

## THE AUNDH STATE CONSTITUTION.

[ A PRESS NOTE. ]

The text of the Aundh State Constitution has recently appeared in the State Gazette of 31st December 1938. The official text is in Marathi, but an English and a Canarese translations are also published. The Constitution is expected to become law before the end of January 1939.

A striking feature of the Constitution is that not only even one point in the proclamation of Nov. 1st, 1938 was whittled down, but in many respects the Constitution has gone further than what was anticipated in the proclamation. This shows the earnestness of the Raja of Aundh and his determination not to stand in the way of the freedom for his people.

The Constitution is simple and businesslike. The villages are electing Panchayats by votes of all literate adults. The Panchayats are given wide administrative and judiciary powers. The presidents of all the Panchayats in a Taluka constitute the Taluka Council, which receives half of the revenue of the Taluka for redistribution amongst the Panchayats. There will be five Taluka Councils in the State and each Taluka council will send its president and two elected members to the Legislative Assembly that will thus consist of 15 members only.

The Legislative Assembly will be the supreme Authority in the State. The Ruler is "the first servant and the bearer of conscience of the people," and as such is given the power to return any bill for reconsideration for 3 sessions of the Legislative Assembly, to control the relations with the Paramount Powers, to call for extraordinary sessions of the Assembly and to suspend the government for serious reasons, provided a session of the Assembly is called for immediately.

The Legislative Assembly is indissoluble and renews itself gradually as & when the tenure of office of its members expires.

The Government consist of a Prime Minister and not more than two Ministers, nominated by the Ruler from amongst the members of the Legislative Assembly and responsible to the Assembly.

The total revenue of the State is divided into two equal parts, one part going to the Panchayats, the other to finance the Government budget votable by the Assembly. The Privy Purse is subject to the vote of the Assembly except for the first five years, when it is fixed at Rs. 36,000/-per year.

Basic education is universal and compulsory. The State does not undertake to provide higher education except for training people for Government services. In

order to make up the clause on literacy franchise the State will immediately start a campaign for liquidation of adult illiteracy within a year.

The justice will be much simplified. The bulk of justice will be administered by the Panchayats, and there will be a High Court Judge for controlling the work of the Panchayats and for all residual justice.

The panchayat justice will be free of all charge; and the State will provide free legal advice and institute a public defender of the same status as the public prosecutor.

During the first two years of the constitution the Government will not be subject to a no-confidence vote and for the first five years the Ruler will have right to nominate five members to the Legislative Assembly.

The representation by interests, provided in the proclamation was abolished, as well as the reservation of a certain fixed percentage of the State revenue for the Ruler.

The Constitution is intrinsically a peasant constitution and gives all the powers to the peasantry. Other interests have nothing to defend them except their usefulness and their services to the villages.

The preamble of the constitution guarantees to every Citizen several political and civil rights, including the right to work and livelihood.

For a predominantly agricultural country like India the Aundh Move is extremely significant. It is still more significant if we take into consideration that it took its final shape in Shegaon. The success of this constitution in Aundh may have a deep influence on the political and social structure of the entire country and the work going on in Aundh is watched with acute interest by all who are interested in the future of India.