

THE STARTING OF THE FIRST SALESIAN WORK IN BOMBAY AND ITS CONSOLIDATION (1928-1950)

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Abbreviations

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| ASC | Archivio Salesiano Centrale |
| SPAM | Salesian Provincial Archives, Madras |
| ADBM | Archives, Don Bosco, Matunga |

1. General information about the city of Bombay

Bombay is India's financial and commercial centre and the principal port on the Arabian Sea. It is the seventh largest and one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Long the centre of India's cotton-textile industry, its manufactures are now well diversified and its commercial and financial institutions strong and vigorous.

Up to the end of the second World War Bombay covered only about 26 square miles (67 square kilometres) of land from Colaba in the south to Mahim and Sion in the north, that is to say, the city was confined to Bombay Island. In 1950 the city expanded northward with the inclusion of portions of Salsette Island, and by 1957 a number of suburban municipal towns – including Bandra, Kurla, Andheri, Juhu and Malad – and some villages of Thana were incorporated into Greater Bombay, with an area of 169 square miles (434 square kilometres). The metropolitan area has continued to expand.¹

Bombay is called the «gateway of India» because most of the visitors to India, especially before the age of aeroplanes, entered and made their exit through this city. In fact, all the steamers coming from Europe and the Middle East touched this port as the first port of India. It is the most westernized of India's cities.

For Catholics Bombay is of special importance since among all the cities of India it has the largest concentration of Catholics. Today there are nearly half a million of them in the city and its environs. In the period between the two

¹ Cf The new Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia. III. Chicago, Helen Hemingway Benton 1974, pp. 13-15.

World Wars when Salesian work in Bombay started, the proportion of the Catholics to the rest of the population was even higher, since there were at that time about a hundred thousand Catholics² in a total population of a million and a quarter.³ Practically all those Catholics were descendants of the converts the Portuguese had made about three or four centuries earlier. Catholics could be found in many walks of life: doctors, advocates, employees of the railways and the posts and telegraphs, farmers and small industrialists in the suburbs. Very many were employed in domestic service as cooks, butlers and nurse-maids. Others worked in the ocean-going vessels that plied between India and the British Isles, East Africa and Australia. A large number of Catholics from Goa came to Bombay because of employment opportunities. In general, the Catholics of Bombay had a lively faith; they loved to pray and receive the sacraments frequently. Hence many and good vocations to the priesthood and religious life could be found among them.⁴

2. Entry of the Salesians into Bombay

2.1. *Importance of starting a Salesian house in Bombay*

Several of the above mentioned factors convinced mgr. Louis Mathias,⁵ the first provincial of the Salesians in India, of the importance of starting a Salesian house in Bombay. He had, however, another compelling reason. Every year several groups of Salesians from Europe used to land in Bombay and occasionally someone had also to be repatriated. Before the Salesians opened a house in that city, a superior from Assam had to go down to Bombay every time a new group arrived from Europe and for the departure of certain people. At times the help of the Jesuits of Bombay was sought, but they did it unwillingly for anybody. It

² According to the archdiocesan sources, in 1937 the Catholic population of Bombay and its suburbs, including Bassein, was 129,356; that of Bombay Island alone was 61,357.

³ According to the census of India, in 1921 the population of Bombay was 1,244,934 and in 1931 it was 1,268,306.

⁴ Cf ASC F 407 Osservazioni su Bombay - 1936, by fr. Candela, extraordinary visitor to the Salesian provinces of India in 1936-37.

⁵ Louis Mathias, born in Paris, of Alsatian parentage on 20 July 1887, lost both parents by December 1899. He made his novitiate and first profession at San Gregorio (Sicily) in May 1905. He was ordained a priest on 20 July 1913. It was when he was rector at Pedara that he was chosen to head the first Salesian missionary expedition to Assam. He reached Shillong on 13 January 1922. In December of the same year he was nominated Prefect apostolic of Assam. On 10 November 1934 he was ordained bishop of the newly erected diocese of Shillong. When archbishop Mederlet of Madras died, bishop Mathias was transferred to that important see in 1935. The archdiocese of Madras and the diocese of Mylapore were united to form the new archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore in 1952 and mgr. Mathias became its first archbishop in November of the same year. He died at Legnano on 3 August 1965. He was the first Salesian provincial of India and continued to hold that office till 1934. He was easily one of the greatest of the prelates of the church in India in the twentieth century.

was obvious that it would be better and more prudent, especially in certain cases of repatriation, that the affair be settled within the family.⁶

2.2. *Difficulty of entering into Bombay*

In India, until the arrival of the Salesians, there existed what is called «the monopoly of the missions», that is to say, a religious order or congregation to which a mission (diocese or archdiocese) in India was entrusted would not allow other orders or congregations, especially those of priests, to enter there. The first to break this monopoly were the Salesians, in Calcutta in 1925 and in Bombay in 1928.⁷

2.3. *Double ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Bombay*

Until 1928 Bombay had two bishops: the archbishop of Bombay (Jesuit) depending on the Propaganda and the bishop of Daman of the Portuguese *padroado*.⁸ The former had territorial jurisdiction in Bombay, while the latter had personal jurisdiction. But as the majority of the Catholics in Bombay (Goans) were under the personal jurisdiction of the bishop of Daman, he wielded considerable influence in the city, in spite of not having the title of bishop of Bombay. As a result of this double jurisdiction, until 1928 there were in Bombay churches belonging to the Propaganda and, often quite close to them, those of the *padroado*; institutions of the Propaganda and those of the *padroado*. This rivalry was the cause of annoyances and conflicts.

The Spanish Jesuits who had taken charge of the archdiocese of Bombay after the expulsion of the German Jesuits during the first World War, and especially fr. Bertran, the administrator of the archdiocese after the resignation of archbishop Goodier⁹ in 1926, would not have allowed the Salesians to start a

⁶ SPAM Bombay(1923-33) Mgr.L.Mathias, Note confidenziali sulle origini dell'Istituto Salesiano in Bombay, p. 1. This is a typed manuscript signed by him and dated Madras, 15 October 1936.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Padroado* is a Portuguese word which means patronage. In the 15th and 16th centuries the kings of Portugal were granted by the Holy See very extensive rights of patronage over the church in the lands over which they would gain control. This was done in view of the zeal which the Portuguese kings had shown in spreading the faith and seeing to the needs of the church in those lands. In the following centuries these rights had to be increasingly curtailed, as Portugal lost her power and became unable to maintain her obligations.

⁹ Alban Goodier, archbishop and spiritual writer, was born in Lancashire, England, on 14 April 1869. He became a Jesuit in 1887 and was ordained in 1903. During the first World War he was sent to Bombay to manage the crisis at St. Xavier's College, caused by the expulsion of the German Jesuits. He was appointed archbishop of Bombay in 1919. The administration of the Poona Diocese was added to his responsibilities in 1924. Though he was much loved by the people for his practical charities, the thorny politico-religious situation weighed heavily on his sensitive nature. He resigned his see and went back to England in 1926. The last years of his life were spent in writing scholarly works. He died on 13 March 1939.

house in Bombay if the decision regarding this had been left to them. In fact, in May 1928 when fr. Hauber,¹⁰ the superior of the newly arrived Salesians at Tardeo, Bombay, went to pay his respects to fr. Bertran, the latter contested the legitimacy of the entrance of the Salesians into Bombay on the strength of an invitation from the ordinary of Daman. He bluntly told fr. Hauber that the Salesians had to get the permission of the Propaganda in order to open a house in Bombay.¹¹ It is also known that fr. Bertran reproached mgr. Xavier, the administrator of Daman, for having permitted the Salesians to enter Bombay. «You will see what trouble they will give us», he seems to have remarked.¹² This opposition to the entry of the Salesians was not just a personal preference of fr. Bertran, but something shared in general by the Jesuits of Bombay. We have it from the mouth of archbishop Joaquim Lima¹³ himself that the Jesuits of the archdiocese of Bombay seemed to him to be opposed in principle to the starting of houses by the Salesians in Bombay.¹⁴

Some years before this, on 29 March 1923 to be precise, mr. F.A.C.Rebello,¹⁵ an influential Mangalorean Catholic of Bombay, wrote to mgr. Mathias, the superior of the Salesians in India, that the Catholics of Bombay lacked facilities for a technical education and hence would be happy to have the Salesians establish one such institution of theirs in or near Bombay. Rebello assured that he could easily get the bishop of Daman to send an official invitation to the Salesians if they would consider his proposal favourably.¹⁶ Further correspondence followed, in the course of which the Salesians were requested to set up a high

¹⁰ Joseph Hauber was born at Zabern (Alsace) on 2 January 1878. He became a Salesian in 1908 and a priest in 1915 and, though already in his mid forties, volunteered to join the first Salesian missionary expedition to Assam in 1921-22. He worked at some places in north-east India and then at Mylapore in South India. From there he was sent to Bombay in May 1928 to start the first Salesian work in that city. From Bombay he returned to north-east India in 1932. He died of cancer at Shillong on 21 October 1946.

¹¹ Cf SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letter Hauber-Mathias 17.5.28; ADBM Chronicle I entry 17.5.28.

¹² Cf SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letter Hauber-Mathias 11.7.28.

¹³ Joaquim Rodriguez Lima was archbishop of Bombay from 1928 to 1936. As a diocesan priest in Portugal he knew well several Salesians like frs. Sutera, Cogliolo and Maffini. Later he joined the Society of Jesus and came to India. It was when he was working at Belgaum that he was nominated archbishop of Bombay. He was friendly and helpful to the first Salesians in that city. He died at Belgaum on 21 July 1936.

¹⁴ Cf ASC F 407 letter Tomasetti-Ricaldone 6.12.28. In this letter fr. Tomasetti was conveying to fr. Ricaldone the gist of the conversation between him and the newly ordained archbishop Lima during a private audience at the Generalate of the Jesuits.

¹⁵ F.A.C.Rebello, a Mangalorean Catholic settled in Bombay, was chairman of the All India Catholic Conference in 1923. He had occupied the high office of the deputy accountant general of the Bombay presidency. He started housing societies for the Goans at Santa Cruz and Chembur, and for the Mangaloreans at Andheri. These were not a success.

¹⁶ Cf ASC F 407 letter Rebello-«Very Rev. Father» [Mathias] 29.3.23. Rebello had an axe to grind! He wanted to make use of the Salesians for his own purposes of land speculation. People would buy land in the suburbs of Bombay, where he had set up cooperative housing societies, only if he could get the Salesians or any one else to open schools, chapels etc.

school at Andheri, an agricultural colony at Vikhroli and a technical school at Chembur. In August of the same year mgr. Pera, the vicar general of Daman, informed mgr. Mathias that his bishop would be very happy to welcome the Salesians to his diocese and that the next time mgr. Mathias would go to Bombay the bishop would like to have him as his guest. In December 1924 mgr. Mathias went down to Bombay and was the guest of bishop Jose' Pereira of Daman at Colaba. In the company of the vicar general who was extremely friendly, he was able to visit all the places, where a Salesian work could be started. Bishop Jose' Pereira wrote a long letter to fr. Rinaldi, the rector major of the Salesians, on 22 July 1925, in which he exposed the need of the diocese and earnestly requested that some Salesians be sent to start a high school at Andheri. But a little later mgr. Pera returned to Portugal and bishop Jose' died. Everything came to a standstill. Only mr. Rebello continued to write and to insist.¹⁷

2.4. The Catholic Educational Institute, Tardeo, Bombay

The extraordinary visitation of fr. Peter Ricaldone to India in 1927 brought about a decision. In November of that year, during his return journey to Europe from east Asia, mgr. Mathias accompanied him to Bombay. Together with mr. Rebello they visited all the places where there was an offer to the Salesians to start or to take up a work. One of the places which they examined was the Catholic Educational Institute of the Immaculate Conception at Tardeo, which was being offered to the Salesians. This boarding high school, functioning always in rented quarters, had been founded around 1915 by dr. J.S.Freitas, a Goan priest, because there was no other English-teaching school in the city of Bombay, to which Catholics (mostly Goans) living in up-country stations or in places overseas, say Iraq and east Africa, could send their children for secondary education. It was precisely because it served a definite and vital need which was not met by any other institution in the city that the Bombay Catholic Welfare Organization (an association of Goans) decided in October 1925 to take over the school from dr. Freitas when he was no longer able to look after it. The aquisition, however, turned out to be financially burdensome, as the society was not able to find suitable persons to manage the school and the boarding. A change of management was imperative if the institution was to flourish. That was the reason why the Salesians were approached.¹⁸

¹⁷ Cf ADBM Chronicle I p. 1. (In the first three pages there is an introduction to the chronicle, written by mgr. Mathias, the provincial, on 10.5.28, giving a brief history of the events which led to the starting of the first Salesian house in Bombay); ASC F 178 letter Mathias-Rinaldi 18.8.1925; SPAM Bombay (1923-33) several papers at the beginning.

¹⁸ Cf ADBM Chronicle I pp. 1-2; see also the cuttings stuck at the beginning of the Chronicle, from the Angelus of 1928 (pp. 745-6) containing the «Fifth Report, 1926-28» of the Bombay Catholic Welfare Organization.

After visiting all the places which were being offered to the Salesians, fr. Ricaldone and mgr. Mathias went to meet mgr. Xavier, the administrator of Daman, who urged that the Salesians should go to Bombay as early as possible. Fr. Ricaldone left India after authorizing mgr. Mathias to negotiate and decide as he thought best in the Lord. In the mean time mgr. Mathias came to know confidentially that the *padroado* jurisdiction would soon disappear from Bombay. Realizing that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to start a Salesian work in Bombay after that, he wrote to mgr. Xavier on 5 December 1927 that the Salesians had in mind to establish three works at Andheri, Chembur and Vikhroli; but since the high school at Andheri could not be started at once, they would avail themselves of the offer of the Bombay Catholic Welfare Organization and take over «the Catholic Educational Institute» at Tardeo as a temporary measure, so that later the school could be transferred to the suburbs with knowledge of the local conditions. Mgr. Xavier replied on 27 December, warmly welcoming the Salesians to his diocese.¹⁹

Several letters were exchanged after this regarding the modality and conditions of the take over. The Salesians were to have complete liberty of action. The school with all its furniture, utensils and appurtenances would belong to them, with no interference whatever from the Bombay Catholic Educational Society or the diocese. The society moreover offered to give a one-time grant of Rs. 3,000 to the Salesians to tide over the difficulties of the initial period.²⁰

The Salesians agreed to go to Bombay in May 1928, so as to be able to take over the school before the new scholastic year started in June. The rector of the new house would be fr. Joseph Hauber, and fr. Augustine Dehlert²¹ the spiritual director. Two clerics of the third year of philosophy, Michael Devalle and William Haughey would be assistants. They would leave Shillong on 11 May and reach Bombay on the 15th.²²

Actually the Salesians reached Bombay only on the 16th morning. They were received very cordially at the railway station by fr. D'Costa, the secretary of mgr. Xavier, and taken to the Bishop's palace at Colaba. On the 18th they went over to Tardeo and took possession of the school.²³

¹⁹ Cf ADBM Chronicle I pp. 2-3; SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letter (copy) Mathias-Xavier 5.12.27; letter Xavier-Mathias 27.12.27.

²⁰ Cf SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letter (copy) Mathias-Xavier 23.2.28; letter Xavier-Mathias 12.3.28; letter Soares-Xavier 10.3.28.

²¹ Augustine Dehlert, born in Warmia, Poland in 1888, became a Salesian in 1910 and was ordained a priest at Turin in 1922. He opted for the missions and was sent to Tanjore, India, where he reached in November of the same year. He became rector of the orphanage of Tanjore in 1926. After the Salesians withdrew from Tanjore at the end of April 1928, he was sent with fr. Hauber to start the new Salesian house at Tardeo, Bombay. He remained in Bombay till his death on 5 December 1958 at the age of 70.

²² Cf ADBM Chronicle I p. 3; ASC F 407 letter (copy) Mathias-Xavier 12.4.28; SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letter Xavier-Mathias 17.4.28.

²³ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 16.5.28; 18.5.28; ASC F 407 letter Hauber-Ricaldone 20.7.28.

In the meantime the dailies of 5 May 1928 had carried the news that a fresh agreement between Portugal and the Vatican added the city of Daman to the archdiocese of Goa, while the remaining portion of the diocese outside the Portuguese possession would be added to the archdiocese of Bombay. Some days later it was announced that fr. Joaquim Lima, a Jesuit working at Belgaum, would be the the new archbishop of Bombay. As soon as mgr. Mathias heard of it, he wrote to him on 19 May, congratulating him and telling him with the shrewdness of a seasoned diplomat that he would find the Salesians always willing to give him any help. He told him how at the request of bishop Jose' Pereira of Daman and later of mgr. Xavier and especially of the Bombay Catholic Welfare Association, the Tardeo school had been accepted by the Salesians in December and how two priests and two clerics were already there. Fr. Lima replied on 29 May from Belgaum expressing his happiness at the fact that the Salesians were already in the archdiocese of Bombay. He also mentioned about his contacts with the Salesians in Portugal and how he almost became a Salesian there. About three weeks later, when passing through Bombay on his way to Rome for his episcopal ordination, though very busy, he managed to find time to pay a visit to the Salesians at Tardeo.²⁴

3. The Salesians at Tardeo, Bombay

3.1. *Rectorate of fr. Hauber*

The school reopened under the Salesians for the first time on 6 June 1928. Sixty-eight boarders returned after the holidays. About thirty others were newly admitted. The total number of students in the school was 189, nearly 40 of whom were non-Christians. There were 13 teachers: 9 gentlemen and 4 ladies. Only six of the teachers were catholics, the rest being Hindus, Parsees or Muslims. Since fr. Hauber, the rector and principal, would not be able to be in the school always, it was decided to appoint a headmaster who would supervise the teachers and the teaching. A certain mr. Thomas was chosen for the post. He took up the job on 1 July.²⁵

Fr. Hauber soon found a number of boarders to be troublesome and of very little good spirit. Many of them were old and used to a very relaxed discipline. During the October holidays a copy of the rules to be observed by the boys of the boarding was sent to the parents, and only those who agreed to observe them were readmitted to the boarding. After the holidays only forty boys returned. There was better spirit in the house, but the finances were seriously strained. With just forty boarders, the expenses of the house could not be cov-

²⁴ Cf SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letters (copy) Mathias-Lima 19.5.28; Lima-Mathias 29.5.28; Hauber-Mathias 22.6.28.

²⁵ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 6.6.28; 19.6.28.

ered, in spite of all the economy that the community practised. The monthly rent of Rs. 620 for the building weighed heavily on them.²⁶

There were, however, also events which brought consolation to the Salesians. In January 1929 the strength of the community rose with the addition of one brother and two clerics from Assam. The brother was to have the supervision of the kitchen and the service personnel. He would also be in charge of provisions.²⁷ Another event which brought cheer to the community was the success of the spiritual retreat which ended on Sunday, 3 February. It was organized for the whole school: boarders, day-scholars and teachers. Fr. Hauber had not expected them to do it so well. The behaviour of the boarders was exemplary and the day-scholars could not help following their example. On Saturday all made their confession and on Sunday there was general communion.²⁸

The school was always having a deficit in the first years. Almost every letter of fr. Hauber to mgr. Mathias from 1929 to 1931 mentions some aspect or other of this problem. Paying the monthly rent for the building was a constant worry for him. Now and then the landlord would even threaten to evict the school! The financial situation became very serious by June 1929. In spite of hopes to the contrary, the number of boarders for the new school year had not increased appreciably. The boarders were only 45. That number was too small to cover the expenses. Fr. Hauber became terribly discouraged and wrote on 28 June to mgr. Mathias who was then in Italy that the money which he had in hand would be over in less than two months and therefore, unless he received contrary orders before the end of July, he would give notice to all the teachers to leave by the end of August. He would also ask the parents to take away their children. The Salesians would leave Bombay at the end of August, the clerics going to Shillong, fr. Dehlert and bro. Bellani to Madras, while he himself would go to Turin if the superiors would allow him. The money required for all these journeys would be found by selling all the belongings of the school by public auction! A week later he wrote the same things also to fr. Ricaldone.²⁹

Mgr. Mathias was horrified at the proposal to close down the house and leave Bombay. He knew full well that if the Salesians gave up their position in the city, it would be almost impossible for them to get back there. So he replied at once to fr. Hauber that the Salesians should remain in Bombay at any cost, even if it meant incurring debts. Fr. Hauber took the words quite literally and borrowed Rs. 5,000 more from the archbishop. Together with an earlier loan of Rs. 2,000, there was now a debt of Rs. 7,000 with the archbishop (loaned for an

²⁶ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 19.6.28; 9.11.28; ASC F 407 letter Hauber-Ricaldone 7.12.28.

²⁷ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entry 19.1.29. The brother was Carlo Bellani. Attilio Colussi and Giuliano Cucchi were the two clerics.

²⁸ Cf SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letter Hauber-Mathias 3.2.29.

²⁹ Cf SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letters Hauber-Mathias 10.5.29; Hauber-Bars (acting provincial) 13.5.29; Hauber-Mathias 20.6.29; Hauber-Mathias 28.6.29; ASC F 407 letters Hauber-Ricaldone 6.7.29; 19.7.29.

indefinite period of time) at 5% per annum. He wrote to fr. Ricaldone that he took the loan as the ultimate means to keep the Salesians in Bombay. He wanted fr. Ricaldone to decide whether they should carry on like this or abandon the place. He added that the future was by no means rosy.³⁰

Finance was not the only problem that the Salesians had to face. The students were on the whole quite lazy. The Salesians had abolished the stick in the school. When there is no stick, there should be religion and the sense of duty which comes from it. But that was not there as yet. At the January examination of 1930 many boys failed. Hence it was decided that everything should be done to force the boys in a reasonable way, to do their duty. At a meeting of the teachers it was agreed that every teacher would get his pupils to do their homework regularly. There would be weekly tests and monthly tests. Those who were weak would be specially helped. If the boys did not do their homework or study their lessons, they would be kept back after school hours and made to do what they had failed to do. At the end of the school year in a further effort to raise up the level of studies, some of the teachers who had been found to be easy-going were changed.³¹

From 1 June 1930 the school which was till then known as «the Catholic Educational Institute» changed its name to «Don Bosco High School». Fr. Hauber in agreement with mgr. Mathias had asked the educational authorities in March for the change of name. The students, we are told, welcomed the change.³²

By now the school was making a certain amount of progress in studies, though it was by no means spectacular. What was more evident was the fact that there was good spirit among the boys and still more among the Salesians. In general, as seen from the letters of the time, there was union and much good will among the members of the Salesian community.³³

The financial situation of the house once again became critical by January-February 1931. When fr. Hauber wrote to mgr. Mathias lamenting about his difficulties, he received a rather hard-hitting reply. He was reminded that there was a general financial crisis (the «great depression» of the nineteen thirties), and the condition of mgr. Mathias was worse than his. He was told that he should approach the Goan community of Bombay, arranging a meeting of the principal Goans and tell them about the state of things. He could perhaps speak to the patriarch of Goa and the clergy, making them aware that the Salesians were working for their people, and obtain a subsidy. Even the Por-

³⁰ SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letters Hauber-Mathias 23.8.29; Hauber-Bars 31.7.29; ASC F 407 letters Hauber-Ricaldone 19.7.29; 26.7.29.

³¹ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 22.1.30; 1.6.30.

³² Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries May-June 1930; SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letters Hauber-Mathias 24.3.30; 5.5.30; 25.5.30.

³³ Cf ASC F 178 letter Mathias-Ricaldone 19.3.30; SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letters Hauber-Mathias 22.6.30; 20.8.30.

tuguese governor of Goa could be approached. There was only one thing to be done: «to start to work, to move, to make ourselves known. You are not Salesians, but hermits at Bomabay».³⁴

There is no indication anywhere in the sources as to how the crisis was overcome. But we know that in May of the same year the rector bought a set of new band instruments (16 instruments) for Rs. 1,100.³⁵ Though the chronicler says that it was a big sacrifice, yet the very fact that the rector dared to make a rather heavy expense like this seems to be a sign that the financial position was no longer so intolerable.

The band played at Poona for the feast of Christ the King on 24,25 and 26 October of that year. All the expenses were met by the committee in charge of the feast. By November the band was being invited to several places in Bombay, for example to Gloria church, where the delegate apostolic was present for the feast of Our Lady of Glory. Fr. Hauber could say with a certain amount of pride: «now we are starting to make ourselves heard in Bombay». In fact, right from the beginning the band was thought of «as a good means of propaganda». On 4 December the band left for Goa, with the rector and three clerics, to play during the festivities in connection with the exposition of the body of st. Francis Xavier. They made a real hit there. The people could hardly believe that the band players had had less than six months of practice.³⁶

During all these years, clerics in the period of «practical training» were teaching in the school. This brought with it certain difficulties. They had no prior teaching experience. Besides, most of them did not know well the language in which they had to teach. They remained too short a time in Bombay, so that as soon as they managed to get some practice, they had to go back to Shillong to start their theological studies. New ones would come, with the problem starting all over again. Fr. Wollaston,³⁷ the prefect of studies at Bombay in 1932-33, wrote to mgr. Mathias that the frequent change of teachers was the reason why the students arrived at the higher classes «lacking in the fundamentals of every kind of subject and accustomed to no one kind of discipline» and hence undisciplined.³⁸

³⁴ SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letter Mathias-Hauber 19.1.31; cf also ASC F 407 letter Hauber-Ricaldone 20.2.31.

³⁵ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entry 14.5.31; SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letter Hauber-Mathias 21.5.31.

³⁶ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries from 26.9.31 to 9.12.31; SPAM Bombay (1923-33) letters Hauber-Mathias 6.11.31; 10.12.31.

³⁷ Douglas Joseph Wollaston was born in December 1902 at Akyab, Burma. He did his studies brilliantly and became a teacher at st. Edmund's, Shillong in 1922. He was the first to join the Salesians from Assam. He did his novitiate and philosophical studies in Shillong. For theology he was sent to Crocetta in 1927. He returned to India as a priest in November 1931. He was sent to Bombay as prefect of studies and he took charge on 2 February 1932. In July of the following year he left Bombay and went to Shillong. Subsequently he worked at a number of places in eastern and north-eastern India. Beginning from 1952 he was for seven years principal of st. Anthony's college, Shillong. He died at Shillong on 17 January 1979 at the age of 76.

³⁸ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entry 14.5.31; SPAM Bombay (1932-33-34) letter Wollaston-Mathias 27.2.32.

3.2. Rectorate of fr. Tornquist³⁹

In the afternoon of 1 April 1932 a telegram from mgr. Mathias informed fr. Hauber that he had been elected delegate of the province to the general chapter and that he should get ready to leave for Italy. Fr. Tornquist would succeed him as rector. The new rector reached Bombay on the 6th. Five days later fr. Hauber left for Europe in the company of mgr. Mathias.⁴⁰

Towards the end of the month, the school gave the public an entertainment in honour of blessed don Bosco. The *Angelus*, a Catholic journal of Bombay wrote a very appreciative account of it and of the school:

«Once again the end of the school year has come for the Don Bosco High School, and the Salesians as usual closed it with a pleasant entertainment given on Sunday, the 24th April, which a goodly crowd of friends and well-wishers attended... There is always something that distinguishes Salesian activities from others, - the most is made of the little at their disposal, and the whole entertainment has about it a feeling of homeliness, which the family spirit of the Salesians generates... The Salesians have now been four years in Bombay and their school at Tardeo has made and is making headway notwithstanding the fact that beginnings are always hard and that they are fighting against heavy financial odds, for these are years of depression in every way».⁴¹

Several people welcomed the change of rectors and were of the opinion that it was providential for the house. Among those who were pleased with the change was the Italian consul in Bombay. He had been unhappy with the somewhat closed and retiring and timid character of fr. Hauber. He now started to visit the house often and also to invite fr. Tornquist for dinner, something he had not dared to do before. In general the boys were happy that fr. Hauber was no longer there. Some of the clerics too were happy and they even said somewhat «irreverent» things like: «we are no longer under the Germans».⁴²

Almost immediately after the new rector took over, there were a number of material improvements in the house and the school. The entrance of the house,

³⁹ Adolph Tornquist Altgelt was born at Buenos Aires on 4 December 1887. His father was of Swedish origin, his mother a German. The family was very rich. Adolph had much of his education abroad and so, besides his own native Spanish, he knew English and French well. He decided to become a priest and did his seminary studies in the U. S. A. In 1920 he was ordained a priest. Two years later he became a Salesian and was appointed secretary to cardinal Cagliero. He made large donations to Salesian works in several countries. In 1929 he started to visit the missions of Asia. He was back in Europe in 1931. Meanwhile he had been so enamoured of Asia that he requested to be sent to India, where his knowledge of English would be useful. Mgr. Mathias appointed him provincial economist. In April 1932 he was made rector of Bombay. He remained there till May 1936 and then returned to his own country after spending some time in Italy. He died at Alta Gracia, Argentina on 20 April 1971 at the ripe old age of 83.

⁴⁰ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 1.4.32 to 11.4.32.

⁴¹ ADBM Chronicle I. See the page from *Angelus* stuck on the page facing May 1932.

⁴² Cf SPAM Bombay (1932-33-34) letter dal Zovo-Mathias 21.7.32.

the chapel, the veranda, the class-rooms, the stairs etc. were painted. The trees in the middle of the play ground were cut down and the play ground was levelled. Beautiful lamps were provided for the chapel, the study-hall and the hall. Many things were repaired and others were bought, for example many indoor games. The food was improved and the boys were happy. The number of boarders rose to seventy. The day scholars too were many more than in the previous year.⁴³

Another person who was pleased with the change of rectors was the inspector of schools. He wrote inter alia: «the school has a new principal in whom I have much confidence». He referred to the improvements in the buildings and their cleanliness and noted the growth of the school in numbers. But he was still critical of the low standard of English and arithmetic. Reading and pronunciation too were bad. And he noted that with the exception of the headmaster, the entire teaching staff was without training. This naturally told on their teaching, in spite of the fact that the religious teachers had much zeal and enthusiasm.⁴⁴

Shortly after his arrival fr. Tornquist was able to persuade the owner of the building to reduce the house-rent from Rs. 620 to Rs. 600 per month. A year later it was further reduced to Rs. 575, though this last concession was only for one year.⁴⁵

On 1° April 1932 archbishop Lima granted written permission for canonically erecting a Salesian house in Bombay. In the following January the permission of the Propaganda and of the sacred congregation for religious was obtained and fr. Ricaldone canonically erected the house on 7 March 1933.⁴⁶

Before even one year of the rectorate of fr. Tornquist was completed, there were criticisms galore against him from almost all the confreres of his house. Fr. Dehlert was rather critical about the discipline and assistance of the boys and about the quality of community life in the house after the arrival of fr. Tornquist. The worst misfortune, according to him, was that the rector did not find time to meet the boys during recreation because of his large correspondence. Cleric Mariotta too was critical. He wrote that there was much disagreement in the house, especially on the question of discipline. Two other clerics (dal Zovo and Gatti) even wrote to the provincial, with all due submission and humility, that fr. Tornquist should be changed from his post as rector because he brought «dishonour and discredit to the Salesians». The exercise for a happy death was held in common only once during the previous 11 months. The prescribed conferences were hardly ever given. He humiliated the parents who could not pay the fees. For him payment was the most important thing and so he admitted for matriculation boys who had been refused selection elsewhere. Fr. Wollaston,

⁴³ *Ibid.* - Cf also ADBM Chronicle I several entries in May, June and July 1932.

⁴⁴ Cf ASC F 407 copy of the report of the inspector of European schools, August 1932.

⁴⁵ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 7.5.32; 15.6.33.

⁴⁶ ASC F 407 documents Lima 1.4.32; Propaganda 16.1.33; s.c. for Religious 31.1.33; Ricaldone 7.3.33.

the prefect of studies, was thoroughly dissatisfied. He wrote that the rector never encouraged anyone, but only criticized. According to him the rector was too autocratic. The French classes which the rector was supposed to take had become a farce. Often he skipped them; and when he did take, the boys had to wait till he woke up after his siesta! In the chronicle of the house (written by fr. Dehlert) it is stated that the rector introduced several changes in the discipline of the house, which turned out to be harmful to the studies of the boys.⁴⁷

The result of the matriculation examination of 1933 was very bad for don Bosco school. Out of the eleven students sent up for the examination, only three passed. Among all the Catholic schools of Bombay, don Bosco's had the worst result.⁴⁸

Some imprudent statements made by fr. Tornquist to the press regarding the starting of technical and agricultural schools in Bassein by the Salesians irritated archbishop Lima who had been till then very friendly to the Salesians. In order to soothe the ruffled feelings mgr. Mathias had to make a disavowal through a letter to the editor. Fr. Tornquist complained several times in his letters to Turin that the archbishop was showing himself to be cold and that he never visited the house etc., not realizing perhaps that he himself had to bear the blame for antagonizing the archbishop.⁴⁹

In the course of these years the earlier plans of the Salesians with regard to their work in Bombay underwent much change. In the instructions which mgr. Mathias had given on 10 May 1928 to the first Salesians who were to leave Shilong soon, in order to proceed to Bombay, he wrote:

«Our work at Tardeo is only temporary. It is only meant as a preparation to transfer the high school to Andheri. So try with prudence and caution to get as soon as possible the land needed at Andheri (at least 10 acres) and look out for the means required to construct the buildings... We can think of starting the other works at Chembur and Virauli after we have established ourselves firmly at Andher».⁵⁰

In accordance with this instruction fr. Hauber visited Andheri several times in the first months of his stay in Bombay. Then came the serious financial problems which made it impossible for fr. Hauber to think on such lines. Mgr. Mathias himself changed his ideas later. During the visit of November-December 1933 he wrote in the visitation-book on 3 December:

«I am all the more convinced that the place where we are [Tardeo] is the most suitable for us. We are in the city and yet out of it. It is near the sea, so we have good breeze. We should think of buying two plots from our landlord».⁵¹

⁴⁷ Cf SPAM Bombay (1932-33-34) letters Dehlert-Mathias 20.2.33; Mariotta-Mathias 18.7.33; dal Zovo & Gatti-Mathias 10.3.33; Wollaston-Mathias 6.4.33; ADBM Chronicle I entry 26.5.33.

⁴⁸ Cf ASC F 407 letter Tornquist-Berruti 8.9.34.

⁴⁹ Cf ASC F 407 letters Tornquist-Ricaldone 16.12.33; Tornquist-Berruti 25.3.34.

⁵⁰ SPAM copy-book for provincial and extraordinary visitations (Bombay), pp. 5-6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Elsewhere mgr. Mathias went to the extent of saying that it was providential that the Salesians did not settle down in the suburbs but were able to remain in Bombay Island. He added that they should never leave the island of Bombay.⁵²

Bro. Santana⁵³ came to Bombay from Shillong in March 1933. Within a few days of his arrival a little workshop for tailors was started in a very modest way. There was just a room with two stitching machines, one new and the other second hand.⁵⁴ Two and a half years later we hear that the enterprise was not a success. Fr. Tornquist wrote that he was thinking of closing it down because the workshop was not getting enough orders. Bro. Santana was an excellent religious but not a good tailor.⁵⁵

In the new school year 1933-34 the number of boys in the school and the boarding increased. The school was full and in the boarding it became difficult to provide suitable accommodation for all. Some of the boys had to sleep on mats spread on the floor.⁵⁶ There was also an important change in the Salesian staff. Fr. Haughey⁵⁷ went to Bombay as prefect of studies on 7 June 1933. He was sent to take the place of fr. Wollaston who left for Shillong on 1 July.⁵⁸

It was during these years that the Salesian cooperators of Bombay began to be organized. Frs. Tornquist and Haughey deserve some of the credit for this. Most of the cooperators were from Girgaum and Cavel. The two most active members of the group, Mr. Noel Kenny and Miss Eva Fernandes, soon became Salesian religious. Two of the sons of cooperators (Oscar Misquitta and Dennis Duarte) became aspirants at Tardeo.⁵⁹

A report about the house of Bombay sent by fr. Cinato,⁶⁰ the provincial, to the rector major in July 1934 was rather disquieting. It showed that the conditions in the house, instead of improving, were only becoming worse. He said:

⁵² Cf SPAM Bombay (1923-33) Mgr. L. Mathias, Note confidenziali sulle origini dell'Istituto Salesiano in Bombay, p. 4.

⁵³ Laureano Santana was born in Spain on 17.11.1871. He became a Salesian in his own country. He was the oldest member of the first batch of Salesian missionaries who went to Assam in 1921-22. After working in Shillong for more than eleven years he was sent to Bombay in March 1933 and remained there till his death on 1.1.1943. He was a faithful religious.

⁵⁴ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 15.3.33 and 24.3.33.

⁵⁵ Cf ASC F 186 letter Tornquist-Berruti 31.8.35.

⁵⁶ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 6.6.33; 15.6.33.

⁵⁷ William Haughey was born at Glasgow on 28 May 1908. He made his novitiate in England and then came to India in 1926. He did his philosophical studies at Shillong and then was sent to Bombay as assistant of the boys in May 1928. After his theology at Shillong, he was ordained a priest in April 1933 and was sent back to Bombay as prefect of studies. Since he was not keeping well there, he was transferred to Tirupattur. Ultimately he had to go back to England. He died at Blaisdon on 12.11.1984 at the age of 76.

⁵⁸ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 7.6.33; 1.7.33.

⁵⁹ Cf SPAM No.2,025 «Salesian Cooperators» Report of work done by the association of Salesian cooperators of Bombay from 1932 to 1935.

⁶⁰ Fr. Eligius Cinato was born at Sant'Ambrogio, Italy on 21 July 1898. He was already 25 when he reached India in December 1923 to start his novitiate with the first batch of novices at Shillong. He was ordained a priest on 20 July 1930. It was when he was superior of the mission of Raliang that in March

«There is little Salesian spirit among the boys and little Salesian method used with the boys. There is a certain amount of general discontent among the confreres. It is above all due to the small amount of esteem and confidence they have in the rector. I spoke with each one individually first, and then in common, trying to make some suggestions to them. But it did not seem that they were listening to my suggestions very willingly».⁶¹

A little later fr. Cinato wrote again: «When we are able to put there a rector who is really a Salesian, things will go much better».⁶² Fr. Tornquist himself admitted in a letter to fr. Berruti in 1935 that he was not able to be a good rector because he had never been a Salesian pupil or cleric or catechist or prefect of studies or prefect. He felt that he suffered and made others suffer with his constant failure to observe Salesian customs which he had never known.⁶³

Since fr. Haughey was not keeping well in Bombay, he was transferred to Tirupattur at the beginning of 1935 and fr. Murray (newly arrived from Europe) was asked to take his place as prefect of studies in Bombay. He was keen on discipline, but was so harsh with everyone that by the month of April he was no longer wanted there by the rector, several clerics, many teachers and the boys! Only fr. Dehlert defended him. The teacher of mathematics in the 8th standard, a certain mr. Mathai, prepared a letter of protest against fr. Murray signed by many boys of the school, accusing him of rigorism, encouragement of espionage etc. This move had the sympathy of two clerics.⁶⁴

To make matters worse, the matriculation results of the school in 1935 was very poor: only two students out of eleven passed! Almost every one failed in mathematics. There were now attacks (some of them anonymous) in the press against the Don Bosco School, but many more sprang to its defence. Thus in the Bombay Sentinel of 25 April there was an anonymous attack on the Salesian school by a «Salesian well-wisher» who condemned fr. Murray's «tyranny» and stated that the preventive «system has degenerated into espionage». Similar attacks appeared also in some other papers, for example in the Anglo-Lusitano. Apparently a certain G.B.D'Souza, a teacher who had been sent away from the school, was the author of these letters. In fact, in the Anglo-Lusitano of 4 May

ordained a priest on 20 July 1930. It was when he was superior of the mission of Raliang that in March 1933 he was appointed vice provincial of South India. In the following year the south became completely autonomous and he was made provincial. He continued to be the provincial of south India till February 1945, though from the beginning of 1943 onwards he was not in the province but in the internment camp at Dehra Dun. In March 1945 he was sent as vicar general of Krishnagarh diocese. Disagreements with bishop Morrow obliged him to return to Italy after about two years. After a few years of stay in Italy he returned to north India. It was when he was superior of the mission of Cherrapunji that he died on 15 January 1964.

⁶¹ ASC F 186 letter Cinato-Ricaldone 14.7.34.

⁶² SPAM fr. Ricaldone & fr. Cinato (1933-41) letter Cinato-Ricaldone 16.9.34.

⁶³ ASC F 186 letter Tornquist-Berruti 12.2.35.

⁶⁴ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 7.1.35; 23.4.35; SPAM Bombay (1934-35) Casa salesiana letters Tornquist-Cinato 10.4.35; 17.4.35; Murray-Cinato 10.4.35; Dehlert-Cinato 14.4.35.

he signed his name. He attacked the poor results etc. of the school. But the school was strongly defended by several others, for example in the Goa Mail of 13 May, in the Anglo Lusitano of 25 May, in the Mangalorean of June, in the Goan World of June and in the Goa Mail of 13 August. The last mentioned said inter alia:

«The attack against the good Salesian Fathers conducting the Don Bosco School has proved a veritable boomerang and it must be a matter for no little gratification to the Fathers to find practically every Catholic journal of any importance stand by them and appreciate the valuable service they have been rendering to Catholic children despite the fact that they are seriously handicapped financially».⁶⁵

Because of the poor results, the 8th standard was suppressed for the school-year 1935-36. The boys who had passed from the 7th standard were all weak and so it was feared that the results of the following year would be as poor as those of the current year. That was why the suppression was done. Besides taking this precaution, the teacher of mathematics was dismissed.⁶⁶

After the new school year started, there were once again several letters from the confreres to the provincial, complaining about the rector and the prefect of studies. There was a letter even from Mr. Thomas, the headmaster, saying that the school was going down because of the wrong policies of the rector and Fr. Murray. The downward trend in the school was closely associated, he said, with the arrival of Fr. Murray. Most of the Salesians on the staff were discouraged. He ended his letter with an impassioned plea to go to their aid in some way.⁶⁷

With all these complaints reaching him in quick succession, the provincial must have made some strong remarks to the rector, for we see Fr. Tornquist making loud laments in his letter from Vellore to Fr. Cinato on 24, 25, 26 July. He said that he was disappointed to see that the provincial had accepted the words of the two clerics who wrote to him and not the words of the rector of the house. So he was returning to Bombay sad. He would not be able to direct the house any longer. Hence he would be extremely grateful if he were allowed to leave for Europe immediately.⁶⁸

In September of the same year (1935) the provincial made a long visitation of the house of Bombay, which lasted more than a month. He stayed long to study the problems of the house, both internal and external. It was probably when he was already in the house that he received a long letter written by some boys on the 6th of September, practically saying that all the ills in the school

⁶⁵ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 23.4.35; those of May 1935.

⁶⁶ ADBM Chronicle I entry 9.6.35.

⁶⁷ SPAM Bombay 1934-35 Casa salesiana letters Mariotta-Cinato 16.6.35; 10.7.35; Thomas-Cinato 26.6.35; Bellani-Cinato 13.7.35; Santana-Cinato 14.7.35.

⁶⁸ SPAM Bombay (1934-35) Casa salesiana letter Tornquist-Cinato 24, 25, 26.7.35.

were due to fr. Murray. The letter spoke of the poor matriculation results, the headmaster dissatisfied, the clerics unhappy, the spies that fr. Murray was having in the classes etc. The provincial tried to eliminate the difficulties between the rector and some of the confreres of the house. He succeeded in his efforts only partially and that too for a short time. In fact he was convinced by now that only a change of rector would bring a lasting remedy.⁶⁹ As for the other major difficulty in the house, the provincial came to the conclusion that it was caused by the efforts of fr. Murray to remove certain disorders which had taken root in the community. The intention of fr. Murray was good, but the methods used by him were too rigid and «more proper of the repressive system». Besides, certain angry interventions of his and his authoritarian ways caused lack of confidence in some clerics and among the boys who started some sort of methodic rebellion. Since at this time fr. Murray had trouble with his lungs and needed medical care in a dry place, it was possible to give him a transfer without causing much hurt.⁷⁰

In October fr. Cinato had to go to Europe. He could return to India only in April 1936. When he came back, he was accompanied by fr. Seeber who was to be the prefect of studies at Bombay.⁷¹

As had been agreed earlier, fr. Tornquist left Bombay on 7th May 1936. Since the provincial was immediately not able to find a suitable person to be appointed as rector, he requested fr. Dehlert to be in charge of the house until a more permanent arrangement could be made.⁷² This situation lasted till February of the following year. Naturally, there were some difficulties in the house because of this arrangement. fr. Dehlert was the confessor of the house, and he had to be also acting prefect and acting rector! There were, therefore, problems of discipline and problems for the renewal of the vows of the clerics etc. But fr. Dehlert succeeded in maintaining union and good spirit in the community and also improved several things in the running of the house.⁷³

Fr. Candela, the extraordinary visitor to India in 1936-37, performed the visitation of the house of Bombay from 12 to 19 November 1936. He gives much valuable information about the condition of the house. The school had at that time three preparatory classes and eight classes of the high school course. The number of students had risen to 310, of whom 87 were boarders. All the boarders were Catholics. Among the day-scholars there were 159 Catholics, 32

⁶⁹ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries of Sept.1935; SPAM Bombay (1934-35) Casa salesiana letter some boys-Cinato 6.9.35; ASC F 186 letter Cinato-Berruti 8.9.35.

⁷⁰ SPAM Visitation Book, Bombay report of provincial 22.9.35; fr. Cinato to mgr. Mathias (1933-36) letter Cinato-Mathias undated, but written a little after he received Mathias's letter of 8.9.35.

⁷¹ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entry 8.4.36.

⁷² Cf SPAM fr. Ricaldone & fr. Cinato (1933-41) letter (copy) Cinato-Ricaldone 25.4.36; Bombay (1935-36) Casa salesiana letters Dehlert-Cinato 8.5.36; 27.5.36; ASC F 186 letter Cinato-Ricaldone 17.6.36.

⁷³ Cf ASC F 186 letter Cinato-Ricaldone 8.10.36; F 188 Report of fr. Candela, extraordinary visitor, on the house of Bombay in November 1936.

Parsees, 25 Hindus, 5 Muslims and 2 others. Since the number of students had increased, the school was able to manage without incurring debts, nay it could slowly clear the earlier ones. The school used to receive a yearly grant of Rs. 900 at the beginning, but by the time the report was drawn up it had been raised to Rs. 2,600. The diocesan clergy and the Catholic public who had a certain amount of reservation and diffidence towards the Salesians at the beginning had now changed their attitude. It could now be said that they liked the Salesians and hoped for more initiatives from them. Though they were aware of the problems that beset the Salesians, they found it hard to believe (because of their acquaintance with the Jesuits) that the Salesians were really poor. There were not enough schools in Bombay, and all the people, whether Catholics or non-Catholics, preferred schools directed by the European religious. So the Salesians would certainly have enough pupils also in the future.⁷⁴

3.3. *Rectorate of fr. Maschio*

As fr. Cinato was not able to find in the southern province a person suitable to be made rector of Bombay, he appealed to the superiors in Turin to intervene and give him someone from the province of north India which had many more Salesians and more capable ones. After many discussions and much delay caused especially by the objections of bishop Ferrando of Shillong, the superiors asked fr. Maschio, the mission superior of Cherrapunji, to proceed to Bombay. He reached Bombay on 20 February 1937 in the company of fr. Cinato who introduced the new rector to the whole house and the school. The provincial remained in the house for a whole month in order to discuss and plan with the new rector the future of that house. At the end of his stay he wrote that he noted with pleasure and relief how fr. Maschio had started well and that he was likely to fulfil the hopes placed in him by the superiors for the development of Salesian work and the promotion of good spirit among the confreres.⁷⁵

Immediately after fr. Maschio took over as rector, fr. Cinato and he went around to look for a suitable place, where the school could be established permanently on a property owned by the Salesians. The rented building which they were occupying at that time was absolutely insufficient for their needs. There was no hope of the school making any progress unless the Salesians bought the land on which the building stood and some more adjacent land and built anew after destroying the existing buildings. That would cost them a fabulous amount. That was why the search for a new place was started. After much search a former cloth mill, called the Imperial Mill, belonging to the Maharajah of Gwalior and under the care of the Wadias, was found. It was situated some-

⁷⁴ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entry 12.11.36; ASC F 407 Osservazioni su Bombay - 1936, by fr. Candela; F 188 Report of fr. Candela during the extraordinary visitation.

⁷⁵ Cf ASC F 176 typed copy of Cronaca della Missione salesiana in Assam, p.309; ADBM Chronicle I entry 20.237; SPAM Visitation Book, Bombay entry 22.3.37.

where between the railway stations of lower Parel and Mahalakshmi, and hence not very far from Tardeo. There were several solid buildings in the compound, which could be easily adapted to the needs of a school. Fr. Berruti, the prefect-general, who was on his way to Thailand and China as extraordinary visitor, stopped at Bombay for a few hours on 28 April on orders from fr. Ricaldone, the rector major, in order to examine the Imperial Mill and to report. He saw the place and wrote that he was in favour of buying it. But he expressly said that he subordinated his opinion to that of mgr. Mathias who would go to see the place shortly and report to fr. Ricaldone. Mgr. Mathias accompanied by fr. Cinato reached Bombay on 24 May and stayed there till the 27th to study the question. He found that the price demanded was rather high. His conclusion was that unless the price came down to four lakhs of rupees, it would be better to buy land elsewhere and build according to the requirements of a Salesian school, rather than adapt an existing structure which would never be fully according to the needs of the Salesians.⁷⁶

The search for a place, therefore, continued. Finally, in the month of August a good place was found. It was a large plot of land having an area of about 60,000 square yards, in a locality called Matunga, situated to the north of the city, but still within the city limits. Land could be bought there rather cheaply from the municipality. The plot which the Salesians intended to buy was very close to King's Circle and formed part of a scheme to enlarge the city. Buildings had not yet come up in that area; but two other areas bordering on it had already been completely filled with buildings, houses, shops etc. During the preceding years the city had extended fast towards this area and continued to extend, so much so that one would get the impression that one was close to the centre, while in reality it was a few miles away. But it was well connected with the centre by large roads and trams and buses. So it would be easy for the day-scholars to reach there. There was also a railway station in the vicinity. The ground was sufficiently level and was suitable for the foundation of buildings.⁷⁷

On their way back to Italy from Calcutta after the visitation of east Asia, frs. Berruti and Candela passed through Bombay on 10 January 1938. They went to see the plot meant for the new house and were happy. They promised to expedite matters as soon as they would reach Turin. On 24 March the general council gave permission to buy the land at Matunga and to take a loan for that purpose. The permission reached Bombay on 1 April. Fr. Maschio now made a formal request to the municipality for the land. The sale was approved

⁷⁶ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 7.3.37; 28.4.37; 24.5.37; SPAM fr. Berruti & fr. Cinato (1932-40) letter (copy) Berruti-Ricaldone 29.4.37; ASC F 407 Berruti-Ricaldone 29.4.37; Mathias-Ricaldone on feast of Mary Help of Christians 1937; F 187 letter (copy) Mathias-Ricaldone on feast of Mary Help of Christians.

⁷⁷ Cf ASC F 189 letter Cinato-Ricaldone 17.8.37; SPAM Fr. Ricaldone and Fr. Cinato (1933-41) letter (copy) Cinato-Ricaldone 24.8.37; copy of undated paper entitled «Proposta per la compera di un terreno nella citta' di Bombay per stabilirvi la casa salesiana su terreno nostro».

by it on 16 July. The total cost of the land was Rs. 229,160. A tenth part of it, viz Rs. 22,916 was paid together with the request. The ownership of the property was officially passed on to the Salesians on 1 December 1938, but they took legal possession of it only in April 1939.⁷⁸

In the school year 1937-38 there was an increase in the number of boarders. They were 96, and all were rather young. All available space in the house was occupied. In the next scholastic year the boarders were more than a hundred. To accommodate the additional number a place which till then served for three classes had to be sacrificed. Those classes would now be held in another building on the other side of the road, taken for a monthly rent of Rs. 160. In the years that followed, the boarders would go on increasing as also the day-scholars. By 1950 there were 250 boarders and 1070 day-scholars.⁷⁹

From 1938 onwards there were also a few aspirants in the house. Several of them later became Salesians and four were ordained priests. Those who left the aspirantate after some time, did fine work later as cooperators. The remnant went to Tirupattur when the official aspirantate of the southern province was started there in July 1943.⁸⁰

Already within a few months after fr. Maschio became the rector of the house, the provincial could write to the rector major that the house was improving from all points of view. In the mean time there were also changes and additions to the Salesian staff. Fr. Seeber, the prefect of studies, had to go to Madras and his place was taken by fr. Boira in June 1937. Fr. Mariotta, a newly ordained priest, who had served earlier in the house as an assistant, went as catechist of the house in October 1939. This was the first time that Bombay had a catechist. Another welcome addition to the staff was Fr. Tuena, a new priest, who was sent there in November 1940 as prefect. Fr. Maschio felt that after the arrival of fr. Mariotta the piety of the boys made great progress. He did not think that the same could be said about their studies, even though so much had been done in the past three years to increase the quantity of teaching aids in the school and to improve the quality of the teachers. There were certainly many boys who could do well in studies, yet did not do so because of lack of proper help. He felt that the house needed a good prefect of studies. Fr. Boira was excellent for the band and for music, but when it came to the question of giving up his siesta, he did not do it willingly. While not asking for an immediate change, fr. Maschio wanted the provincial to keep in mind the need of a good prefect of studies. Fr. Cinato, the provincial, was in Bombay in January-February 1939 for the visitation of the house. He took part in the feast of don Bosco and was happy to see that the feast was really a great success. He also realized that fr. Maschio was re-

⁷⁸ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 10.1.38; 1.4.38; SPAM Fr. Maschio & House of Bombay (1938) letters Maschio-Provincial 1.4.38; 5.4.38; 30.7.38; 1.12.38.

⁷⁹ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entries 4.6.37; June 1938; ASC F 407 see yearly statistics sent to Turin.

⁸⁰ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entry September 1938 (additional sheet); ASC F 407 letter Maschio-Ricaldone 10.6.39.

ally the right man for getting the large amount of money that would be required for building the school. While a superficial observer might get the impression that fr. Maschio thought only of getting money, the provincial noted that also all the rest was going well in the house. There was good spirit and in general all had good will.⁸¹

At the beginning of 1940 fr. Maschio made a special effort to improve the level of studies of the boys. He himself went round the classes, examining the notebooks etc. of the boys, - all to give a push to studies. He felt that both boys and teachers needed to be prodded. After his visit to the classes it was noticed that the boys were studying much more than before.⁸²

During the novena for the feast of don Bosco in 1940, a special effort was made to make don Bosco better known and loved by the boys. The reading in the church after Mass, the reading in the refectory, the good night talk, the sermon during the novena service, - all were on don Bosco.⁸³

By now the entertainments given by the Don Bosco School on such days as the feast of don Bosco, the feast of the Assumption etc. had become quite popular. They were very much appreciated by the invited guests who came. In August 1937 «a Catholic Observer» after describing the «academy» held on the vigil of the Assumption, wrote in one of the journals of Bombay: «this school is doing an excellent work for our poorer Catholics».⁸⁴

Fr. Maschio's first plan was to build a high school and a technical school at Matunga. The idea of a technical school aroused the interest of very many people, including those at the highest levels of the government of the Bombay presidency. Several unusual ways of raising money for the project were devised. For example, charity dances were organized, one of which was held at the Taj Mahal hotel. The dance was under the patronage of Lady Lumley, the wife of the governor. A committee of voluntary helpers of which Sir Richard Temple was president took charge of everything connected with the dance. More important than the money which it brought, it made many more people aware of don Bosco and his works in Bombay. Another means used was the «Don Bosco Gift Scheme», under which coupons were distributed in return for a small donation of one rupee. Prizes, including a de-luxe motor-car, were offered to the possessors of the lucky numbers.⁸⁵

In September 1940 fr. Maschio was able to pay Rs. 90,000 to the Bombay municipality for the Matunga property. In October another good amount was

⁸¹ Cf ASC F 189 letters Cinato-Ricaldone 17.8.37; 19.2.39; ADBM Chronicle I entries 26.6.37; 30.6.37; 13.10.39; SPAM Don Maschio & Casa Bombay (1939) letter Maschio-Cinato 21.12.39; ADBM Chronicle II entry 17.11.40.

⁸² Cf SPAM Corrispondenza Bombay 1940 letters Maschio-Cinato 11.1.40; 17.1.40; 21.1.40.

⁸³ Cf SPAM Corrispondenza Bombay 1940 letter Maschio-Cinato 21.1.40.

⁸⁴ Cf ADBM Chronicle I entry 15.8.37; and *passim*.

⁸⁵ Cf Evening News of India of March 15, 1939; ADBM Chronicle I entry 3.2.39; SPAM Don Maschio e Casa Bombay 1939 letter Maschio-Cinato 6.3.39.

paid, so that only one more lakh rupees was due to the municipality. He was able to pay so much because of a lottery organized in a permanent way. The agreement with the municipality at the moment when the Salesians took possession of the land was that the whole amount would be paid in instalments within five years. By paying in advance like this, he spared the interest to be paid.⁸⁶

Fr. Maschio saw clearly that when the house of Bombay would be properly set up, it would be able to maintain the poor houses of the province, and more especially the formation houses. The reason for his confidence was that the people of the city already liked the Salesians. Later when the Salesians would make themselves better known with a decent house, help would come on a larger scale. He could also see that the future school at Matunga would be really full, because there were so many boys in that township. Already at that time many were enquiring when the Salesians would go there. He calculated that in the new place the Salesians could easily have 300 boarders and 800 day-sholars, since there was as yet no decent school in the area. The fact that also some fathers and brothers were actually teaching there would make the school more attractive.⁸⁷

By May 1940 the danger of Italy entering the war on the side of Hitler became serious. In order to make sure that there would be no danger to the funds of the house, fr. Maschio transferred the bank accounts from his name to those of frs. Dehlert and Mariotta. Even after Italy declared war on the allied powers on June 10, the police authorities of Bombay were extremely understanding towards fr. Maschio and the other Italian Salesians of Bombay. They were merely asked not to leave Bombay island without permission, to inform the police commissioner of their continued presence in Bombay by writing a letter to him every Thursday, and not to keep ammunitions, guns etc.⁸⁸

4. The interlude at Cumballa Hill

The owner of Tardeo castle where the Don Bosco school had been functioning all these years, gave notice to the school on 19 March 1940 to vacate the premises within 6 months. He had been negotiating for some time with a film company to sell all the land and buildings to them. The notice meant that the Salesians would have to quit the place by the end of September. The first reaction of fr. Maschio was to think of starting the construction of the new building at Matunga as early as possible, so as to have at least a part of the building ready for the school by September-October. (In October the

⁸⁶ Cf ADBM Chronicle II entries 16.9.40; 18.10.40; SPAM Corrispondenza Bombay 1940 letters Maschio-Cinato 17.9.40; 21.9.40; ASC F 407 letter Maschio-Ricaldone 28.10.40.

⁸⁷ ASC F 407 letters Maschio-Ricaldone 9.4.40; Maschio-Candela 9.4.40.

⁸⁸ Cf SPAM Corrispondenza Bombay 1940 letters Maschio-Cinato 16.5.40; 16.6.40.

boys have Diwali holidays). In fact, plans for the new building were seriously studied. Fr. Provincial went to Bombay for the purpose at the end of March and again in the middle of May. Mr. Gogerly of Calcutta, the Catholic architect who had drawn the plans for the cathedral of Shillong, was called to Bombay for some days towards the end of May. Everything seemed to be in order, but in the end it was decided to stop the building plans for the time being because of two reasons. First, some misunderstanding arose between fr. Maschio and mr. Gogerly, and the latter kept on postponing the making of the plans. Then there was the uncertainty caused by the entry of Italy into the war. So fr. Maschio had to search for a building to be taken on rent. It was hard to find a place suitable for a school. After much searching, a large building by name «Hilltop» on Cumballa hill was found. The last 7 days of September were spent in transporting all the things from Tardeo to Cumballa hill.⁸⁹

The provincial was at Bombay for about a fortnight around the feast of don Bosco in 1941. Since the rent for the building at Cumballa hill was Rs. 1,200 per month, it was eating up much money. As the contract with the owner would end on 30 September, it was decided to build a part of the proposed structure at Matunga by September-October. The foundation stone was blessed and laid on Wednesday, 19 March 1941 by archbishop Roberts of Bombay in the presence of a large number of distinguished personages of the city. On 15 April the building work started in right earnest. The great efficiency of the contractor and the large number of men he employed made it possible for the work to progress astonishingly. The fact that the Tatas, because of fr. Maschio's influence with mrs. Tata, agreed to supply the required amount of steel at the pre-war price was a great help. By July fr. Maschio was feeling so confident about the finances that orders were given to build the ground floor of the second half of the building. In fact, he hoped to complete the whole of the second half, with a loan. In this way the school building would be complete.⁹⁰

Every one in the house, including the boys, fully backed the efforts of fr. Maschio. The boys felt completely one with the house. In the months from June to September 1941 the boys conducted a campaign of prayers and visits to the blessed sacrament, in order to obtain the fast continuation of the work on the new school building at Matunga. The boys were taken to the site occasionally. This increased their interest and involvement through prayer.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Cf ASC F 407 letter Cinato-Ricaldone 3.4.40; Maschio-Ricaldone 9.4.40; 28.10.40; SPAM Corrispondenza Bombay 1940 letters Maschio-Cinato 2.4.40; 3.4.40; 6.4.40; 18.5.40; 28.4.40; ADBM Chronicle I entries 19 to 24.3.40; 20 to 31.5.40; Chronicle II 24 to 30.9.40.

⁹⁰ Cf ASC F 407 letters Maschio-Ricaldone 12.2.41; 29.4.41; 30.5.41; SPAM Corrispondenza Bombay (1941)-I letters Maschio-Cinato 7.4.41; 10.4.41; ADBM Chronicle II entry 31.7.41.

⁹¹ Cf ADBM Chronicle II entries 8.6.41; 20.7.41; first days of Sept. 41.

5. The Salesians at Matunga, Bombay

The transfer of all the things of the house and of the school from Cumballa Hill to Matunga was carried out between 27 and 31 October 1941. The boys were still in their homes, having holidays. The supper of 31 October was taken by the Salesian community in the new house. It was difficult to describe the joy of every one. It seemed almost like a dream, after 13 years and 5 months spent in rented quarters. Telegrams and letters from Salesians in many places in India reached Bombay. The building work was not yet completed. It would take another two months to finish every thing. But some parts were ready and that was enough for them. All were happy to be there, because «it is our house».⁹²

The work was completed in eight months' time, and that by itself was almost a miracle. The design was very simple. No money was wasted on useless details. Fr. Maschio kept strictly to the instructions of the superiors regarding poverty. In spite of it, the work was very satisfactory. Archbishop Mathias was most enthusiastic about the new building. Writing to fr. Cinato from Bombay on 26 November, he said that fr. Maschio deserved to be decorated with the highest honours of the Salesian congregation since he has given to it a magnificent institution worthy of Rome and Turin. He said that it was the realization of a dream of 13 years earlier, when he had sent the first Salesians to Bombay. He called it «a gigantic work which compels the admiration of all who come to visit the school».⁹³

When the school reopened on 19 November in the new building at Matunga, it was noted that almost no one of the pupils left the school because of distance. The school-bus alone brought sixty from Tardeo and its neighbourhood. The school-bus was a new service which had been started about a year earlier when the school was still at Cumballa hill. The boys who did not make use of the bus came by train or tram. All these means of transport were very close to the school.⁹⁴

The official opening of the new school building was fixed for the feast of saint John Bosco on 31 January 1942. There were very solemn celebrations for several days. Various events were being commemorated. Besides the inauguration of the new building, the Salesians were keeping the centenary of the ordination of their founder (5 June 1841) and the centenary of the beginning of his work for boys (8 December 1841). The three national Catholic weeklies of India gave wide coverage to the events. Archbishop Roberts of Bombay and the Salesian archbishop of Madras (mgr. Mathias) presided at various functions which were spread over four days. Thursday, January 29, was set aside as the «Chil-

⁹² Cf ADBM Chronicle II entries 27 to 31.10.41; SPAM Bombay (1941) - II letters Maschio-Cinato 31.10.41; 4.11.41.

⁹³ SPAM Mgr. Mathias to fr. Cinato & fr. Carreno (1941-43) letter Mathias-Cinato 26.11.41; ASC F 407 letter Maschio-Redaelli (rector of Lugano, and through him to fr. Ricaldone) 24.2.42.

⁹⁴ Cf ADBM Chronicle II entries 19.11.41; 6.11.40.

dren's Day» for which children of all Catholic schools in Bombay were invited. The archbishop of Madras said mass and addressed the children. This was followed by a breakfast to the children and an entertainment. Friday, January 30, pontifical vespers were sung in the afternoon followed by benediction. Later in the evening the statue of don Bosco was taken in triumph through the streets and round King's Circle on a decorated car. The day ended with an academy, including a playlet illustrating don Bosco's boyhood. Early on Saturday, January 31, the archbishop of Bombay performed the blessing of the new building and celebrated mass. Later in the morning there was a pontifical high mass celebrated by the archbishop of Madras, at which the preacher was the popular Redemptorist, fr. Hickey, who had gone all the way from Bangalore to Bombay for the purpose. He dwelt especially on the educative method of don Bosco. About 60 guests were present at a luncheon given to the clergy of the city and the suburbs. For the evening entertainment more than 1,500 invited guests were present. On Sunday, February 1, a pontifical high mass was sung by archbishop Mathias at Gloria church, Byculla. There were also high masses at some other important churches of Bombay. The diocesan clergy gladly cooperated in the celebration of the feast of don Bosco. We are told that they liked don Bosco and his spirit. On Sunday afternoon there was a lunch to distinguished patrons of the institution. Among those present were the mayor of Bombay, the administrator-general of Bombay and many municipal councillors. In the evening there was a party for the parents of the pupils of the school. Altogether, in spite of inevitable limitations due to the war, it was a great celebration. The philosophy circle of the diocesan seminary (directed by Jesuits) wanted to be associated with the centenary celebrations of don Bosco's ordination, by holding an academy of experimental psychology on the evening of 29 January.⁹⁵

Archbishop Roberts of Bombay made a very important remark in his «letter to the children» in *The Examiner* of 7 February 1942:

«I would like to repeat here what I said to several audiences at Matunga, that if the Salesians never did anything else in Bombay, they would still have taught us the lesson most needed by us human beings for whom the trust of children in their Father is the condition of being saved...The new building is a lesson in stone about the miracles possible to those who, like St. John Bosco, became like little children...It would be difficult to imagine any conditions more unfavourable to Father Maschio than the present ones. The war, difficulties of staffing, trouble with materials, their ever rising cost - all these were treated as just so many challenges to trust in God in proportion to the difficulty. God's answer has been astounding».

The total expenditure for the building of Don Bosco School, Matunga (the present high school building) was Rs. 275,367-4-6. Of course, this does not in-

⁹⁵ Cf ADBM Chronicle II entry 31.1.42. See also *The Examiner* 7.2.42; *The New Leader* 15.2.42; *The Herald* 22.2.42; SPAM Bombay 1942 (January to June) letters Maschio-Cinato 23.1.42; 29.1.42; ASC F 407 letter Maschio-Redaelli 24.2.42.

clude the cost of the land. In the meeting of the provincial council on 28 August 1942, fr. Cinato, the provincial, praised the house of Bombay for the marvellous progress which had been made there: its financial strength in spite of so many difficulties, the satisfactory results in the public examinations, the regularity of the life of the house in spite of all political disturbances etc. were so many reasons for praising the rector and the confreres of Bombay and for thanking divine providence.⁹⁶

In the matriculation examination of 1942 ten out of eleven candidates sent up by the school passed. It was the best result so far for the Salesian school in Bombay. Certainly, a great improvement from 1937, when only two out of seven passed! Cleric Dennis Duarte in his letter to fr. Cinato on 18 July 1942 could write: «The school which is in the front rank of the schools in Bombay, both in literary achievements and in the field of sport also...».⁹⁷

Under the caption «Good Citizenship in Don Bosco's High School» The Illustrated weekly of India of Sunday, 13 September 1942 wrote among other things:

«Courtesy, a regard for others as a guiding principle in life, and idealism have their appeal to youth, and these qualities are being fostered and admirably exploited by the priests who run this grand institution».

The article also spoke of «this progressive school, which is now housed in its own spacious new building at Matunga...».

By November 1943 fr. Maschio managed to clear all the debts incurred for buying the land at Matunga and for raising the new school building. Besides, by now he was practically maintaining the aspirants at Tirupattur and also making other regular contributions for the needs of the province. We also know that as soon as the war ended in Europe, fr. Maschio sent about Rs. 42,000 in the name of the province to the superiors in Turin for their pressing needs.⁹⁸

The examination results of 1943 were even better than those of the previous year. All the boys sent up by the school passed. The same thing was repeated in 1945. On this second occasion, while communicating the good news to fr. Carreno,⁹⁹ the provincial, fr. Maschio wrote:

⁹⁶ SPAM Bombay Corrispondenza 1942 letter (copy) Cinato-Maschio 18.9.42; Book of Minutes of the Provincial Council Meetings (1936-67) p. 36.

⁹⁷ SPAM Bombay 1942 (January-June) letter Maschio-Cinato 30.5.42; see also telegram of the same day; Bombay Corrispondenza 1942 letter Duarte-Cinato 18.7.42; ADBM Chronicle II entry 31.5.42.

⁹⁸ Cf SPAM Book of Minutes of the Provincial Council Meetings (1936-67) p. 51; Bombay Corrispondenza 1944 letter Maschio-Carreno 3.1.44; Bombay (1945 June to December) letters Maschio-Carreno 10.9.45; 21.11.45; Bombay (1946 January to June) letter Maschio-Carreno 21.2.46.

⁹⁹ Fr. Joseph Carreno Etxeandia was born at Bilbao (Spain) on 23.10.1905. He made his first profession on 25.7.1922, and on 21 May 1932 he was ordained a priest. In the following year he was sent to Tirupattur (south India) as rector and novice-master in the newly established novitiate. He was the heart and soul of that house which became also a house for students of philosophy as soon as the novices professed early in 1935. He remained there till the beginning of 1943, when he was appointed acting-provin-

«The school is coming up, but much more could be done. Our boys should also come up for some scholarship or other prizes. But this will be realised more and more when confreres will be sent to us in larger numbers and with greater efficiency. This is not out of selfishness: we want Don Bosco to have a school which is second to none, and also an institution which may be in a position to provide at least partially for the Province. - With 1,000 boys this year you can well understand why we need more priests».¹⁰⁰

Towards the end of 1945, though he lost fr. Tuena who was sent as rector of Vellore, he was happy to receive three priests: frs. Giacomello, Zocchi and Bianchi. Fr. Giacomello was to be the new prefect of studies. Fr. Bianchi's appointment as music master was a big boost to the band and the singing in the house.¹⁰¹

In the meantime the number of students in the school kept on rising. In the school year 1942-43 the boarders were 120, and the number of pupils, day-scholars and boarders together, passed the 400 mark. The following year there were nearly 700 pupils and 176 of these were boarders. The boarders were 230 in 1944-45 and together with the day-scholars the total was about 750. In 1945-46 the total was 935 pupils, of whom 260 were boarders. Fr. Tuena, the prefect, was kept busy by the crowds of anxious parents who thronged his office to get their children admitted. The fact that people travelled from far outside the city and were prepared to wait, sometimes a few hours, was a pointer to the opinion the public had formed of the school's efficiency. Because of the rise in the number of applications for admission, the house had to build a temporary shed as refectory in 1944, so that there would be more space in the main building for classes. It was with difficulty that permission was obtained from the government to build even this temporary structure. So great was the scarcity of building material because of the war.¹⁰²

In May 1944 there was a tremendous explosion in the Bombay docks. Hundreds of lives were lost and many buildings were destroyed. Naturally, there was a lot of debris to be removed. Fr. Maschio applied to the military au-

cial of the province of south India and vicar general of the archdiocese of Madras. In 1945 he became provincial. During his term as provincial (1945-51) the province developed fast. Above all, he managed to win the hearts of every one. In 1951 he had to go back to Spain for a year, but was back again in India towards the end of 1952. This time he came as rector of Goa and was there till 1960. Later, he was in the Philippines (1962-67) as rector and novice-master. He died at Pamplona (Spain) on 29.5.1986.

¹⁰⁰ SPAM Bombay (1943-1944) letter Maschio-Carreno 18.6.43; Bombay (1945 January to June) letter Maschio-Carreno 5.6.45.

¹⁰¹ ADBM Chronicle II entries 17.11.45; 26.11.45; 4.12.45; 13.12.45; 15.8.46; SPAM Bombay (1945 June to December) letter Maschio-Carreno 17.11.45.

¹⁰² Cf ASC F 188 «Inter Nos» no. 1, p. 7; no. 2, p. 21; no. 13, pp. 72-73; ADBM Chronicle II entries 8-9.6.43; 1-2.6.44; SPAM Bombay Corrispondenza 1944 letters Maschio-Carreno 31.3.44; 27.6.44; Bombay (1943-1944) letter Maschio-Carreno 14.11.44; Bombay (1945 January to June) letter Maschio-Carreno 7.6.45.

thorities and managed to get part of the debris transported free of charge to the don Bosco grounds to fill up all the low lying areas. Hundreds and thousands of lorries were directed to the don Bosco grounds from May till December. The record was reached in the first week of December, when on a particular day as many as 1,100 lorries reached the compound. The drivers of lorries preferred to go to the don Bosco grounds than elsewhere, because fr. Maschio was out there to entertain them with iced water, sour limes, sweets and cigarettes. The military sent also their bulldozer to level the ground. After that the coolies did some levelling and started to plant grass at the beginning of the rainy season of 1945. The result of it all was that don Bosco school came to have excellent play grounds.¹⁰³

To generate missionary fervour among the boys, from 1943 onwards a mission fair was organized every year on 3 December (feast of st. Francis Xavier). The boys organized it for the purpose of raising funds, to be distributed afterwards among the fathers and sisters of the Salesian missions of India, to enable them to give a treat to their poor children. In 1944 the boys collected nearly Rs. 1,000. Several missionaries were given gifts of Rs. 60 each. In 1946 the amount collected was divided into 60 equal shares and sent.¹⁰⁴

Don Bosco school had once again 100% passes in the matriculation examinations of 1948 and 1950. The number of boys sent up in 1948 was 24. All of them passed, including one who had written the last paper with 104 degrees fever and afterwards had to spend a whole month with typhoid. Don Bosco's was the only school which secured 100% that year. In 1950 the number of boys who went for the examination was thirty-seven.¹⁰⁵

In the area of sports, too, don Bosco school began to do very well from 1945 onwards. That year don Bosco's were runners-up in the schools' division of the Harwood Football League. The newspapers reported that don Bosco's was «one of the best school combinations this season», and they «fully merited the second position, two points ahead of Antonio de Souza's, another good side in the competition». Don Bosco's hockey team won top honours in the Schools Hockey League in January 1946 when they beat st. Sebastian's high school. In July 1949 the don Bosco team claimed top place in the Harwood Football League, beating st. Mary's. On this occasion, congratulatory letters were received from several persons in authority, including bishop Gracias of Bombay. Don Bosco high school beat st. Xavier's high school by four goals to nil in the

¹⁰³ Cf ADBM Chronicle II entries April 1944 and the paper cuttings there; entries May 1945; SPAM Bombay Corrispondenza 1944 letters Maschio-Carreno 23.5.44; 30.5.44; Bombay 1943-1944 letters Maschio-Carreno 12.8.44; Murphy-Carreno 12.11.44; Tuena-Carreno 10.11.44; Maschio-Carreno 4.12.44; 7.12.44; ASC F 407 letter confreres-Berruti 31.3.45.

¹⁰⁴ Cf ADBM Chronicle II entries Dec. 1944; 1.12.46. See also attached copy of letter sent to missionaries on 29.12.46 by fr. Fernandes, the catechist.

¹⁰⁵ SPAM Bombay 1946-47-48 letter Maschio-Carreno 5.6.48; Bombay (May 1949-July 50) letter Maschio-Carreno 29.5.50; ADBM Chronicle II entry 5.6.48; Chronicle III entry June 1950.

inter-school football final on 18 August 1950 and won the Ahmed Sailor Cup which had eluded them the previous three years. In September 1950 the smaller boys of don Bosco school beat st. Mary's high school in the final of the Turner Memorial Cup Football Tournament for Juveniles.¹⁰⁶ When don Bosco's won the Tata Shield for Seniors, with an aggregate of 46 points, in the annual athletic sports of the Bombay High Schools Athletic Association at the Brabourne Stadium on 19 January 1951, the Free Press Bulletin of the 22nd wrote:

«... which institution [i.e. don Bosco school] is slowly taking the place of the old St. Marys and the St. Xaviers who dominated school sports in every branch a decade ago. The Fathers of Don Bosco School are to be congratulated for the fine work they are doing for the advancement of sport in their school».

Fr. Mantovani reached Bombay in June 1948 as the catechist of the house. According to the chronicler, after the coming of fr. Mantovani the sodalities, the feasts, the novenas, the church functions etc. were going much better than before. After long preparation and much work a Marian congress and exhibition were held in the school on 27, 28 and 29 December 1948. It was organized on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the consecration of the basilica of Mary Help of Christians at Turin. The moving force behind the congress and exhibition was fr. Mantovani. The provincial went from Madras to make the occasion more solemn. The visitors to the exhibition were struck by the wealth of Marian information it contained.¹⁰⁷

In 1949 fr. Maschio began preparations for constructing the second block (identical with the first) of Don Bosco, Matunga. In the first weeks of January 1950 about 100 workers were in action. The digging of the foundations and building the foundations had begun. On 31 January after celebrating mass in the school chapel, bishop Gracias went with cope and mitre to bless the foundation stone of the new building. Progress of the work was somewhat slow because of the difficulty of obtaining building materials. The building was completed by the end of 1951. Though more than Rs. 500,000 had been spent, there were no debts.¹⁰⁸

Every year the feast of don Bosco was celebrated very solemnly in the school. For lunch the bishop (or archbishop) and about 25 to 50 of the clergy of Bombay would come. In 1951 during the festive lunch the new archbishop of Bombay (mgr. Gracias) listened to fr. Maschio speak about what providence had

¹⁰⁶ Cf ADBM Chronicle II paper cutting stuck after the entries of May 1945; entries 12.1.46; 31.7.49; Chronicle III entries 29.4.50; 18.8.50; Sept. 1950; 19.1.51; SPAM Bombay (1946 January to June) letters Giacomello-Carreno 13.1.46; Menezes-Carreno 12.1.46; Bombay (July 1950-June 52) Maschio-Carreno 17.8.50; 19.1.51.

¹⁰⁷ Cf ADBM Chronicle II entry 1.6.48; passim from June 1948 onwards; 27-29.12.48; ASC F 407 common letter to Ricaldone in Dec. 1948.

¹⁰⁸ SPAM Bombay (May 1949-July 50) letters Maschio-Carreno 12.11.49; 18.11.49; 31.1.50; ADBM Chronicle III 8.1.50; 31.1.50; ASC F 407 letters Maschio-Ricaldone 18.8.49; 1.4.51; 27.6.51.

helped the Salesians to achieve so far and about his future plans. The archbishop then replied praising fr. Maschio's serenity and faith and said that soon Matunga would become a Salesian quarter. He ended his speech wishing that the Salesians not only carry out their plans in Matunga but also get, in course of time, their houses spread all throughout Bombay.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ ADBM Chronicle III entry 31.1.51.