors of the districts are primarily responsible for the work of the department

¹ G.O. No. 224, Legal, dated 11th July 1939.

G.O. No. 293, Legal, dated 11th September 1939.

² Fortnightly Report (Confidential), dated 20th July 1939.

³ G.O. No. 2396, Development, dated 4th July 1947.

⁴ G.O. No. 53, Legal, dated 13th May 1947.

⁵ G.O. No. 661, Firka Development, dated 20th July 1949.

⁶ Harijan Welfare in Madras State, 1951, pages 32-33.

⁷ *Idem*, pages 26-27.

G.O. No. 2628, Development, dated 16th June 1947.

G.O. No. 199, Finance, dated 25th March 1947.

⁹ Harijan Welfare in Madras State, 1951, pages 4, 28-29.

in the districts and they are assisted by the District Harijan Welfare Officers. The Director of Harijan Welfare, however, co-ordinates the activities of the Collectors and formulates and controls the implementation of the various measures for Harijan Welfare ¹.

These measures, in the main, consist of the provision of house-sites, the grant of special educational facilities, the provision of water-supply and sanitary amenities and the assignment of lands for cultivation. The chief difficulty of the Harijans is that they do not generally own the houses or huts in which they live and even where they own a hut, the land seldom belongs to them. They are thus liable to be evicted from their huts at any time by unscrupulous landlords. They have therefore been given house-sites on suitable vacant lands belonging to the Government and where no such lands are available, private lands have been acquired under the Land Acquisition Act and distributed to them. Formerly the cost of the sites was recovered from them, but from 1949 sites have been given free of cost to them, except in cases where they can afford to pay for them. Each family is assigned 3 cents in wet areas and 5 cents in dry areas exclusive of the land required for common places like streets, lanes and pathways. Where they have already built houses on Government poramboke lands, such lands, if unobjectionable, have been assigned to them and if objectionable, alternate sites have been allotted to them. Thus, from the commencement of the Harijan Welfare operations in Madurai, down to 1951-52, 180 house-sites were assigned to the Harijans on Government lands and 103 house-sites were assigned to them on lands acquired from private persons ².

Education of the Harijans which had been more or less neglected has, in recent times, been fostered in various ways. The policy of the Government has been to get the Harijan pupils admitted into the existing schools and to open special schools for them only in exceptional cases. The authorities of the private schools were formerly compelled to take in the Harijan pupils on the threat of withdrawal of grants, but since the passing of the Civil Disabilities Act of 1947 the Harijan pupils have equal rights with other pupils for admission into all educational institutions. Ten per cent of the seats in all recognized Secondary and Training Schools and all Arts and Professional Colleges have also been reserved for them and a number of special schools too have been opened for them ³. In 1951-52, there were in Madurai 13 schools for the Harijans and eligible communities in which were studying 714 boys and 303 girls. In these schools, in Madurai as elsewhere, mid-day meals have been supplied free to children, and in 1951-52 in Madurai,

¹ Harijan Welfare in Madras State, 1951, pages 29-30.

² Administration Report of the Harijan Welfare Department for 1951-52, pages 41-46.

³ Harijan Welfare in Madras State, 1951, pages 7-9.

Rs. 17,337 were spent over these mid-day meals ⁴. As for fees, education in all elementary and secondary schools, whether special, public or private, has been imparted free to all the Harijan pupils whatever be the income of their parents. In the case of high schools, however, the full concession fee has been allowed only where the income of the parents does not exceed Rs. 1,200 per annum; and in the case of colleges only if the annual income does not exceed Rs. 1,500. This is not all. Poverty certificates for fee concessions which were formerly required to be produced from Government officials are not now insisted upon. Many scholarships, including residential scholarships, have been offered to the Harijan students in elementary and secondary schools as well as in colleges ⁵. In 1951-52 in Madurai, 30 non-residential scholarships of the value of Rs. 1,485 and 253 residential scholarships of the value of Rs. 85,075 were given to the Backward class students and 1,194 non-residential scholarships involving a sum of Rs. 19,565 were given to the Harijan students for ordinary education ⁶. Full exemption from the payment of examination fees has also been granted to the Harijan students in the case of all Government examinations, and in the case of University Examinations whenever half exemption is granted, the Government have made grants to the students to meet the other half. Several Government hostels for the Harijan students have likewise been provided and where private hostels for such students exist, they have been subsidized by the Government ⁷. In 1951-52 in Madurai, there were 30 private hostels for the Harijans subsidized by the Government at a cost of Rs. 1,28,400. Of these the Sevalaya Hostel, Madurai, and the Harijan Hostel at Usilampatti which were the largest, received grants amounting to Rs. 16,950 and 15,000 respectively ⁸.

In regard to the provision of water-supply and sanitation to the Harijans, the Collectors of the districts have been authorized to sanction a non-recurring expenditure up to a limit of Rs. 4,500 in each case for the construction of wells, tanks, pathways, latrines, levelling of house-sites, etc., and the Director of Harijan Welfare has been empowered to sanction a similar expenditure up to a limit of Rs. 7,500. Up to 1951-52 in the Madurai district, 62 wells were constructed and 53 wells were repaired at a cost of Rs. 1,02,804 ⁹.

A liberal policy has been pursued in the matter of assignment of lands to the Harijans for cultivation purposes. A fair proportion

¹ Administration Report of the Harijan Welfare Department for 1951-52, pages 56-59.

² Harijan Welfare in Madras State, 1951, pages 9-13.

³ Administration Report of the Harijan Welfare Department for 1951-52, pages 9, 13-14.

⁴ Harijan Welfare in Madras State, 1951, pages 13-15.

⁵ Administration Report of the Harijan Welfare Department for 1951-52, page 32.

⁶ Pdl. 14/52 of the Harijan Welfare Department, page 2.

⁷ Administration Report of the Harijan Welfare Department for 1951-52, page 91.

of waste lands in each village is reserved for them for free assignment. So also is reserved for them a good portion of the large blocks of lands such as unreserved forests, unassessed waste lands and porombokes whenever they are transferred to the head of assessed lands. Even in the case of valuable lands, like wet lands which are generally sold in public auction to the highest bidders, a concession has been shown to the Harijans. Such lands are sold to them privately at a fair market price and the price collected in easy instalments. Where necessary, large blocks of lands are also assigned to land colonization co-operative societies consisting mostly of the Harijans¹. In the Madurai district, up to 1951-52, 300,012 acres were reserved for the Harijans and of these 5,120 acres were assigned to them².

As to the special preference shown to the Harijans in the matter of appointments to public services, they are considered to possess general educational qualification even if they obtain a lesser number of marks than those prescribed for others in the Secondary School-Leaving Certificate Examination. They are exempted from paying the prescribed fees when they sit for competitive examinations conducted by the Madras Public Service Commission, provided they have passed in the Intermediate Examination. They are also exempted from the age-limits prescribed in the service rules for appointments under certain conditions. In deserving cases, they are even given special preference in the matter of appointments by the relaxation of service rules, if necessary³.

Thus the dream of Gandhiji is now being made capable of realization. The Government have deliberately and systematically endeavoured to remove the social disabilities of the Harijans and to improve their economic condition. But the Government alone can by no means solve this vast and age long problem. A change of heart among all the caste Hindus is absolutely necessary before the Harijans can take their rightful place as equal members of society. In socio-religious matters like this, legislation and executive action can only pave the way, but the goal can be reached only with the whole-hearted support and co-operation of the people.

Since 1949 the Harijan Welfare Department has been entrusted with the work of Kallar reclamation, a work which was till then carried on first by the Police and then by the Labour Department. The origin of this work is to be traced to 1920, when on the recommendation of Mr. Loveluck, the District Superintendent of Police of Madurai, the Government sanctioned a special police officer to wean the Kallars from their lawless habits and criminal propensities. It was well-known that the Kallars were then as a community levying blackmail on the people and committing most

¹ Harijan Welfare in Madras State, 1951, pages 18-20.

² Administration Report of the Harijan Welfare Department for 1950-51, page 94.

³ *Idem* for 1951-1952, page 96.

⁴ Harijan Welfare in Madras State, 1951, page 21-26.

of the crimes of the district. They stole cattle and returned them to their owners through intermediaries on payment of half their value called tuppoo coolie and levied fees, called kaval fees, for insurance against theft and at the same time committed most of the thefts of the district. In 1909 a cattle branding system was introduced in Madurai by means of which each owner of cattle could have his animals identified by particular letters and numbers. It was hoped that this would make it more difficult for the Kallars to dispose of stolen animals and impossible for them to account for any stolen animals found in their possession. But very soon the system had to be abandoned. The owners showed no disposition to brand the skins of their best animals; the Kallars took greater care to hide the stolen animals and on that account demanded a higher tuppoo coolie for restoring them; and the branded marks on the animals themselves disappeared within two or three years. From 1915 attempts were made to restrain the criminal activities of the Kallars by the application of the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act passed in that year. But the registry of the Kallars in a few of the most notorious villages had little effect upon the volume of crime and it became clear that the police of the district were not numerous enough to enforce the provisions of the Act in all the Kallar villages.

It was under these circumstances that the authorities began to realize that reclamation was the only solution for the reduction, if not the repression of Kallar crimes. What was needed was to make the criminals as thoroughly unpopular with the members of their own community as they were with the outside public; to provide them with alternative occupations so as to render them economically independent of crime, and, at the same time, to divert the energies of the younger generation among them to peaceful pursuits. And this was sought to be achieved by the formation of Kallar panchayats, by the opening of Kallar schools, by the starting of Kallar co-operative societies, and by the assignment of waste lands to the Kallars for cultivation. All this was done in a systematic manner and gradually, the Kallar crimes were reduced, and the Kallars were appreciably reformed and made to take to agriculture and cottage industries. The panchayats undertook on behalf of the Kallars who had selected them, to report any crime committed in their villages, including those committed by the Kallar residents. They undertook also to give up exacting kaval fees and tuppoo coolie and to surrender to the police any criminals that might be wanted. And so long as they did their best to fulfil their duties, the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act were not applied to their villages¹.

¹ G.O. No. 2545, Judicial, dated 14th October 1920.

G.O. No. 162, Judicial, dated 13th May 1921.

G.O. No. 447, Home (Judicial), dated 1st March 1921.

G.O. No. 1002, Judicial, dated 28th August 1922, pages 25-28.

The reclamation work was done originally through a Kallar Special Officer of the Police Department. In 1929, in order to improve this work, a bifurcation of the Madurai district was made for police purposes into North Madurai and South Madurai and in each of these police districts a District Superintendent of Police was appointed. As the South Madurai district comprised the principal Kallar areas, the District Superintendent of Police of South Madurai was also appointed as the Superintendent of Kallar Reclamation, and required to work under the general supervision of the Commissioner of Labour¹. In 1932 the ex-officio appointment of the Superintendent of Kallar Reclamation was abolished and the responsibilities for the reclamation work within the districts of north and south Madurai were entrusted to the District Superintendent of Police respectively, subject to the control of the Commissioner of Labour². This arrangement continued till 1944 when, as a war measure, the reclamation work was exclusively placed under the Police Department, the Commissioner of Labour having been relieved of all his responsibilities connected with it³. In 1948 the National Government abolished the Criminal Tribes Act⁴ and with this abolition the Kallar panchayats became defunct⁵. In the same year, the reclamation work was transferred from the Police Department to the Commissioner of Labour⁶. But this change was only short-lived. In 1949 the reclamation work was, as has been already stated, entrusted to the Harijan Welfare Department⁷.

The Harijan Welfare Department now controls this work through the Collector of the district and a Special Deputy Collector assisted by a considerable staff of non-gazetted officers such as a Co-operative Sub-Registrar, some senior and junior Inspectors of Co-operative Societies, a Special Revenue Inspector, some Supervisors of Kallar schools, a District Scout Master, etc. The Special Deputy Collector is also assisted by a Kallar Advisory Committee constituted in 1950 consisting of five official and five non-official members. In 1951-52 there were 250 Kallar schools in the district with a strength of 11,337 pupils under 567 teachers of whom 162 were women teachers. There were two boarding houses for the benefit of Kallar boys studying in the District Board High Schools at Usilampatti and Uttamapalayam. No less than 1,013 boarding grants were sanctioned to the Kallar pupils in the several institutions.

¹ G.O. No. 178, Judicial dated 4th April, 1929.

² G.O. No. 466, Public (Police), dated 27th August 1932.

G.O. No. 3403, Home, dated 28th November 1936.

³ G.O. No. 1102, Home, dated 19th March 1949, page 15.

⁴ G.O. No. 84, Legal, dated 27th June 1947.

G.O. No. 83, Legal, dated 28th April 1948.

G.O. No. 112, Legal, dated 26th June 1948.

⁵ Administration Report on the Kallar Reclamation, etc., for 1948-49, page 4.

⁶ G.O. No. 221, Home, dated 18th January 1950, page 5.

⁷ G.O. No. 3168, Home, dated 4th August 1949.

G.O. No. 558, Rural Welfare, dated 14th August 1950.

and 357 pupils receiving higher education were sanctioned non-residential scholarships. The total expenditure incurred on education under Kallar reclamation in the district amounted to Rs. 6,48,245. There were 287 Kallar Co-operative Societies in the same year, besides two Kallar School Co-operative Societies, and among these the most notable were the two Supervising Unions at Usilampatti and Cheekannurani, the Cottage Industries Co-operative Society of Usilampatti, the Veilcrichanpatti Egg Production and Sale Society of Usilampatti, the Labour Society of Cheekannurani, the Sathagudi Milk Supply Co-operative Society and the Andrews-puram Milk Supply Co-operative Society. In the same year the loans granted to the Kallars under the Land Improvement Act for the sinking of new wells and repairing of old wells amounted to Rs. 62,350, while the loans granted under the Agricultural Loans Act amounted to Rs. 13,900¹.

Industrial Labour Welfare, to which we now turn and which nowadays causes not a little anxiety to all Governments owing to the increasing prevalence of industrial strikes, has had a history of more than seventy years in India. The idea began undoubtedly as a humanitarian reform, but it gradually assumed a political complexion until today it has become one of the most crucial problems confronting all States. The Indian Factories Act (India Act XV of 1881) was passed for regulating the employment of children in big factories and for providing fencing for machinery for protecting the workers against injury. It was amended in 1891 for bettering the working conditions of children as well as women and for bringing in smaller factories also under its scope. In 1911 another Act was passed which reduced the hours of work alike in the case of men, women and children and made provision for their health and safety. Then came the amending Acts of 1922, 1923 and 1926 and the comprehensive Act of 1934 (India Act XXV of 1934) which was based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour in India. The last Act divided the factories into seasonal and non-seasonal factories, brought in many more small factories under its scope, regulated the hours of work of all workers and required the big factories to provide rest sheds and creches. But even this Act was soon found to be inadequate. It was amended in 1935, 1936, 1937, 1940, 1941, 1944, 1945, 1946 and 1947 and eventually in 1948 it was repealed and replaced by a new Act (India Act LXIII of 1948) by the National Government, based on the standards set by the International Labour Organization. The 1948 Act which is now in force includes many progressive features. It provides for the licensing and registration of all factories, including non-power factories employing 20 or more persons and power factories employing ten or more persons. It abolishes the distinction between

¹ Administration Report of the Harijan Welfare Department for 1951-52, page 102.

G.O. No. 795, Rural Welfare, dated 18th June 1953.

seasonal and non-seasonal factories and shifts the entire responsibility for the fencing and guarding of machinery on the factory owners. It prescribes standards for light, ventilation and temperature, prohibits the employment of children below 14 years, reduces the hours of work of young persons to 4½ hours a day with a spread over of 5 hours, regulates the hours of work of adults to 9 hours a day and 48 hours a week, provides for the payment of overtime wages to workers, imposes special precautions for their protection and insists upon the provision of sitting facilities, spittoons, latrines, good drinking water, first-aid facilities, canteens, rest-sheds and creches and the appointment of special welfare officers in all factories employing 500 or more workers¹. Its provisions are enforced by the Inspectors of Factories. In 1950 this Act was applicable to no less than 321 factories in the Madurai district. Among these factories were those manufacturing food, textiles, beverages, tobacco, footwear and leather products, chemicals and chemical products and non-metal and metal products. There were also printing presses, metal industries and manufacturers of machinery and transport equipment². All these factories employed in 1949, 26,376 workers³.

Besides the Factories Act, the Government have enacted several laws aiming at the social welfare and security of the workers and employees. The earliest of these laws was the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 which assured the disabled workers and the dependants of the workers who sustained injuries and died in the course of their work, the payment of monetary compensation. This Act was amended in 1929 and 1933 so as to extend its benefits to certain classes of workers whose occupations were of a hazardous nature; and under these Acts compensation amounting to Rs. 1,115 was paid in 1950 in Madurai. The Indian Trade Unions Act of 1926 (India Act XVI of 1926) extended the benefits of Trade Unions to workers. This Act was amended in 1928 and 1942. In 1950 there were 40 workers' unions and one employers' union in Madurai⁴. The Payment of Wages Act of 1936 (India Act IV of 1936) ensures prompt and regular payment of wages to the workers in factories and other concerns whose wages and salaries average below Rs. 200 per month. The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act of 1946 (India Act XX of 1946) requires the employer of every individual establishment in which one hundred and more workers are employed to submit to the certifying officer for certification, draft standing orders proposed for adoption in his industrial establishment. The certifying officer sees that the draft standing orders contain provisions relating to the terms of service for the

¹ Labour Welfare in Madras State, 1952, pages 9-13.

² Report on the working of the Factories Act for 1950, page 26.

³ Report on the working of the Factories Act for 1949, page 8.

Figures for 1950 are not available.

⁴ Report on the working of the Factories Act for 1950, page 51.

workers in conformity to the model standing orders framed by the State Government under the Act. He also gives the employer and the trade union of the workers or their representatives an opportunity of being heard before certifying the draft standing orders. The Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 (India Act XIV of 1947) provides for the investigation and settlement of industrial disputes and prohibits strikes and lockouts in public utility services without due notice. The conciliation officers appointed under this Act try to settle the industrial disputes arising in their respective jurisdiction and disputes which are not settled are, in deserving cases, referred by the Government to Industrial Tribunals for adjudication. The Industrial Disputes (Appellate Tribunal) Act of 1950 provides for an appeal to the Labour Appellate Tribunal, against the award of decision of an Industrial Tribunal. The Minimum Wages Act of 1948 (India Act XI of 1948) requires the fixation of minimum wages in certain employments where "sweated labour is most prevalent or where there is big chance for exploitation of labour." The provisions of this Act apply to workers employed in industries specified in the schedule appended to it, provided that there are not less than 1,000 workers in such employment in the State taken as a whole. So far, minimum rates of wages have been fixed for industries like oil mills, rice mills, dhall mills, flour mills, tobacco works, tanneries and leather manufactories. The question of fixing minimum rates of wages for employments, ancillary to or in conjunction with agriculture is also under consideration¹. The Employees' State Insurance Act of 1948 (India Act XXIV of 1948) provides sickness benefit, maternity benefit, disablement benefit, dependants' benefit and medical benefit to the workers. The Madras Maternity Benefit Act of 1935 (Madras Act VI of 1935) prohibits the employment of women in factories for three weeks before and four weeks after confinement and provides for the payment of maternity benefit to them². The total amount of maternity benefit paid in Madurai in 1950 amounted to Rs. 19,050³. And finally, the Madras Shops and Establishments Act of 1947 (Madras Act XXXVI of 1947⁴) which applies to all shops, restaurants, hotels, theatres and commercial establishments in Madras City as well as in all municipalities and major panchayats in the State, provides several benefits to the employees more or less similar to the benefits provided to the workers under the Factories Act. Under this Act adults are not allowed to work for more than 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week, young persons between the ages of 14 and 18 years are not allowed to work for more than 7 hours a day and 42 hours a week and children below 14 years are prohibited from working in any establishment. Besides this, all employees are provided a weekly holiday with wages and allowed 12 days

¹ Social Services in Madras State, 1955, page 41.

² G.O. No. 123, Law (Legislative), dated 13th March 1935.

³ Report on the working of the Factories Act for 1950, page 52.

⁴ G.O. No. 989, Development, dated 1st March 1948.

annual leave, 12 days casual leave, and 12 days sick leave with pay each year. This Act also, to some extent, ensures security of service by conferring on any dismissed employee the right of appeal to the appellate authority, mentioned in the Act, whose decision shall be final. It is needless to say that the benefits conferred by these Acts are shared by the workers and employees in Madurai as in other districts¹.

Nor is this all. Some employers have paid much attention to the welfare of their workers and have, of their own accord, provided at considerable cost, housing and other facilities to their employees. The Co-operative Housing Colony at Harveypatti, Madurai, established by the Madurai Mills Company, Limited, is the most notable and is often held up as a model for the other managements to follow. The provision of housing for workers has been engaging the attention of both the Central and State Governments. The State Government have been, in this matter, handicapped for want of finance. The Central Government have, however, now finalized a scheme called "the Subsidized Industrial Housing Scheme" under which the Central Government grant 50 per cent of the actual cost of construction, including the cost of land, as subsidy and 50 per cent as loan repayable in 25 years in the case of housing schemes undertaken by State Governments or Statutory Housing Boards, and up to 25 per cent as subsidy and 37½ per cent as loan repayable in 15 years, where such schemes are undertaken by private employers. They have also laid down certain standards of accommodation and limited the cost of the tenements for the purpose of calculation of the amounts to be given as loans or subsidies. They have likewise fixed the maximum rent to be charged for the houses constructed and prescribed the rules to be followed for the allotment of the houses².

All these Acts are now administered by the Labour Department. Originally the Deputy Commissioner of Police in Madras City and the District Magistrates in the districts functioned as Inspectors of Factories. In 900 an Inspector of Factories was appointed to relieve the Deputy Commissioner of Police of the work connected with the Factories Act. In 1914, in order to assist him in inspecting the factories in the State, an Assistant Inspector of Factories was appointed. In 1920, a Labour Commissioner was appointed. He looked after not only the Harijan Welfare Work but also industrial labour welfare work and the supervisory duties till then exercised by the Board of Revenue were transferred to him. He was also appointed the Chief Inspector of Factories. In the subsequent years, the department underwent several changes. In 1950 it consisted of one Commissioner of Labour and Chief Inspector of Factories, two Deputy Chief Inspectors of Factories, one Deputy

¹ Labour Welfare in Madras State, 1952, pages 16-23.

² Social Services in Madras State, 1955, pages 45-46.

Commissioner of Labour, one Assistant Commissioner of Labour, three Inspectresses of Factories, 22 Inspectors of Factories, 14 Labour Conciliation Officers and a large number of Assistant Inspectors of Labour. There were also four Industrial Tribunals in the State constituted under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. In 1950 there was a Regional Inspector of Factories at Madurai having jurisdiction over Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli districts and an Inspector of Factories and a Labour Conciliation Officer at Madurai.

One of the important welfare schemes undertaken by the Government is the Women's Welfare Scheme. This scheme had its origin in the Women's Auxiliary A.R.P. Corps started in 1941 during the Second World War for instructing illiterate and ignorant women in air raid precautions. In 1915, after the cessation of the war, the corps was reconstituted to undertake general social welfare work among women and its name was changed to Indian Women's Civic Corps. It had a central organization and centres both in the city and in the districts and it did useful work in slums by holding classes in cooking, knitting and handicrafts, by giving talks on various subjects connected with women's welfare and by organizing excursions and undertaking similar activities intended to make homes brighter. As soon as the National Government came to power, they decided to utilize this useful organization for carrying on systematic social work among women on a wider scale. In 1948 they constituted it into a separate department called the Women's Welfare Department with a Women's Welfare Officer as its head and a number of Assistant Women's Welfare Officers and Women's Welfare Organizers in the districts¹. In November 1953, after the formation of the Andhra State the post of the Women's Welfare Officer was abolished and the department was added to the charge of the Director of Rural Welfare with a Women Deputy Director of Rural Welfare to carry on the work relating to the Women's Welfare Department. In August 1955, the department has again been made an independent one under the Director of Women's Welfare. In 1951, the year with which this book closes, Madurai had one Assistant Women's Welfare Officer, Five Women's Welfare Organizers and two Maternity Assistants.

The department aims at the social, economic and cultural improvement of women at large and endeavours to achieve these aims by providing for field work, maternity welfare, service homes and industrial training. Field work consists of regular house to house visit by trained welfare organizers for advising and assisting

¹ Madras in 1949, Part I, pages 144-145.

Women's Welfare in Madras State, 1952, page 3.

Handbook of Information issued by the Department of Women's Welfare, 1952, pages 3-4.

G.O. No. 2921, Public, dated 19th September 1947.

G.O. No. 3376, Public, dated 13th November 1947.

women in matter like health, hygiene, maternity, child care, nutrition, cooking, gardening, and the means of earning a supplementary income through simple cottage industries like spinning. It also consists of inducing women to take an active part in community centres organized for the free mingling of women of all classes, for providing recreation like indoor and outdoor games for them and for training such of them as need training, in house crafts and cottage industries like spinning, weaving and tailoring. It likewise consists of holding pre-basic classes for children aged between 2½ and 7 years and of helping destitute women by securing admission for them in the Service Homes set up at Madras and Madurai and, after they are trained and discharged from these Homes, in finding useful employment for them. Each Welfare Organizer is in charge of three centres in each branch and several of these branches are located in the villages. Of the three centres in each branch, one is normally a model centre provided with a reading room, an information bureau, a show room, a sales depot, a balavadi section, a maternity and health clinic and facilities for games and practical demonstration in handicrafts. In Madurai district in 1951, there were altogether four branches at Madurai, Kallupatti, Pudupatti and Chinnalapatti. There were nine centres in these branches. Apart from their own work the Women's Welfare Organizers extended their full co-operation to other schemes undertaken by Government such as prohibition, popularization of non-rice food stuffs and the grow more food campaign.

Maternity welfare is sought to be provided for by appointing a trained midwife in each selected village branch. The midwives are trained in social work as well and are expected to work in co-operation with the Welfare Organizers. It is hoped to provide, in due course, one midwife for each rural branch.

As has been said already, there are two Service Homes, one of these is situated at Rayapuram in Madras, and the other called Sevikasram, is situated at Gandhigram in Madurai. It is proposed to start more such Service Homes in the districts. The homes are intended for helping destitute women to re-establish themselves and to lead honourable lives. They take in women with children also where necessary. Whenever the Assistant Women's Welfare Officers find deserving cases of destitute women, they recommend them for admission into the home; and here they are maintained free, educated up to the middle school standard and sent up for various trainings such as teachers and midwives. They are also given training in the home as house-keepers and balasevikas. Training is also given in handicrafts like spinning, weaving, tailoring, basketry and rattan work, printing and dyeing, paper making and soap making. After they are so trained, they are either absorbed in the field staff or are assisted to start life independently. The

Sevikasram at Gandhigram was opened in 1949 with 10 inmates and in 1951 it had 40 inmates¹. Besides the Service Homes, there is also an Industrial Training Centre for Women at Madras (sponsored by the Government of India and run by the Department of Women's Welfare) in which a one year's course of training in cutting and tailoring, weaving or sari lace borders, ribbon and gota and making of glass beads and bangles is provided to women who, though not destitute, are poor and are anxious to learn a trade and earn an independent livelihood. The destitute and poor women of Madurai as of other districts have availed themselves of the facilities provided by the homes and the Industrial Training Centre. For women who received a limited education and who were anxious to pursue their studies further a Rural College was opened at Tanjore. This college which was formerly under the Education Department was in 1950 transferred to the Women's Welfare Department. It offered a two years' course in subjects like history, geography, economics, co-operation, political science, sanitation, everyday science, food, nutrition, clothing, home craft, mother craft and care of the pre-school child. Instruction was given in Tamil through lectures delivered by lecturers from colleges, teachers from high schools and training schools, lawyers, doctors and agricultural demonstrators. In 1950-51 there were 18 women studying in this college². The college was, however, closed in 1952.

In an age like the present age when women are claiming equal rights with men and when the Constitution of India has tacitly conceded these rights and placed them on an equal footing with men, the welfare of women assumes at once a special importance.

If it is admitted that the women have a vital role to play in the building of New India, it should also be admitted that this can be made possible only by improving alike the social, the economic and the cultural position of women. The work being new and important, great attention is being paid to the selection of right type of welfare workers and to their training³.

A monthly journal relating to the activities of the department and all aspects of welfare concerning women and children is published by the department in three editions, viz., a Tamil edition, a Telugu edition and a general edition containing articles in English, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi. The journal not only serves the purpose of educating the public but also forms a medium of expression for the welfare workers.

While the Women's Welfare Scheme is of very recent origin, electrification of urban and rural areas is of some years' standing. Madras City began to receive electricity through a private undertaking as early as 1908; Ootacamund received it through another

¹ Administration Reports of the Women's Welfare Department for 1949 and 1951.

² Report on Public Instruction in Madras for 1950-51, pages 41-42.

G.O. No. 1791, Public (Political), dated 6th April 1950.

³ See Women's Welfare in Madras State, 1952; and Handbook of Information issued by the Department of Women's Welfare, 1952.

private undertaking in 1924; but the districts began to receive it in a large measure only after the Electricity Department was organized in 1927 and the Pykara, the Mettur and the Papanasam Hydro-Electric Schemes were completed in 1933, 1937 and 1941 respectively. The credit for initiating an active policy for developing the power resources of the State goes to Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar who, as a Member of the Executive Council, did much to organize the Electricity Department and to start the Pykara Scheme. And the credit for pushing through all the three schemes successfully belongs to Sir Henry Howard, the Chief Engineer for Electricity.

Madurai, however, did not have to wait for the execution of these schemes to get electricity. The question of lighting the town of Madurai with electricity was taken up by the Madurai municipality as early as 1910. The Government first granted a licence to a firm in Madras for the supply of energy, but this had to be soon cancelled. A private company was then floated for financing the scheme and a contract was entered into with the Metropolitan Vickers Electric Company as managing agents, but this scheme also failed. In 1923 the Municipal Council decided to establish its own electrical installation and obtain the necessary licence from the Government. The work was, however, completed only in 1928 and the lights were switched on, on 3rd July 1928¹.

After the reorganization of the Electricity Department in 1932, that Department took up the electrification of some municipalities and towns in the district by establishing local thermal stations where electricity was produced with the help of oil engines. The Dindigul Electricity Scheme was thus inaugurated on 19th February 1934²; the Palni Scheme on 23rd November 1934³; and the Theni-Periyakulam-Bodinayakanur Schemes in 1935-36. After the Pykara Scheme and the Papanasam Scheme were completed, transmission lines were laid in the district and gradually hydro-electric power was supplied to more and more places⁴. Kodaikanal began to receive hydro-electric power in 1939⁵ and soon afterwards several other places began to receive the same. Electric power also now came to be utilized not only for domestic but also for agricultural and industrial purposes. At present 141 villages in the district are receiving electric supply from the Government Electricity Department while eight villages are being supplied by the Madurai Municipal Electrical Undertaking. Under the Second Five-Year Plan 169 more villages are proposed to be electrified.

The power distribution in the district is mostly in the hands of Government; only a few licensees are operating. Legislation has

¹ Gazetteer of the Madura District, Volume II, 1930, page 139.

² Administration Report of the Electricity Department for 1933-34, page 11.

³ *Idem* for 1934-1935, page 2.

⁴ See e.g. Administration Report of the Electricity Department for 1937-38, page 2.

⁵ *Idem* for 1938-39, pages 12-13.

⁶ *Idem* for 1939, pages 5, 59.

been passed by the Government to acquire on payment of compensation all private as well as local authorities' undertakings in the State. This has been done with the object of improving and extending electric supply especially in rural areas¹.

Nor is this all. The National Government have undertaken several new schemes. They have undertaken the Papanasam II Stage Extensions for increasing the capacity of the Papanasam Hydro-Electric Station which is mainly intended to supply the Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram and Madurai districts. They have also built a thermal station at Samayanallur near Madurai. More recently (1955) they have taken up the execution of the Periyar Hydro-Electric Scheme after reaching an agreement with the Union of Travancore and Cochin.

The Papanasam Second Stage Extensions (including Madurai Thermal Station) and the Periyar Hydro-Electric Scheme, affecting, as they do, the Madurai district, demand some description here. The former which was completed in 1954 has provided spillway gates at the Papanasam Dam for enabling additional storage in the reservoir and made extensions to the Papanasam Power House by an additional generating unit of 7,000 K.W., bringing the total installed capacity to 28,000 K.W. It has also installed an auxiliary steam station with a total installed capacity of 14,000 K.W. near Madurai and laid several transmission lines, namely, the Papanasam-Kayathar 66 K.V. line, the Madurai-Sivaganga 66 K.V. line, and the Madurai-Tirumangalam-Rajapalayam-Tenkasi 66 K.V. line.

As for the Periyar Scheme, this is the biggest hydro-electric scheme which has been yet taken up by the Madras Government. As has already been stated in the Chapter on Agriculture and Irrigation, there is a drop of more than 1,000 feet between the exit of the Periyar irrigation tunnel and the Vaigai Basin into which the Periyar lake water is let for irrigation purposes. The question of utilizing this fall for the development of power has been engaging the attention of the engineers from the very beginning of the Periyar Irrigation Project, in spite of the fact that full power could not be developed for nearly three months in a year, that is, from March to May during the non-irrigation season when water cannot be let down from the lake. But nothing materialized until the protracted negotiations with the Travancore-Cochin Government regarding royalty for the use of the water for hydro-generation came to a conclusion in 1954. The sanctioned scheme envisages the development of power during the non-irrigation period also, the water after generating power, being stored in the proposed Vaigai Reservoir to be constructed lower down in the lower reaches of the Vaigai for irrigation purposes.

¹ G.O. No. 19, Legal, dated 23rd January 1950.

The new scheme sanctioned by the Government provides for utilizing a continuous discharge of 1,000 cusecs from the Periyar lake during the irrigation season and 300 cusecs during the non-irrigation period from March to May. The capacity of the existing irrigation tunnel of the lake is only 1,300 cusecs and this will be increased to 1,600 cusecs by increasing the area of the cross-section of the tunnel from 96 square feet to 154 square feet and lining it with concrete. Water from the tunnel will discharge into a tunnel pond to be formed by a forebay dam which will be 93 feet high and which will have a capacity of three million cubic feet. Necessary surplusing arrangements and headworks for irrigation outlet and for power draft will be provided at the forebay dam. Water for power purposes will take off from the forebay reservoir through a power tunnel 4,188 feet long and 154 square feet in cross-section. This tunnel will be capable of discharging a maximum of 1,600 cusecs. It will terminate into a single surge tank which will be 180 feet high and 40 feet in diameter, sunk entirely in rock excavation and concrete lined. Two low pressure pipe lines 10 feet in diameter and 194 feet long will take off from the surge tank and each low pressure pipe line will then branch off into two penstocks of 6 feet 6 inches diameter. Of these four high pressure pipe lines, one will be blank flanged for use at a later date, while the other three will be connected to individual turbines at the Power Station. Each pipe will be 3,100 feet long and in three sections of diameter, 78 inches, 72 inches and 66 inches respectively and will be capable of discharging a maximum of 400 cusecs. The penstock will roughly follow the line of shoulder which runs from the surge shaft to the Power House.

The Power House will be located in the ghat section of the main road from Kambam to Thekkadi and will be about 35 miles from Theni. There will be initially three 50,000 h.p. turbines each directly coupled to 35,000 K.W.O., 85 P.F. 3 phase 50 cycles 11 K.V. generator. A fourth set will be installed at a later date. Three number step up transformers II K.V. 110 K.V. 42,000 K.V.A. capacity will be installed at first and the fourth one at a later date. The transformer yard will be located by the side of the Power House.

The power generated at the Periyar House will be fed into the existing power grid through 110 K.V. transmission lines, namely, the Periyar-Theni-Madurai 110 K.V. double circuit line which will be 80 miles; the Theni-Sembatti-Tiruchirappalli single circuit 110 K.V. line which will be 108 miles; and the Sembatti-Karur single circuit 66 K.V. line which will be 53 miles. In addition, two more transmission lines will be constructed within a period of ten years from the time the Periyar Power House commences operation, namely, the Tanjore-Sivaganga 66 K.V. single circuit line via Karaikudi and Pudukottai which will be 80 miles and the Sivaganga-Ramanathapuram 66 K.V. single circuit line which will

be 50 miles. Apart from the abovementioned trunk lines, the scheme provided also for nearly 150 miles of 33 K.V. lines for taking power to suitable load centres, about 80 miles of double circuit telephone lines and about 350 miles of single circuit telephone lines to facilitate communication between various stations. Power line carrier current communication will also be provided between the generating station and important sub-stations.

The existing sub-stations at Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Karur, Sembatti and Sivaganga will be provided with additional equipment for taking in and distributing the Periyar Power. A new 110 K.V. sub-station will be constructed at Theni and 66 K.V. sub-stations at Oddanchatram, Pallapatti, Pudukottai, Karaikudi and Ramanathapuram. There will also be a number of 33/11 K.V. sub-stations for distribution purposes. The cost of the entire scheme is estimated at Rs. 10.47 crores.

The scheme was inaugurated by the Chief Minister, Sri K. Kamaraj, on 11th February 1955 and the work is now fast progressing. It is hoped to put the Power House into operation by 1957-58, bringing the benefits of the additional power to Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli districts in the Papanasam System and the Tiruchirappalli and Tanjore districts of the Mettur System.

A welfare scheme which came directly in the wake of electricity was the Rural Broadcasting and Community Listening Scheme. In 1933 the Government appointed a Special Radio Expert to devise a provincial broadcasting system and he suggested the installation of a number of medium or long wave stations linked with a short wave Central Station at Madras. But, as the Government of India desired to retain control over all transmitting stations in their own hands and installed the All-India Radio Stations at Madras and Tiruchirappalli (1938), the Madras Government turned their attention solely to the provision of facilities for broadcasting and community listening. They aimed at providing entertainment to the rural population, at imparting instruction to them in matters affecting their welfare and at disseminating among them news on current events and information on governmental activities. In order to achieve these aims a new department, called the State Broadcasting Department, was organized. This department has rapidly expanded its activities by installing community receiving sets, public address systems and wireless broadcasting system in various rural centres and municipalities and by making suitable arrangements for their field maintenance. Wherever the radio sets have been installed—and they have been installed in many places—the people can listen to the programmes broadcast by the All-India Radio, including special rural programmes on subjects like public

¹ Madras Information for August 1955, pages 12-14.

health, sanitation, agriculture, prohibition, education, etc. These sets are generally worked for about two hours a day¹.

In 1949, the Government authorized the Collectors of all districts, except Madras, to sanction from the allotment of their discretionary grant the cost of battery-operated radio sets, including the cost of installation, not exceeding Rs. 500 in each case, to villages in all the firkas and centres selected for intensive rural reconstruction work². In 1950 they went a step further and authorized the Collectors to sanction half the cost of mains operated radio sets, including cost of installation, or Rs. 200, whichever is less, to villages wherever electricity was available in the firkas and centres³.

The Madurai district began to receive this amenity from 1939⁴. By March 1951 the Department had installed 80 sets in the various big villages and towns in the district; of these, 18 were main sets and 62 battery sets⁵.

We may close this chapter by referring to certain important measures undertaken by the Government for the proper upkeep and maintenance of the hundreds of temples, maths and other Hindu religious institutions existing in this State. These have a history going back to a period of more than a century. As early as 1817 a Regulation (Regulation VII of 1817), was passed for enabling the Board of Revenue and through it, the Collectors of the various districts, to exercise control over all endowments in land or money belonging to the religious institutions⁶. In 1911, however, on the instructions of the Court of Directors, the Government divested themselves of this responsibility and handed over the management to the trustees⁷. This having led to mismanagement and complaints, in 1863, they passed an amending Act (Madras Act XX of 1863) to prevent the abuses⁸.

Regulation VII of 1817 divided the religious institutions into two classes, namely, those in which the nomination of trustees, managers or superintendents was vested in the Government and those in which this was not the case. For the superintendence of the institutions falling under the first description, the Act of 1863

¹ Annual Administration Report of the State Broadcasting Department from 1938 to 1951.

² G.O. No. 330, Firka Development, dated 23rd March 1949.

³ G.O. No. 421, Firka Development, dated 12th May 1950.

⁴ Administration Report of the State Broadcasting Department for 1938-1939, page 9.

⁵ *Idem* for 1950-51, pages 11, 19-20.

⁶ Madras Code, pages 68-71.

Board's Consultations, No. 56, dated 20th November 1817.

⁷ Revenue Consultations, Nos. 19-24, dated 15th June 1841.

⁸ Board's Consultations, No. 32, dated 24th March 1842.

Idem, Nos. 5-6, dated 3rd November 1842.

Idem, No. 4, dated 21st November 1842.

Idem, Nos. 9-16, dated 19th November 1846.

G.O. No. 1586-1587, Revenue, dated 13th September 1860.

G.O. No. 118, Judicial, dated 31st January 1872.

provided for the appointment, once for all, by the Government of local committees of three or more persons to exercise the powers of the Board of Revenue and the Collectors, the vacancies in the committees being filled up by election. But it left the institutions of the second class in the hands of the then existing trustees, free from the control of any local committees, the trustees, however, being made liable to be sued by any person for breach of trust or neglect of duty¹. This arrangement was soon found to be by no means satisfactory. It was found that the trustees could not be compelled to perform their duties; that the committees' powers were, to say the least, ill-defined; and that both the trustees and the committees being unpaid agencies had little inducement to discharge their responsibilities². Various attempts were therefore made between 1870 and 1920 to bring in further legislation. First came Sri V. Ramalingar's Bill (1871)³. Then followed several Bills framed by various committees presided over by Sir William Robinson (1877)⁴; by DAVID Fremantle Carmichael (1883) by Henry Edward Sullivan (1886)⁵; by Justice Muthuswami Ayyar (1893)⁶; and by Sri Chentsal has (1896)⁷. Some individual Bills were also brought forward by the members of the Imperial as well as the Madras Legislature. Sri K. Kalyanasundaram Iyer brought forward a Bill in the Madras Legislative Council in 1896⁸; Sri Ananthacharlu brought forward another in the Imperial Legislative Council in 1897⁹; Sri Srinivasa Rao brought forward a third in the Madras Legislative Council in 1902¹⁰; and Sri T. V. Seshagiri Ayyar and Sri L. A. Govindaraghava Ayyar brought forward a fourth in the same Council in 1912¹¹. Next came Imperial Legislation by the passing of the Religious and Charitable Trusts Act of 1920¹². But even this Act proved a failure. It was not till 1925 that something was sought to be done to place the religious institutions on a better

¹ The unrepealed Acts of the Governor-General in Council (1898), Volume I, pages 405-412.

² G.O. No. 1975 (A), Judicial, dated 23rd October 1874.

³ G.O. No. 118, Judicial, dated 31st January 1872.

G.O. No. 1975, Judicial, dated 23rd October 1874.

⁴ G.O. No. 639, Judicial, dated 4th April 1876.

G.O. Nos. 33-34, Judicial, dated 10th January 1879.

Copy of the Bill of 1879.

G.O. No. 1471, Judicial, dated 21st June 1880.

G.O. No. 1681, Judicial, dated 15th January 1880.

⁵ G.O. No. 58, Legislative, dated 5th February 1884.

G.O. No. 543, Public, dated 15th April 1887.

G.O. No. 364, Public, dated 4th April 1888.

⁶ G.O. Nos. 72-74, Legislative, dated 25th May 1894.

G.O. No. 114, Legislative, dated 30th October 1894.

⁷ G.O. Nos. 1065-1066, Public, dated 23rd September 1899.

G.O. No. 223, Public, dated 2nd March 1900.

⁸ Legislative Council Proceedings, dated 26th February 1896 and 9th April 1897.

⁹ G.O. Nos. 183-184, Public, dated 13th February 1899.

¹⁰ G.O. No. 14, Legislative, dated 12th March 1903.

¹¹ G.O. No. 627-628, Public, dated 28th May 1912.

Idem.

¹² G.O. No. 363, Public (Confidential), dated 10th March 1915.

G.O. No. 250, Public (Confidential), dated 11th February 1916.

G.O. No. 1982, L. & M., dated 18th October 1922.

footing by the passing of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act I of 1925; and it was not till 1927 that certain doubts regarding the validity of this Act were removed by the Madras Act II of 1927¹.

This Act set up a Statutory Board consisting of a President and certain Commissioners in whom was vested, subject to the provisions of the Act, the general superintendence and control of all Hindu religious institutions in the State, with judicial and administrative powers over them². The Hindu Religious Endowments Board which thus came into being sought to set right matters; but even this Board was soon found to be incapable of discharging its duties efficiently and as a result, several amendments were made to the Act which created it³. The position, however, did not improve. Complaints of mismanagement and inefficient supervision still began to pour in, until at last, the First Congress Ministry under Sri C. Rajagopalachari, resolved to take over the direct administration of the endowments. Before, however, it could do so, it resigned office⁴. Some amendments were then made to the existing Act by Act V of 1944 and Act X of 1946⁵, but, the important step, that of direct administration, was taken by the National Government only in 1951 by passing the Madras Act XIX of 1951⁶. This Act consolidates the law relating to the Hindu Religious and Charitable institutions and endowments of the State, and specifies several controlling authorities, the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioners, the Assistant Commissioners and the Area Committees. It empowers the Commissioner to exercise general superintendence and control over the administration of all religious endowments. It invests the Area Committees with jurisdiction over the temples and specific endowments attached to the temples with an annual income of less than Rs. 20,000. And it requires the trustees of every religious institution to keep regular accounts of all receipts and disbursements and also provides for the payment annually to the Government, by every such institution, of a contribution not less than 5 per cent of its income in respect of the services rendered by the Government and their officers⁷. The Government have since then arranged for the

¹ G.O. No. 1982, L. & M., dated 18th October 1922.
² G.O. No. 272, Law (Legislative), dated 5th December 1922.
³ G.O. No. 29, Law (Legislative), dated 27th January 1925.
⁴ G.O. No. 2612, L. & M., dated 17th June 1926.
⁵ G.O. No. 43, Law (Legislative), dated 5th February 1927.
⁶ G.O. No. 45, Law (Legislative), dated 5th February 1927.
⁷ G.O. No. 80, Law (Legislative), dated 9th February 1928.
⁸ G.O. No. 251, Law (Legislative), dated 1st June 1929.
⁹ G.O. No. 278, Law (Legislative), dated 8th April 1930.
¹⁰ G.O. No. 360, Law (Legislative), dated 9th October 1931.
¹¹ G.O. No. 468, Law (Legislative), dated 20th November 1934.
¹² G.O. No. 240, Law (Legislative), dated 6th June 1935.
¹³ G.O. No. 4026, P.H., dated 1st November 1939.
¹⁴ G.O. No. 2540, P.H. (Confidential), dated 10th June 1940.
¹⁵ G.O. No. 16, Legal, dated 3rd July 1944.
¹⁶ G.O. No. 15, Legal, dated 1st April 1946.
¹⁷ For the Bill see G.O. No. 9, Legal, dated 1st April 1946.
¹⁸ Madras State Administration Report, 1951-1952, Part II, page 10.

audit of accounts of the religious institutions, the annual income of which is not less than one thousand rupees, by the Local Fund Audit Department instead of private auditors¹. Further, the Act enables the Commissioner to utilize the surplus funds of religious institutions for religious, educational or charitable purposes. Under this provision, an orphanage has been opened and maintained from the funds of Sri Meenakshisundareswarar temple at Madurai.

The religious institutions of Madurai have naturally been affected by all these measures. In 1817 they came under the supervision of the Board of Revenue and the Collectors; in 1841 they were left to be managed, without any interference, by their own trustees and managers; in 1863 they came to be controlled either by the local committees or by their own trustees; in 1925 they came under the supervision of the Religious Endowments Board; and finally, in 1951, they came under the control of the Commissioner and his assistants. In 1951 there were 332 major religious institutions in the district under the jurisdiction of the Assistant Commissioner, Madurai.

¹ G.O. No. 608, Rural Welfare, dated 2nd June 1952.

CHAPTER XI.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The Madurai district is well served by roads and railways. It has 192 miles of meter gauge railway and 2,084 miles of roads, which means that it has 3.45 miles of railway for every 100 square miles of country and 1 mile of road for every 2.72 square miles of country.

Of the 2,084 miles of roads, 657 miles are under the Highways Department, 1,156 miles are under the District Board and 271 miles are under the municipalities¹. All the National Highways, all the Provincial Highways and most of the major district roads are managed by the Highways Department; the rest of the major district roads and other district roads and village roads are managed by the District Board; and the municipal roads are managed by the Municipalities. As to the length of the various classes of roads, the National Highways constitute 110 miles, the Provincial Highways 67 miles, the major district roads under the Highways Department 480 miles, the major district roads under the District Board 245 miles, the other district roads 158 miles, the village roads 753 miles and the municipal roads 271 miles². As to the lengths of the various types of roads, 25 miles of the Highways Department and 5 miles of municipal roads are cement concrete roads; 88 miles of the Highways Department and 51 miles of municipal roads are black-top surface roads; 518 miles of the Highways Department, 543 miles of the District Board and 115 miles of municipal roads are metalled roads; and 26 miles of Highways Department, 612 miles of District Board and 100 miles of Highways Department, 612 miles of District Board and 100 miles of municipal roads are un-metalled roads³. Large sums of money are being annually spent over the capital works and repairs of these roads. For instance, in 1951-52, the expenditure over the Government roads amounted to Rs. 22,91,379 and over the District Board roads to Rs. 17,81,262⁴.

The main roads of the district after the advent of the Highways Department have been classified under five categories, viz., National Highways, Provincial Highways, Major District Roads, other District Roads and Village Roads. In the first category come the Madurai-Ramanathapuram Road, Dindigul-Aravakurichi Road, and Banaras-Cape Comorin Road making up a total length of 110 miles. In the second category fall the Madurai-Tenkasi Road, Dindigul-Palni, and Palni-Udumalpet Roads totalling 67 miles. In the third category may be mentioned the following, viz., Madurai-Tirupattur

Road, Madurai-Aruppukottai Road, Madurai-Theni Road, Madurai-Natham Road, Tiruchirappalli-Melur Road, Melur-Sivaganga Road, Tirumangalam-Pallapatti Road, Tirumangalam-Usilampatti Road, Amunainaikkanur-Periyakulam Road, Dindigul-Batlagundu Road, Silkuvarpatti-Pallapatti Road, Mettur-Palakkanuthu Road, Periyakulam-Kuruvanuthu Road, Theni-Bodinaikkanur Road, Bodinaikkanur-Korangan Road, Kodaikanal Ghat Road, Kodaikanal-Cochin Road, Dindigul-Vattanam Road, Oddanchatram-Dharapuram Road, Palni-Dharapuram East Road, Batlagundu-Ayyampalayam Road, Thandigudi Ghat Road, Uthamapalayam-Suruppatti Road, Goschen Road, Batlagundu-Usilampatti Road, etc., totalling 730 miles. In the fourth category may be mentioned the important roads, viz., Kodachinandal-Tiruvadur Road, Melur-Poovandhi Road, Bodinaikkanur-Thevaram Road and Bodinaikkanur-Rasingapuram Road, the total mileage being 152¹.

The condition of all the main roads in the district is generally good. Madurai, indeed, enjoys certain facilities which make it possible to maintain its roads in sound condition. It has granite in most parts and quartz and kunkar in others; and, except in a few places, the quarries of these road materials are easily accessible to carts during the working season. Most of the quarries are also situated on Government poramboke and the average lead from them to the roads is between 2 and 3 miles, a distance which calls for no transport of road material by rail and which enables carting to be done at cheap rates. Metalling with granite carried on mostly during the last twenty-five years and cement concreting and surface topping during recent years have contributed much to make many roads fit for wheeled traffic².

Wheeled traffic, it would appear, has been heavy in this district from early times. Hundreds of bullock-carts have been conveying all sorts of merchandize from place to place in the district as well as from places outside the district. The roads have borne all this strain; and ever since the advent of motor traffic, they have borne much more strain. In 1952, for instance, there were no less than 1,493 non-transport vehicles like motor cars and motor cycles, 400 buses, 477 lorries and 38 taxis in the district³.

Though the district may be said to be well served in the matter of main roads or through communications, some areas of it, such as the Kambam Valley and portions of the Palni taluk, have yet to be

¹ Based on information furnished by the Chief Engineer (Highways), Madras. G.O. No. 2647, Local and Municipal, dated 7th July 1932—Administration Report of the Madurai District Board, page 19.

G.O. No. 3996, Local and Municipal, dated 8th September 1934—Report for 1932-33, pages 24-25.

G.O. No. 2462, Local and Municipal, dated 27th June 1935—Report for 1933-34, page 18.

G.O. No. 2467, L.A., dated 4th July 1940—Report for 1939-40, pages 19-20.

G.O. No. 725, L.A., dated 28th March 1950—Report for 1948-49, page 7.

G.O. No. 2459, L.A., dated 21st December 1950—Report for 1949-50, page 12.

³ Report on the Administration of the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules and the Madras Traffic Rules for 1952, page 7.

² These figures relate to the year 1951, the year with which this book closes. See the Administration Report of the Highways Department for 1951-1952, page 74.

¹ *Idem*, page 74.

² *Idem*, page 76.

³ *Idem*, page 92.

opened up by the construction of new roads. Again, alike in the Palni, Kodaikanal, Periyakulam, Tirumangalam and Madurai taluks, short feeder roads are said to be necessary to connect the villages to the main roads. Further, the roads in the southern portion of the district which run through black cotton soil and which for that reason become impassable for several months in the year, require all to be metalled¹.

A problem which gave not a little trouble to the District Board some years ago was that of protecting the roads against encroachments. It was found that a very large number of encroachments on roads had been made by adjacent landowners. It was said that "far and wide, lamentable instances" might be seen where private individuals had appropriated to themselves "portions of public roads and other public property with impunity". And, it was remarked that in many cases the main streets in the villages had become so narrow by encroachments the removal of which had been barred by limitation that "the only way to relieve the congested traffic" was to construct diversions round the villages where the lands were very expensive². This state of affairs has now been, to a great extent, set right by the District Board by systematic detection and prosecution.

The district is not badly served in the matter of bridges. There are here few broad rivers and on what rivers there are, several bridges have been constructed³. The Vaigai bridge at Madurai was built in 1889 and the bridges at Veerapandi and Uttamapalayam in 1893⁴. The bridges over the Varahanadi and the Panbar at Periyakulam and over the Shanmughanadi near Palni were built in 1918. The bridge over the Suruliyar at the old Kānnur ferry was built in 1914, while the bridge over the Kodamari Odai at mile 203/1 of the Great Southern Trunk Road was rebuilt in 1926⁵. Since then, till 1951, the year with which this book closes, a number of bridges have been constructed. Among these may be mentioned the bridges over the Theniyar at Theni, over the Mangarai on the road from Dindigul to Palni⁶; over the Manimuthar at mile 26/5 of the Madurai-Tirupattur Road and over the Suruliyar near Kamayagoundanpatti⁷.

¹ Scheme of Road Development for the Madras Presidency by A. Vipan, Special Engineer, Road Development, 1935, pages 123-124.

² 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai district, 1953, page 5.

³ See for instance, G.O. No. 2647, Local and Municipal, dated 7th July 1932. Administration Report of the Madurai District Board for 1930-31, page 19.

⁴ Scheme of Road Development for the Madras Presidency by A. Vipan, Special Engineer, Road Development, 1935, page 124.

⁵ Gazetteer of the Madurai district by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 156-157.

⁶ Gazetteer of the Madurai district, Vol. II, 1930, page 111.

⁷ *Idem*, page 111.

⁸ G.O. No. 2647, Local and Municipal, dated 7th July 1932.

Administration Report of the Madurai District Board for 1930-1931, page 28.

G.O. No. 2014, Local and Municipal, dated 25th May 1933, page 1.

Among these also may be mentioned the bridges at mile 277/4 of the Great Southern Trunk Road¹, at mile 10/3 of the road from Batlagundu to Usilampatti², at mile 13/4 of the Mettur-Palaikanuthu Road, and at mile 3/4 of the Uttamapalayam-Thevaram Road³. Among these may likewise be mentioned the bridges over the Kodavannar on the Dindigul-Aravakurchi Road, over the Nanganji on the Oddenchattram-Dharapuram Road⁴, at mile 30/5-6 of the Melur-Tiruchirappalli Road, over the Kokkalar on the Periyakulam-Kodaikanal Road⁵ and over the Manjalar at mile 2/3 on the Batlagundu-Usilampatti Road⁶. Some of these bridges were constructed by the Government, while most of them were constructed by the District Board with the aid of Government grants. Besides the bridges, a number of culverts have been constructed by the District Board.

There are many travellers' bungalows, rest-houses, chattrams or choultries and water-pandals in the district. In 1950, the Highways Department had one travellers' bungalow under its charge at Ganguvarpatti and the District Board had 17 travellers' bungalows and rest-houses under its charge in various towns situated on the arterial roads, namely, in Usilampatti, Tirumangalam, Kodai Road, Palni, Kodaikanal, Palakanuthu, Theni, Eriyodu, Natham, Kottampatti, Periyakulam, Chokkanoorani, Sedapatti, T. Kallupatti, Vedaasandur, Shembatti and Batlagundu. Some of these are electrified, while in all of these accommodation is said to be generally sufficient⁷.

The District Board has also several choultries and water-pandals in the Madurai, Nilakkottai, Tirumangalam, Periyakulam, Dindigul, Palni and Melur taluks. In the Madurai taluk it has Rani Mangammal's and Karuppatti choultries at Madurai and the Samayanallur and Chattarapatti choultries and the Chattarapatti and Tirupalai water-pandals. In the Nilakkottai taluk it has the Sholavandan, Thathampatti, Nilakkottai and Annayanayakanur choultries and the Sholavandan water-pandal. In the Tirumangalam taluk it has choultries at Tirumangalam (Sundaradoss choultry), Kallupatti (Kilangulam), Kalligudi, Usilampatti, Chokkanoorani, and water-pandals at Tirumangalam, Kilangulam, Pothampatti and Kalligudi. In the Periyakulam taluk it has a

¹ G.O. No. 2560, Local Administration, dated 14th September 1937—Report for 1935-36, page 36.

² G.O. No. 2407, Local Administration, dated 4th July 1940—Report for 1938-39, page 22.

³ G.O. No. 2413, Local Administration, dated 4th November 1944—Report for 1943-44, page 11.

⁴ *Idem*, page 11.

⁵ G.O. No. 1324, Local Administration, dated 1st August 1947—Report for 1945-46, page 13.

⁶ G.O. No. 725, Local Administration, dated 28th March 1950.

⁷ G.O. No. 2459, Local Administration, dated 21st December 1950—See Report for 1949-50, page 14.

G.O. No. 2611, Public Works, dated 7th July 1950.

choultry at Andipatti and water-pandals at Periyakulam, Vadipatti and Chettipillayarnatham. In the Dindigul taluk it has choultries at Vadamadurai, Kovilur, Shanarpatti, Palakanuthu and Guzzilamparai and a water-pandal at Guzzilamparai. In the Palni taluk it has a choultry and a water-pandal at Vayaloor. And in the Melur taluk it has choultries at Melur and Kottampatti and water-pandals at Melur, Kottampatti, Keelavalavoo and Erakkapatti¹.

Of all these choultries, the most well-known are the Rani Mangammal and Karuppatti choultries at Madurai. The Mangammal choultry proper consists of four blocks of which three have also upstairs accommodation. The first two blocks were constructed by the Madurai Taluk Board in 1900, after the advent of the railway to Rameswaram and Dhanushkodi, for the convenience of the travellers and pilgrims passing through Madurai. The expenses of these buildings were met from the surplus funds of the Sholavandan choultry originally founded and endowed by Mangammal. The other two blocks were constructed by the District Board. A fifth block, called the Karuppatti block was added to these buildings, its cost being met from the surplus funds of the Karuppatti choultry. A sixth block was also added to these buildings by Sri Muthu K. R. V. Alagappa Chettiar of Devakottai. It has been built on the site belonging to the District Board situated between the second and fourth blocks of Mangammal's Choultry and two villages have been endowed by the donor for its upkeep. Besides these, there is also the Karuppatti Choultry situated in New street, Madurai. It consists of a spacious building having upstairs accommodation. An idea of the services rendered by the principal choultries of the district can be obtained from the administration report of the District Board for the year 1949-50. That report says that, in spite of the scarcity of foodstuffs prevailing in the year, the Mangammal's Choultry, Sholavandan, fed 6,151 persons; the Sundardoss Choultry, Tirumangalam, fed 4,340 persons and supplied raw rations to 1,864 persons; the Melur Choultry fed 2,243 persons; the Kottampatti Choultry supplied raw rations to 1,616 persons and the Kilangulam Choultry fed 2,611 persons. In the same year the Mangammal's Choultry at Madurai derived Rs. 21,458 by way of rent from travellers².

Coming now to the history of the roads, several of the main roads of the district were in existence from the very beginning of the last century when the British took possession of the country. Captain Ward in his "Geographical and Statistical Memoir of the Provinces of Madurai and Dindigul" written in 1817 mentions these roads and remarks that they were good enough for wheeled traffic and that they were being constantly used by country bullock carts for conveying merchandize from place to place³. They were,

it would appear most of them, made by the Nayaka rulers of Madurai among whom Tirumala Nayaka and Queen Mangammal share the credit for having constructed roads and erected choultries. None of the roads of those days, however, can be said to have been satisfactory from the modern stand-point. They were not wide, they were not metalled, they were not even gravelled, they were full of dust and broken up by ruts.

The first Collector who seems to have carried out any improvements to the roads of the district was Mr. Blackburne. He was officially complimented for having spent Rs. 1,23,000 on the roads in the nine years between 1834 and 1842, a sum which would nowadays be considered ridiculously low. Of this sum, he spent Rs. 70,000 on bridges and culverts and Rs. 8,000 on graveling. In 1868 some 500 miles of the district roads were returned as 'maintained', but this maintenance was far from satisfactory. The only road which was then said to be in fair order was the road from Tiruchirappalli via Melur and Madurai to Tirumangalam and Tirunelveli; and, even the important road from Dindigul to Madurai was stated to be "for the most part in a very ruinous state" and the lesser lines were pronounced to be "all in a more or less unsatisfactory condition". It was not till the Madras Local Funds Act of 1871 and the Local Boards Act of 1884 were passed, not till the local bodies were authorized to levy a road-cess and entrusted with the duty of construction and maintenance of roads, that any progress became possible.

The construction and maintenance of roads in the early days of the East India Company was attended to by three different agencies, the Maramath Department of the Board of Revenue, the Trunk Road Department and the Engineering Department of the Military Board. The Engineering Department looked after the roads and bridges in Madras City and in all the cantonments; the Trunk Road Department looked after all trunk roads; while the Maramath Department looked after all other roads. In 1858 these three departments were abolished and the Public Works Department was for the first time organized with the Chief Engineer at the head and several District Engineers below him. Very soon, however, it became increasingly clear that, unless some special taxation was resorted to, the roads could not be properly maintained. After the Indian Mutiny the Government of India began to dole out smaller and smaller grants from Imperial funds to maintain trunk roads which were then called Imperial roads and this Government found it impossible to maintain in fair condition both the trunk roads and the district roads, the latter of which were specially under their charge. In 1866, therefore, the District Road Cess Act III of 1866 was passed by which a cess not exceeding half an anna in the rupee on the rent value of occupied land was imposed so as to form a

¹ G.O. No. 2459, Local Administration, dated 21st December 1950—Report for 1949-1950, pages 14-15.

² *Idem*, pages 15-19.

³ Geographical and Statistical Memoir of the Provinces of Madurai and Dindigul, Vol. III, pages 17-18, 36, 81, 132-133.

⁴ Gazetteer of the Madura District by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 154.

fund for the construction and maintenance of district roads. Then came the Local Funds Act of 1871 which repealed the District Road Cess Act of 1866, transferred the road funds raised under the latter Act to the Local Fund Boards and authorized the local bodies to levy a cess similar to the district road-cess but with a maximum of one anna in the rupee and to establish tolls upon roads, two-thirds of the cess and the whole of the tolls being earmarked for road development. The agency of execution was, as before, left with the Public Works Department¹.

Thus commenced a new chapter in the history of road development. The Government now began to make annual contribution from Provincial funds to the Local Fund Boards as grants-in-aid for expenditure upon main lines of road. In 1879-80 the Government also transferred the entire execution of the maintenance and construction of roads from the Public Works Department to the Local Fund Boards which thereafter employed their own engineering staff directly responsible to them. Close on the heels of this came the Local Boards Act of 1884 which created the District Boards and Taluk Boards. But though it increased the Local Funds it took away the salutary restriction imposed by the Act of 1871 which prescribed that, besides the income from tolls, a sum of not less than two-thirds of the land-cess should be spent on communications. This gave a handle to the District Boards to spend less and less upon roads with the result that the Government found it necessary in 1895 to interfere and direct by an executive order that the local bodies should spend not less than half the income from their land-cess upon roads. But this order was seldom followed. It was therefore in 1900 withdrawn and the Government thereafter began to grant to the local bodies 25 per cent of their land-cess for the improvement of roads in addition to the sums allotted from the Imperial grant. From 1920 the Government also began to give special grants from time to time for special repairs of important roads, for the maintenance of second-class roads and for the construction of bridges and culverts, subject to a maximum. The payment of all these grants were also made subject to the condition that the roads were to be kept in a reasonably good condition. The inspection of the trunk roads was then entrusted to the Superintending Engineers of the Public Works Department, while that of the second-class roads was entrusted to the Collectors of the respective districts. In 1930-31, on the introduction of the motor vehicles tax, the tolls were abolished and the local bodies were given compensation for the loss of income from tolls².

Under all these circumstances, the Madurai District Board, which among the local bodies of the district maintained the great majority of roads, began to pay more and more attention to them. In 1885-86, for instance, it maintained 1,085½ miles of roads (out

of the 1,266½ miles of roads in the district) of which 160½ miles were village roads, 721½ miles were taluk roads and 200½ miles were district roads. In the same year it spent nearly two lakhs of rupees on the maintenance of roads¹. In 1930-31 it maintained 1,210 miles of roads of which 266½ miles were village roads, 867 miles were district board roads and 76-5/8th miles was the Great Southern Trunk Road. In the same year, it spent nearly 8½ lakhs of rupees over the maintenance of roads, out of which the Government grant amounted to nearly 1½ lakhs of rupees². This showed no doubt a distinct improvement. More money was spent over proper maintenance, such as metalling, repairs, etc.; but more mileage was not secured and many of the market places and villages still remained to be linked up to the main roads.

Meanwhile the Government became more and more road-conscious. In 1927 the Council of State stressed the necessity to develop the road system of India and a Committee appointed by the Government of India soon afterwards pointed out that everywhere, in every State, there was an imperative need for road development for facilitating the marketing of agricultural produce, for bringing the villages into more intimate contact with the towns and for complementing the railway development. In 1933 the State Government decided on the preparation of a comprehensive programme of road development and, for that purpose, appointed a Special Officer. Mr. A. Vipan, who was so appointed, in his report submitted in 1935, pointed out a number of drawbacks inherent in the existing system. The District Boards had not sufficient funds. Their resources had become inelastic especially after the abolition of the tolls, the compensation given by the Government in lieu of tolls, being in many cases, inadequate. They had therefore failed to devote adequate attention to the proper maintenance of roads. Motor traffic had, at the same time, increased in leaps and bounds and called for better maintenance of marketing roads and roads serving as feeder to the railway systems. There was thus a definite lack of balance in the existing road system which could be corrected only by classifying all important roads into trunk and marketing roads and giving adequate grants from State funds for their maintenance³. In 1937 the Government accordingly created a separate class of roads called important marketing roads and thereafter began to grant subsidies for their maintenance subject to a maximum fixed for each district and subject also to the condition that the District Boards should spend at least an amount equal to the subsidy from their own funds either on the important marketing roads or on second-class roads.

But even these measures proved unavailing. No uniform practice of spending a fixed percentage of the road-cess was adopted by any District Board. While some of the District Boards

¹ G.O. No. 1238, Finance (Local Funds), dated 20th September 1886.

² G.O. No. 2647, Local and Municipal, dated 7th July 1932.

³ Scheme of Road Development for the Madras Presidency by A. Vipan, Special Engineer, Road Development, 1935.

¹ Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency by C.D. Maclean Vol. I, 1885—See the footnotes on pages 365-367 and 379-380.

² G.O. No. 2486, Local Administration, dated 16th November 1945, pages 5-9.

spent a good percentage of their land-cess on roads, others spent very little. Thus, while the Tanjore District Board spent 85 per cent of the land-cess on roads, the Tirunelveli District Board, 41 per cent, and the Ramanathapuram District Board, 32 per cent, the Madurai District Board spent only 15 per cent of the land-cess on roads. Then came the Second World War and the continual heavy wear and tear of the roads caused by the military vehicles led to their speedy deterioration. Accordingly, in 1941 the Government took power under the Madras Local Boards Act of 1920 and the Madras Municipalities Act of 1920 to direct a District Board or a Municipal Council to make allotments for roads to such an extent as the Government might deem it necessary, and, once an allotment is made, to prevent its diversion to any other purpose. They also directed that minimum allotments should be made for the maintenance of roads by every District Board and Municipality¹.

All this time other measures too were taken by the Government to have a greater control over the engineering staff employed by the local bodies. It has already been seen that from about 1880 the District Boards began to employ their own engineering establishments. The Municipalities, likewise, from about the same time began to employ their own engineering establishments. By the Local Boards Act of 1884 and the Municipalities Act of 1881 the appointment of District Board and Municipal Engineers were made subject to the general control of the Government; but this general control amounted practically to no control at all. It was not till 1923 that the District Board Engineers' Service was provincialised² and not till 1938 that the Assistant Engineers' Service of the local bodies was constituted into a separate service³. In the meantime the Superintending Engineers of the Public Works Department were required to inspect the trunk roads and all works costing above Rs. 50,000 situated within the jurisdiction of the District Boards. In 1936 the Government appointed a Special Engineer (Road Development) as inspecting and superintending officer in respect of all operations of the engineering departments of all District Boards⁴. In 1940 they made the Chief Engineer (Buildings and Roads), the controlling authority for the District Board Engineers' Service and the Local Fund Assistant Engineers' Service and created three posts of Superintending Engineers (Communications) for the better inspection and superintendence of district roads. In 1942 they went further and created a new post of the Chief Engineer (Communications)⁵ and soon afterwards created six road divisions and a road's circle⁶.

¹ G.O. No. 2486, Local Administration, dated 16th November 1945, pages 9-13.

² G.O. No. 242, Local and Municipal, dated 25th January 1923.

³ G.O. No. 1445, Local Administration, dated 22nd April 1938.

G.O. No. 2392, Local Administration, dated 6th June 1938.

⁴ G.O. No. 1353, Local and Municipal, dated 31st March 1936.

⁵ G.O. No. 800, Public Works, dated 16th March 1942.

⁶ G.O. No. 2486, Local Administration, dated 16th November 1945, pages 16-17.

But the times were fast changing, revealing new defects and demanding new remedies. The District Boards and Municipalities failed to make the minimum allotments for the maintenance of roads, while the wheels of war rolled on reducing everywhere the roads to ruin. All over India experts and laymen alike now began to clamour for more metalling, more surface topping, more cement-concreting and more mileage of roads. This led to the convening of a conference of Chief Engineers at Nagpur (1943), to the appointment of a Special Officer in Madras to review afresh the whole subject of road-development, and to the drawing up of a Five-Year Post-war Development Plan for the construction of new national highways, provincial highways, major district roads and village roads and for the widening and repairing of the existing roads wherever necessary. The aim of this plan was to provide eventually access by road to all villages having a population of 500 or more and to so plan the highways that all villages would be within two miles of a district road or a highway in densely-populated areas and within five miles in thinly-populated areas. The five-year plan drawn up for the Madurai district roads comprised no less than 90 items of importance⁷. It was thought that after the war the demobilized personnel and the military equipment like lorries and road-rollers would be available in plenty to launch the plan. But as these hopes did not materialize, the Five-Year Plan had to be modified first into a Fifteen-Year Plan and then into a Twenty-Five-Year Plan. In the meantime for the execution of the Five-Year Plan a separate department called the Highways Department was formed in 1946⁸. This department took under its management all national highways, all provincial highways and, in the first instance, about 10,000 miles of important district roads, leaving the remaining roads, as before, under the District Boards and the Municipalities⁹.

This is how the Highways Department comes to manage all the important roads of the district and to exercise a general supervision over the district board and municipal roads. The department has one Chief Engineer, several Superintending Engineers, a number of Divisional Engineers each in charge of a district or a portion of a district and a larger number of Assistant Engineers each in charge of a subdivision. The expenditure on the Divisional Engineer and his office is shared by the Government and the District Board, while the expenditure on the Assistant Engineers and the subordinate staff engaged on district board works is borne solely by the district board concerned. In the Madurai district

⁷ For the Special Officer's Report—See G.O. No. 2486, Local Administration, dated 16th November 1945.

⁸ See G.O. No. 2263, Local Administration, dated 27th November 1950, pages 4-5.

⁹ G.O. No. 114, Local Administration, dated 18th January 1946.

G.O. No. 593, Local Administration, dated 26th March 1946.

¹⁰ Madras, 1950, pages 107-112.

there are one Divisional Engineer (Highways) and 9 Assistant Engineers and their work is supervised by the Superintending Engineer having jurisdiction over Madurai and Tiruchirappalli districts and having his headquarters at Tiruchirappalli.

So much about the roads. In regard to the railways, it has already been stated that the district is well served by them. There is a south-east line from Madras and Tiruchirappalli Junction passing through Dindigul, Nilakkottai, Madurai and Tirumangalam taluks to Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Trivandrum. This line from Tiruchirappalli Junction to Madurai was opened on 1st September 1875 and from Madurai to Tuticorin on 1st January 1876. There is another line branching off from Dindigul to Coimbatore traversing the Palni taluk and it was opened on 19th November 1928. There is a third line branching off from Madurai to Dhanushkodi which was opened on 1st August 1902. And, finally, there is a fourth line from Madurai to Bodinayakanur. It was opened on 20th November 1928, dismantled in 1942 during the Second World War, and restored in 1953-54, Madurai-Usilampatti line in 1953 and Usilampatti-Bodinayakanur line in 1954. A proposal was made in 1944 to construct a line from Madurai to Karaikudi via Melur as a post-war measure, but it was eventually dropped as being unremunerative.

The district headquarters and the taluk headquarters of Madurai, Palni, Dindigul and Tirumangalam alone are railway stations. The Palni station serves the out-agency of Dharapuram in Coimbatore district. The Kodaikanal Road station in the Nilakkottai taluk serves the out-agency of Kodaikanal as well as the out-agencies of Periyakulam and Theni in the Periyakulam taluk. The out-agencies of Periyakulam and Theni are only for parcels and goods traffic, while that of Kodaikanal is available for passenger service also.

As to the Posts and Telegraphs, there are 29 post and telegraph sub-offices. In the Dindigul taluk there are 105 branch post offices in the district. Their distribution according to the taluks is as follows. In the Kodaikanal taluk there are 5 branch post offices, 1 non-combined sub-post office and 2 post and telegraph sub-offices. In the Dindigul taluk there are 105 branch post offices, 1 non-combined sub-post office and 2 post and telegraph sub-offices. The Nilakkottai taluk has 65 branch post offices and 5 post and telegraph sub-offices; and Melur taluk has 54 branch post offices and 2 post and telegraph sub-offices. In these two

¹ This is the position in 1955.

² 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai District, 1953, page 5.
History of Indian Railways, 1940, page 198.

³ G.O. No. 3146, Public Works, dated 3rd December 1946.
Letter No. 1048, Public Works, dated 11th April 1947.

taluks there are no non-combined sub-post offices. The Periyakulam, Tirumangalam and Madurai taluks have each respectively 60, 63 and 28 branch post offices; 4, 1 and 11 non-combined sub-post offices and 28, 11 and 5 post and telegraph sub-offices¹.

In regard to telephone facilities, there are exchanges in Madurai, Tallakulam, Dindigul, Kodaikanal, Periyakulam and Theni. In Madurai there are 700 lines and 622 subscribers; in Tallakulam (Sub-Exchange) 200 lines and 120 subscribers; in Dindigul 200 lines and 187 subscribers; in Kodaikanal 50 lines and 32 subscribers; in Periyakulam 60 lines and 31 subscribers; and in Theni 100 lines and 53 subscribers. From the Madurai telephone exchange, besides local connections, trunk connections are available to Melur, Ramanathapuram, Sholavandan, Tirumangalam, Tiruparankunram and Ammaiyannayakanur. From the Dindigul exchange, trunk connections are available to Keeranur and Palni besides local connections. From the Kodaikanal exchange only local connection to Kodaikanal is available. From the Periyakulam Exchange, besides local connection, trunk connection is available to Bodinayakanur. From the Theni Exchange, only local connection is available to Theni².

¹ 1951 Census Handbook, Madurai District, 1953, page 5.
² See the Telephone Directory, Group V, May 1954 issue.

CHAPTER XII.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

A hot, dry, variable climate and a scanty rainfall are by no means conducive to good health. And the major portion of the Madurai district which presents these characteristics cannot therefore be considered to be healthy. The only healthy places in the district are Kodaikanal and the Upper Palnis which are cool and which receive a fairly heavy rainfall during both the monsoons.

Cholera has often harassed the district and taken a heavy toll through centuries. Recorded evidence shows that severe epidemics of cholera occurred in 1815, 1818-20, 1831-37, 1843, 1850-53, 1858-59, 1861, 1865, 1875, 1887, 1891, 1897, 1900, 1918, 1924, 1925, 1936, 1943 and 1950. In 1875 the disease carried away 11,600 persons; in 1877, 15,600; in 1891, 6,800; in 1918, 5,378; in 1925, 7,465; in 1936, 4,763; in 1943, 7,312; and in 1950, 6,164¹. Its frequent occurrence is to be traced to the spread of infection by pilgrims resorting to the festivals at Rameswaram, Madurai and Palni (although this has now been controlled to a large extent), to the congregation of labourers in large numbers during harvest time in places without protected water-supply, to the indiscriminate fouling of rivers, streams, channels and tanks, to the inveterate habit among the poorer classes of drinking such contaminated water and eating contaminated food and to the want of protected water-supply and lack of public latrine. The disease, as is well known, is caused by germs which are given out in very large numbers in the motion and vomit of the cholera patients. These germs contaminate food through flies and drinking water through the washing of infected clothes, etc., and any person who takes such contaminated food or water immediately catches the disease. The symptoms of the disease are easily detected; they consist of profuse diarrhoea, vomiting, extreme prostration, suppression of urine, intense thirst, cramps, especially of the leg muscles, and utter exhaustion. These symptoms are speedily followed by death².

Before the separate Health Department came into existence in 1922, no systematic efforts were made to check the ravages of cholera. Since then, however, several steps have been taken to control its outbreaks. Among the preventive measures the most

important are protected water-supply, proper disposal of night-soil and sanitary control over the preparation and sale of food. But these measures have been found difficult of execution owing to the lack of finance and the want of public co-operation. Among the control measures isolation and treatment of patients, disinfection of infected material and immunization of the people by anti-cholera inoculation have been considered to be the most important. These measures, however, have been enforced by the Public Health authorities to a great extent with good results. Whenever an outbreak of cholera takes place, the Public Health authorities attend promptly to the chlorination of water-supply, to the disinfection of excreta, vomit and infected material, to the control of fly breeding centres by improved general sanitation, to the killing of flies by D.D.T. spraying, to the isolation of infected cases as far as possible and to the mass inoculation of the people against cholera.

Smallpox has not been particularly common in the district. There is, however, evidence to show that in 1872 it claimed 4,491 victims, that in 1877 it claimed 3,161 victims and that in 1891 it claimed 2,783 victims. In recent years its ravages have become less, but, all the same, in some years, it has suddenly flared up and done not a little havoc. Thus in 1917 it claimed 1,332 victims; in 1918, 2,284; in 1922, 1,210 and in 1950, 1,018³. The disease spreads by contact, direct or indirect, through clothes, utensils, etc., and also by droplet infection through air over short distances or through dust particles. Its symptoms are severe fever usually lasting for three days, followed by a rash which is thickest on the face and hands and which develops in the course of nine to twelve days into pustules that dry up and drop off in about three weeks. It is sometimes accompanied by various complications. Medical science has not yet discovered a cure for the disease, but on the preventive side it has discovered a most effective remedy, namely, vaccination. Vaccination, however, does not confer permanent immunity. A person has to get himself revaccinated particularly during the outbreak of the epidemic. If all children are vaccinated as required by law and if all adults get themselves periodically revaccinated, the disease can be completely eradicated as in most of the European countries. But this has not been found practicable here for want of public co-operation, although the public has been familiar with vaccination for over a century and a half: it having been introduced in the district as early as 1802. Besides vaccination the other measures necessary for controlling the spread of the disease are prompt notification, isolation,

¹ Gazetteer of the Madurai District, by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 168.
Vol. II, 1930, page 116.

Statistical Atlas of Madurai Province, 1940-1941, Madurai district, page 2.
1951 Census Handbook, Madurai District, page 10.

² Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee, 1946, Vol. I, pages 11-114.
Public Health Pamphlet No. 2—Control of Epidemics, 1949, pages 5-6.

³ Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee, 1946, Vol. I, pages 112-114.

Public Health Pamphlet No. 2—Control of Epidemics, 1949, pages 5-7.

⁴ Gazetteer of the Madurai District, by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, page 169.
Vol. II, 1930, page 117.
1951 Census Handbook, Madurai District, 1953, page 10.

disinfection and protection and surveillance of contacts. Prompt notification has seldom been done by the people, but the rest of the measures have been more or less effectually taken by the Public Health authorities in the district¹.

Mycetoma, a fungus disease, was said to be formerly widely prevalent in the district. It went by the name of "Madurai Foot" and exhibited itself usually by a swelling on the foot which eventually led to ulceration, rupture and discharge of fluid. In advanced cases it produced an enormously swollen foot attached to a leg which was little more than skin and bone. It was found to be particularly common in the tracts of black cotton soil². It is however now no longer widely prevalent.

Besides cholera, the most prevalent diseases in the district are the diseases of the respiratory system, tuberculosis, malaria, influenza, rheumatic fevers, dysentery, digestive diseases, leprosy, scabies, skin infections and venereal diseases³. Thus in 1951, the year with which we close our book, 1,13,593 cases of respiratory diseases including pneumonia, bronchitis, pleurisy and asthma, 9,593 cases of various kinds of tuberculosis, 27,669 cases of malaria, 34,633 cases of influenza, 12,003 cases of rheumatic fevers, 29,163 cases of amoebic, bacillary and other dysentery, 73,439 cases of digestive diseases, 8,076 cases of leprosy, 49,579 cases of scabies, 38,841 cases of skin infections and 45,873 cases of venereal diseases including syphilis and gonococcal infections, were treated in the various hospitals and dispensaries in the district⁴. Hook-worm (ankylostomiasis) is fairly prevalent in the district and plague sometimes breaks out, especially in the Kambam Valley. Several of these diseases were known to be prevalent in the district even about a hundred years ago. In 1853, for instance, the most common diseases were said to be cholera, fevers, diseases of the lungs, diseases of the stomach and bowels, rheumatic affections, and venereal diseases⁵; and in 1870 the cause of the venereal diseases was pronounced to be "the lamentable prevalence of prostitution," especially in the town of Madurai⁶.

Special attempts have been made to control some of these diseases. We have already seen how cholera is sought to be controlled. Whenever plague appears the Public Health authorities take the necessary precautions such as isolation, anti-plague inoculation, carbide gas fumigation, etc. Treatment for leprosy is afforded in the Swedish Mission Leper Dispensary in Dindigul; in

¹ Public Health Pamphlet No. 2—Control of Epidemics, 1949, pages 1-5.

² See the Reports on Civil Dispensaries from 1853 to 1870.

³ Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency, by C.D. Maclean, Vol. II, 1885, page 98.

⁴ Gazetteer of the Madras District, by W. Francis, Vol. I, 1906, pages 169-171.

⁵ See the Report on the working of Civil Hospitals and Dispensaries of Modern Medicine, e.g., from 1930 to 1951.

⁶ Report on the working of Civil Hospitals and Dispensaries for 1951, pages 40-55.

⁷ Report on Civil Dispensaries for 1853, page 44.

⁸ Report on Civil Hospitals and Dispensaries for 1870, pages 125-126.