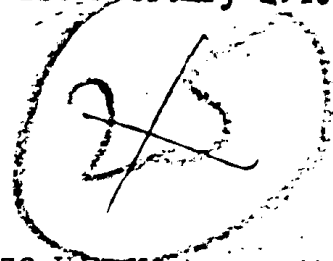


With compliments of the
Information Officer.

No.127.
Huzur Central Office,
Baroda, 1st February 1940.

Press-Note.

GRANT OF REFORMS IN BARODA.



In his Proclamation of the 20th February 1939 His Highness the Maharaja Saheb announced his sanction to a scheme of constitutional advance in the State as a further step in the policy of associating the people of the State with the Administration. A Proclamation dated the 1st of February now promulgates the new constitution which is embodied in the Government of Baroda Act and the rules framed under it. A Government order accompanies explaining important points connected with representation in the Dhara Sabha and the delimitation of constituencies.

I. A. Composition of the Dhara Sahab.
(Legislative assembly)

The Committee appointed to make recommendations for constitutional advance recommended a total strength of 55 members composed as follows:-

1.	Official members including the president.	9
2.	Nominated members.	9
3.	Elected members.	37
	i. territorial	
	rural	15.
	urban	9.
	ii Special interests.	10.

Suggestions were invited from the public on these proposals and were considered by the Government.

In passing orders the Government have introduced modifications in the schemes proposed by the Committee for the reasons given in the following extracts :-

i. Representation of minorities.

In explaining their policy the Government state :-

"Many memorials have been received from minority communities in which apprehension is expressed that their interests will not be adequately safeguarded by the proposals made, inasmuch as they cannot obtain representation through elections in general constituencies and the number of nominated seats under the scheme is not large enough to provide adequate opportunities for public service for them. Requests are, therefore, made for the assignment of a proportion of the elective seats on a basis of separate electorates or the reservation of a number of these seats in the general constituencies, for candidates belonging to such communities. The Government have given the most anxious consideration to these memorials. They desire to assure the communities concerned that the protection of their legitimate interests and the ensuring to them of the fullest measure of social justice will continue to be, as it has always been, the special concern of His Highness' Government. As stated in the gracious proclamation of His Highness the Maharaja Saheb, the fundamental basis of reforms is the identity of interests among the different classes of the people in the State and His Highness' Government trust that the new constitution will be worked in this spirit by all concerned. They do not, therefore accept the suggestions for separate electorates or special reservation of seats. In order, however to reassure these communities, His Highness' Government have decided temporarily to increase the number of members of the Dhara Sabha by five, raising the total number of members of the Dhara Sabha from 55, as proposed by the committee, to 60. It is the Government's sincere hope that the constituencies will return members on their merits and that elections will be conducted on non-partisan lines without faction or party spirit and that the minorities will find their interests protected in them. If the Government find that these hopes are realised, these five temporary seats will be abolished.

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ii. Urban and rural electorates.

On this subject the Government order runs :-

" Adverse criticism has been directed to another portion of the committee's proposals, viz., the separation of urban from rural constituencies. This is deprecated on the ground that there is no real conflict of interests between the two areas. The Government agree with this view and have decided that all urban areas should vote along with the Mahals in which they are situated, and have attempted to secure an equitable balancing of urban and rural votes. The position of Baroda City is exceptional and one seat has been set apart for election by a constituency in the City".

iii. Representation of Interests.

The Government remarks are as follows :-

" The committee have proposed representation of interests as a supplement to election by territorial constituencies. The interests recommended by the committee are important in the life of the State and the Government agree that this is a useful principle and should be embodied in the constitution, as thereby vital questions of economic reconstruction will be placed prominently before the members of the Dhara Sabha."

As a result of those orders, the composition of the Dhara Sabha will be as follows :-

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Official members including the president. | 9 |
| 2. Nominated members. | 14 |
| 3. Elected members. | 37 |
| i. territorial | 27 including one for Baroda City.) |
| ii. special interests | 10. |

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The Dewan will be president ex-officio. There will be a Deputy president who will be a non-official member appointed in the first instance for a period of three years by His Highness and thereafter elected by the Dhara Sabha. His Highness will appoint Parliamentary secretaries from among the non-official members to perform such duties in relation to the work on the Dhara Sabha falling to the Dewan or other members of the Executive Council as may be assigned to them.

B. Powers.

The Dhara Sabha will have legislative authority subject to limitations specified in the Act. Measures relating the army, His Highness' Office and the household department, those affecting the relations and treaties with other States or Governments or the authority and position of His Highness and the members of His family or affecting the provisions of the Government of Baroda Act or regulating borrowing or giving any guarantee do not lie within the powers of the Dhara Sabha. Measures affecting the public debt or revenue or taxes, the religion and religious rights and usages of His Highness' subjects or His Highness' prerogative in any matter or the privileges of the members of the Dhara Sabha may not be moved except with the previous sanction of His Highness.

A financial statement will be laid every year before the Dhara Sabha. Some items of public expenditure specified in section 32 of the Act will be charged upon the revenues of the State and will not be subject to the vote of the Dhara Sabha. All other expenditure will be placed before the Dhara Sabha in the form of demands for grants for the vote of the Dhara Sabha.

Rules regulating interpellations, resolutions regarding matters of public interest procedure for Bills, procedure for budgets etc., are also published.

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II. The executive.

The executive authority of the State will vest in the Executive Council which will consist of Dewan and three other members. . . . whom His Highness will appoint. One of these will be selected from among the non-official members of the Dhara Sabha. The position of this member will in every respect be similar to that of the other members except that he will hold office for the life of the Dhara Sabha viz. three years. All members of the Council will be responsible to His Highness.

III. The Judicature.

The constitution, status and powers and Jurisdiction of the High Court are settled by the Act which prescribes the qualifications required for Judges. The Huzur Nyaya Sabha is also placed on a statutory basis and its constitution and functions are defined.

In concluding his proclamation His Highness states as follows :-

" The new constitution emphasises the fundamental identity of interests between Me and My people and among the different classes of people in the State. I earnestly hope that the greatly increased opportunities for service which the new constitution **confers** will be utilised with the same sense of responsibility as in the past and in a spirit of mutual understanding and good will and that the new constitution will help to advance the material and moral progress of my people."