

## CHAPTER V.

## RECORD OF RIGHT.

169. The former landed tenures existing in this part of India are somewhat involved in obscurity, but we at least know what the system was under the Maharatta rulers at the commencement of the present century. The system then briefly was as follows.

170. At the head of every village was the Patel or headman who had to pay the total Government demand upon the village and who in turn drew the rents from and made terms with, the cultivators or tenants.

171. Originally there can be no doubt that the office of Patel was not hereditary. He was a mere Government nominee holding his place at the will of the Soobah or Koomaisdar by whatever term the chief revenue authority of the Pergunnah might be distinguished. In theory the Patel received a remuneration of 15 per cent upon the total collections of the village, but as he had out of this to defray all the village expenses of a miscellaneous character incurred at festivals and other occasions and to provide the pay of the Putwaree and Kotwal or village drudge, besides making good deficiencies on the part of tenants and having to submit not unfrequently to extra calls of revenue technically termed Putees or "Burguns" according as the necessities of the Government required, it not seldom came to pass that the share of the Patel came to very little if anything at all. The latter however found his account in the important social distinction which his office conferred on him, combined as it was with certain petty magisterial powers, and by his being enabled in virtue of his position to take the best of the land into his own hands to cultivate and he was always enabled to assess it on favorable terms as compared with the lands held by the tenantry.

172. We have no exact means of knowing how the Patel as described above came to merge into the Malgoozar, possessing a certain hereditary interest in the village, but some such change did work itself even under the Maharatta Government.

173. True it is that villages were often most arbitrarily taken away from the Malgoozar and given into other hands or in some cases the village was actually put up as it were to auction and sold to the highest bidder, but still in theory the right of a son to succeed his father in the management of the village was to a certain extent recognized and even

acted on. That is to say he was held to have a prior right provided he was willing to pay the utmost revenue that any outsider was willing to offer.

174. There are now many villages in the district, especially above the ghats where the right of occupancy of the village and payment of the Government revenue together with the management of the village concerns and the appropriation of the waste lands and so forth, have descended in the same family for several generations, and in these cases it is clear that an indefeasible hereditary right has been allowed to grow up.

Cases where occupancy has been continuous for generations.

175. But under the Mahratta party the claims of a son to succeed to the Patelship previously enjoyed by the father were not recognized as a matter of right, but only of sufferance and provided that no loss accrued to the State thereby.

This is a matter of sufferance only.

176. Thus then we see that originally the headman of the village was a mere Government nominee who acted as the Agent of the Government for collecting the rents from the tenantry, himself receiving a certain percentage on these collections for his trouble and risk. The said collections were fixed annually by the Pergunnah revenue officials by calculations, based partly upon the collections of the previous year viewing the amount of new land brought under cultivation or of land falling out of cultivation, and partly upon the requirements of the Government as framed in the annual Ijmalee or estimate prepared at Nagpore, and this latter doubtless had as much or more to do in determining the amount of the collections than the actual worth of the land or the ability of the people to pay.

Former mode of Assessment.

177. Even after the annual settlement of the revenue, extra cesses termed Puttees or Burguns as above mentioned were frequently imposed on the Patels and had to be made good by them out of the unfortunate cultivators. The total amount of the enhancement being distributed over them by a bâch or rate in proportion to the amount of their regular assessment.

Extra Cesses.

178. In process of time the Patel's office began to assume something of an hereditary character, a certain portion of land (answering to the present seer or Jot Malgoozaree as it is termed) came to be attached as an appanage of the office, and from its being rated with less than its due share of the total village burden the place began to be more valuable to the holder of it.

Patel's office becomes hereditary in time.

179. And thus matters went on : frequently as might be expected either from failure of heirs, from resignations consequent on over exaction from the wish of the Pergunnah Officer to favor his friends, or from other such like causes, villages

Causes of this change.

passed into new hands, but in many cases on the death of a Patel his son would succeed to his office and the profits would come to be divided among the other collaterals who would be entitled by the law of inheritance to be termed his heirs. But as proved by the histories of several villages in which the Malgoozaree occupancy has been transmitted for several generations in succession, such collaterals would generally be provided for by land held in tenancy only but at more favorable rates than those enjoyed by the other tenants, and in process of time land so held has come to be regarded as forming a distinct "Putee" or share of the whole estate.

180. Thus arose the Malgoozaree tenure as we found it existing at the annexation of the country. The general tenure is very simple being that of pure Zemin-daree; a village or villages being held in common by one or more members of a family having all things in common saving perhaps the seer land which might be held by ancient and ancestral custom. Thus rents levied from the cultivators would go to defray the Government revenue and the village expenses; the balance if any would be divided among the various shareholders according to the fractional interest that each might possess as divided by inheritance or otherwise.

181. The law of primogeniture, as we understand it, is not known to the Hindoos but practically it is very often carried out as regards the tenure of land with a view to avoid the too great subdivision of an estate, and the consequent loss of importance of the family: hence it frequently happens that by a mutual understanding relatives drop into the position of tenants on easy terms while the Malgoozaree functions have been reserved to the immediate heads of the family. This is more especially the case in the Jagheer estates of which I shall make mention elsewhere.

182. Such is the general form of tenure throughout the district; some few cases there are of Puteedaree estates which have been for several generations in the same family and have now come to be divided into a number of separate shares or Putees. The tenure is on this wise; the seer land is held according to rights derived from inheritance, each succeeding generation seeing a further sub-division of each Putee. If there be any tenant land, the holders of it pay rent to the head of the Putee in which their holding may be included. The government revenue is assessed on the whole village in a lump sum and is paid by the Lumberdar or Sudder Malgoozar as he is here termed. The apportionment of this upon the several shares is as follows:—Each Putee represents a certain fraction of the whole estate and has to pay its quota of the revenue accordingly and this quota again has to be made good by the several sub-sharers in the Putee in accordance with the fractional interest of each in the same.

183. In the settlement of all these cases care has been taken to leave all rights and interests in the same position in which they have been transmitted by ancient custom and no redistribution of lands, seer or otherwise, has been made except at the instance of the parties concerned. When the latter were at issue as regards matters of fact, a judicial decision was necessarily called for, but in such cases as far as possible recourse has been had to arbitration, such a solution being the one most likely to be acquiesced in by the parties.

184. Proprietary Right has now been conferred (or it might be more correct to say recognised) on the terms laid down in the selections forming the Settlement Code; the object as therein expressed being to "maintain fixed rights and interests in whatsoever form they may have grown up and to avoid all speculative interference with the same." Notices were issued in every village calling upon all claimants to come forward and prefer their claims within a certain fixed period; at the expiration of that time the actual occupant of the village was called up and examined as to his length of tenure and so forth; should no adverse claim have been preferred his title to Proprietary Right was recorded; due care being had to record the rights of all collaterals who might be found entitled to share in the village profits. And the title to these rights was based not upon the Law of Inheritance only but upon actual possession as proved by evidence, the object being not to create new rights existing in theory only but simply to confirm past possession in whatsoever form it might have existed.

185. Shares were thus conferred in Proprietary Right, the whole estate being represented by the rupee and the several shares indicated by annas and occasionally even by pies or fractions of pies. Where claims were put forward by persons not in possession the same had to be carefully enquired into; the claimants were generally persons who either themselves had had the management of the village in times past, or who were descendants of persons who had thus held. Frequently the length of time that had elapsed since their connection with the village had ceased, rendered it a simple matter to adjudicate on such claims, especially where the person in possession had long occupancy in his favor and had done his duty by the estate.

186. In some cases however it was a matter of no small difficulty to decide fairly between the claims of former occupancy extending perhaps to two or three generations and terminated possibly owing to over exaction or violent dispossession, and those of present occupancy lasting for no very long period but sufficient to give a little which ought not lightly to be disturbed, accompanied as it might have been by much outlay incurred and improvement effected in the estate.



187. In the prosecution of these enquiries much difficulty has had to be surmounted in arriving at a true and full view of the rights of all parties owing to the wonderful apathy of the people themselves as regards their own rights and interests. Collaterals possessing rights did not come forward and their names were suppressed and so did not appear in the record, and months and in some cases years have elapsed before the persons so affected have come forward and justice has been done to them; in some cases again specious promises were made use of to induce such persons to waive their claims and upon non-fulfilment of the said promises the case has been brought to light. These are mere instances of a numerous class of cases that have arisen, and which have rendered it necessary to revise the record and amend it again and again.

188. Thus every case of this nature had to be enquired into in a thorough and exhaustive manner leaving no point untouched which might bear on the rights of the several parties at issue.

189. Butwara or partition of estates has been effected in cases where any of the co-sharers may have demanded it. In some of the Puteedaree villages a partition has existed from ancient time and this has now been maintained. In Zemindaree villages partition has been effected in two ways; either the whole of the village land including the seer has been redistributed, or else the existing allotment of the seer land has held good while the tenant's land only has been partitioned, this arrangement however has effect only on paper, the various tenants' holdings allotted to one shareholder being grouped under his name in the settlement record; no demarcation of the land has been made in the field, as parts of one share may be scattered over different portions of the village; the only object to be obtained was that each individual shareholder should receive the share of the profits to which he was entitled after deducting the government demand. The revenue will continue to be defrayed as before by the Lumberdar but each sharer himself will levy the rents from his own peculiar tenants and he alone will have the right of making terms with them in future.

190. The Lumberdar himself is remunerated by an allowance of five per cent. upon the total collections from the tenants, and the balance is then divided among the shareholders as above.

191. The appointment of Lumberdar has generally been made in accordance with ancestral custom by consent of all the parties concerned, few cases of dispute in this respect have occurred. In pure Zemindaree villages only one Lumberdar has been recognized, but in the cases of Puteedaree villages or where a division of the village has been effected

two or more Lumberdars have been selected. All the Puteedars however are jointly and severally responsible for the payment of the Government revenue.

192. Upper and under Proprietary Rights have been recognized in a few cases as follows. The Ambara Talooka of the Mohgaon Pergunnah was formerly held in mukta in the name of the Bankabae the widow of Raja Rughojee II. of Nagpore. The mukta was afterwards commuted to an ordinary Malgoozaree tenure. On the death of the Bankabae, the name of the present Janojee Raja was entered as Malgoozar. The whole of the villages are sublet to Theekadars as they are termed who collect the rents, and generally carry on the whole of the management of their villages, paying a little more than the Government demand to the Malgoozar; in some cases this occupancy has descended from father to son for several generations, and again in some cases much capital has been expended by the sublessee in effecting improvement. In such cases on the grounds of long concomitant, and to a certain extent independent tenure, the rights of these Theekadars have been recognized, and they have been declared under proprietors paying over and above the amount of the Government demand, a certain Malikana to the superior proprietor (the late Malgoozar). The amount of this Malikana has been fixed partly with reference to the amount so paid by the Theekadar in past times, and partly in view of the nature of his tenure, and the amount of improvement effected by him.

193. Elsewhere also in the district, there are villages similarly sublet to Thekadars, but these latter hold mostly on short terminable leases, and none have been able to substantiate any title to proprietary rights of any sort.

194. The third and lowest class of the proprietary body, are those who have been declared to be proprietors of their holdings merely, or "Malik Mukbooza" as they are termed in the settlement record.

195. The orders under which these proceedings have been carried into effect are embodied in letter No. 173A of the 3rd November 1853, from the Secretary to the Government N. W. P. forming Selection No. II. of the Settlement Code, and also Circular No. 4, dated 27th October 1863, from the Settlement Commissioner, Central Provinces.

The persons hereby declared to be entitled to proprietary right in their holdings are.

1. Claimants to shares holding land rent-free in commutation of their shares.
2. Relations of the proprietors holding land at favourable and fixed rates.

3. Descendants of former proprietors holding land at favourable and fixed rates.

4. Cultivators of long standing who have exercised some proprietary right, such as transferring their holdings or sinking more than the ordinary amount of capital in the improvement of the land.

196. These instructions have been carried out, each case has been taken up and referred to me for final orders, Care taken in deciding such cases. each being decided upon its own merits. As regards the three first classes, the matter was simple enough, but as regards the fourth a good deal of discrimination was required to judge between the respective rights of proprietor and tenant so as not unduly to interfere with the rights of the former.

197. Some cases there are, where the Malgoozar has held but for a very few years, while the tenantry have cultivated their holdings from father to son for generations without ever having been interfered with, and in such cases in accordance with the spirit of the instructions conveyed in para 14 of the letter above referred to from the Secretary to the Government of the N. W. P., proprietary right over their several holdings has been conferred upon the old tenantry; such cases, however, are exceptional, and but few in number.

198. In Settlement Commissioner's Circular No. 4 of 27th October 1863 above referred to, it is clearly laid down that no mere length of occupancy as a mere cultivator can "per se confer a title to proprietary right." These instructions have been carefully kept in sight, but it is in view of the long independent and uninterrupted tenure of such persons together with the very weak title of the Malgoozar in possession that their title to proprietary tenure has been recognized, and not owing to mere length of occupancy on their part. When claims have been put forward on the grounds of capital expended it is only where some very special and extraordinary outlay has been incurred that such claims have been taken into consideration.

199. Besides the above all ex-maafedars whose rent free tenures may now have been resumed have been declared Ex-maafedars. proprietors of the holding previously held rent free.

200. Malik's Mukbooza in addition to their quota of the Government revenue have to pay the various cesses due thereon and also a small Malikana to the Lumberdar for the trouble of collection; in some cases where the proprietary holding is very small no Malikana has been awarded. Payment by Malik's Mukbooza.

201. These proprietors are held not to be responsible jointly with the superior proprietor for the payment of the revenue, and they pay Malikana in lieu of this responsibility. This is laid down in Circular A. No. 1655 of 1st May 1863 from the Secretary to Chief Commissioner.

202. Subjoined is a table showing the number of persons under each class who have been declared proprietors of their holdings.

NAMES OF PERGUNNAHS.	RECORDED PROPRIETORS OF THEIR HOLDINGS.				TOTAL.
	Maafcedars and holders of resumed parcels under Rule XII. (Maafce rules).	Relations of the Proprietors, holding land at favorable and fixed rates.	Descendants of former Proprietors holding land at favorable and fixed rates.	Cultivators of long standing, &c., &c., &c.	
Mohkhair .....	26	7	6	...	39
Chorye .....	8	7	2	14	31
Chindwara .....	4	8	2	...	14
Amurwara .....	33	8	5	...	46
Oomrait .....	6	11	3	...	20
Assair .....	2	5	2	1	10
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>160</b>
Pandoorna .....	64	4	...	...	68
Mohgaon .....	214	6	...	1	221
Talooka Ambara .....	3	...	...	...	3
Khumarpanee .....	1	...	3	...	4
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>Grand Total .....</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>456</b>

203. In the Mohgaon and Pandoorna Pergunnahs below the ghats there have been cases of tenants requiring peculiar consideration, inasmuch as they have been in the habit of mortgaging and otherwise disposing of their holdings for a consideration without reference to the Malgoozar of the village, and these persons might on these grounds have been held to be entitled to Proprietary Right. After enquiry however into the subject I found that these supposed rights were of very recent origin, being mere usurpations in point of fact by an independant tenantry which were supposed to be sanctioned by our rules of law. The belief was that our rules forbade the enhancement of rent on any tenant or even his dispossession however short his tenure might have been. I merely state this as the general impression that prevailed, and a tenantry well off and quite independant of the Malgoozars as regards taking advances of food or seed grain were not slow to avail themselves of their



new rights as they deemed them. Add to this that below the ghats very many of the Malgoozars were non-residents and giving little or no personal superintendence to the village affairs, and it may readily be imagined how the state of things above referred to arose. But it was clear to my mind that the custom was not of ancient date nor founded upon recognized usage or right and so no special recognition of it has been admitted into the record.

204. These cases were gone into at the time of attestation of rents and the proceedings form part of the miscellaneous records.

205. The tenantry, the great body of the cultivators of the soil next claim our attention. It may safely be asserted that under the Maharatta Government tenant right was unknown and unrecognised. True it is the Maharatta system recognized two classes of tenants viz. Meerasdars who had rights of occupancy at fixed rates and "Ooprees" mere tenants at will, but the former were properly mere Military retainers holding their lands on condition of rendering service in war, and thus not tenants in the strict sense of the term, so my argument will stand good. The distinction of hereditary tenants and tenants at will was utterly unknown. Just as the government demand was renewed year by year upon the Patel so the latter had each year to come to fresh terms with the cultivators and the latter were obliged to submit to the same or throw up their lands: but in practice, especially in the case of the more respectable and wealthier cultivators, it was the interest of the Patel to maintain them in their possession as he would be much more certain of getting his rent than if he had to deal with a new man destitute of resources. And again in the cases of persons who sunk wells and in other ways expended capital in improving the land, though no fixed or indefeasible rights were recognized, yet they generally were allowed to remain on in possession and at their deaths their sons or other heirs were allowed to succeed; and thus it came to pass that land did sometimes for generations remain in the occupancy of the same family, rents however were always liable to annual adjustment and no title to hold on fixed terms was suffered to grow up.

206. This was the position of the tenantry when we assumed the Government on the death of the late Raja. The only enactment giving any status to the tenant class is Act X of 1859 in which an occupancy of twelve years is declared to constitute a title to hereditary occupancy subject only to the payment of fair rent.

207. But in view to the possible change in the law at no very distant period. Circulars Nos. 1832 of 20th April 1865 and 3423 dated 1st September 1865, from the Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, were issued,

whereby cultivators' rights were to be recorded in three classes 1, Absolutely hereditary, 2, Conditionally hereditary and 3, Tenants at will.

208. The first class was to include the following:—

Their classification.

I. Ryots whose possession has carried with it something of an hereditary character.

II. Ryots who have expended such capital on their fields as to give them some special title to occupancy right.

III. Ryots who are relations of present or former proprietors, and whose occupancy right may be considered to some extent as a substitute for a share in the proprietary right.

IV. Ryots of new villages who have held their fields since the village was founded or since those fields were reclaimed from the jungle.

V. Ryots who have held their fields from a date antecedent to the proprietor's connection with the village as its landlord.

VI. Ryots cultivating lands which have descended to them by inheritance, provided that the possession either by themselves, or by themselves and some other persons from whom they have inherited shall have lasted continuously for not less than twenty years.

209. In the first five classes also possession for twelve or nearly twelve years was requisite to admit them to be recorded as hereditary.

Twelve years possession.

210. The next class of cultivators was those who had held for twelve years or upwards but whose occupation did not fulfil any of the conditions expressed in the above category, and these persons were to be recorded as hereditary, but conditionally only and subject to any future alteration of the law. These orders were issued after a large part of the record of right in this District had been completed, and thus the work had all to be gone over again, but the result has been increased accuracy in the record. The bulk of the cultivators are so ignorant and apathetic that they can in many cases give no certain account of the nature and duration of their own occupancy; and in some cases even from suspicion of the object of the attesting officer they were led purposely to mislead and keep back what they knew. The result of going over the ground again has been to bring to light many inaccuracies (not necessarily due to any faults of the attesting officer), and rights which had been overlooked have been enquired into and recorded.

211. The last class of cultivators embraces all those whose occupancy has lasted for less than twelve years. These are mere tenants at will and may be ejected by the proprietors on due notice being previously served in accordance with the law.

Tenants at will.

212. Every care has been taken to make the enquiry exhaustive and the record a faithful one. In all cases of issue as to length of tenure or other qualifying circumstances evidence has been recorded by the attesting officer and a decision passed, the whole forming a *misl* to be filed with the other miscellaneous records of the village. In some cases resort has been had to arbitration and some cases have been settled by compromise between the parties at issue. Such decisions have been appealable to the Settlement Officer, and his decisions again have been appealable to the Settlement Commissioner, every case, therefore, has had the benefit of the fullest possible enquiry, and nothing has been left undone to render the record true and complete.

213. Rights in wells and trees and other miscellaneous rights have also had to be recorded; in this district, the custom has been that wells and fruit trees belong to the persons by whom or by whose ancestors they have been dug or planted; the general customs in these respects form a portion of the administration paper, and will be noticed in the section of this report devoted to the *misl*, and the mode of its preparation.

214. In all Mukta or Oobaree and Mokasa or rent-free villages, the record of right has been compiled just as in the case of Khalsa villages.

215. The distinctions of Khoodkast and Pyekasht cultivators are not known in this district. The former term is unknown, the latter is applied to cultivators holding land in a village other than that in which they reside, but as regards the terms of their tenure and the rents paid by them they in no wise differ from ordinary resident cultivators, and they have been declared hereditary tenants or otherwise just as the circumstances of each case required.

216. Such then briefly are the landed tenures as existing in the Chindwara District, they are for the most part simple and easy of definition, but the compilation of the record has not been without its difficulties for many reasons. The village records of past years are defective and do not extend far back into the past, hence in enquiring into claims put forward on the strength of rights enjoyed in the past the absence of all documentary evidence has been much felt, necessitating as it has the examination of numerous witnesses and counter witnesses, the real facts often remaining in great obscurity.

217. Reference also has been made to the character of the people themselves as having greatly impeded the due prosecution of the enquiry. This is partly owing to the apathy and ignorance of the people and partly may be attributed to the fact of this being the first introduction of a regular Settlement with whose scope and intention they might not be fully acquainted and from which they would hold aloof from a feeling of distrust.

218. Below the Ghats there is much less of this apathy and ignorance, but on the other hand there is a much greater amount of independence and self assertion which has led to all sorts of claims being put forward in the boldest manner without anything to support the same, beyond strong assertions, and it is to be feared much perjury. In some cases the question of occupancy right in a single small field has resulted in the formation of quite a large *mist* of itself, and in some villages such cases have occurred by the dozen, so it will be seen that the work has been heavy but every effort has been made to prevent its being hurried over in a superficial manner. The having to go over the ground again as noted above in consequence of the subsequent orders issued regarding the record of tenant right has been of use, not only in the correction of the record previously prepared but it has been further of use where the record had to be formed for the first time, the experience gained having been very valuable as regards points of error likely to arise and requiring special foresight in a district like this where the people seem to have no ideas of their own but require, so to speak, to be drawn out of their shells before their real position can be ascertained.

Difference of character below the ghats.

Amount of litigation.

219. The only village servants regarding whom any provision is made are the Putwaree and Kotwar, and mention of their status has been made elsewhere.

220. And care also has had to be taken to protect the weak and ignorant from the designs of the unscrupulous Proprietor whose interest it would be to see all ancient rights in the tenantry ignored and himself alone at full liberty to deal with all as he pleased. Such cases have been by no means uncommon owing to the prevailing ignorance of the tenantry.

Care necessary to protect tenant rights.

221. The immediate work of the record has been carried out with tact and patience by the Deputy Collector and a Sudur Moonserim working independantly of each other in different places, but all questions of difficulty have been referred for my orders and all decisions have been directly appealable to me, and the result of these has been to show that the quality of the original work was good in the main, but it has frequently happened that on appeal facts have been adduced other than those relied upon at the original enquiry and thus many cases have had to be taken up again *de novo*.

Officers conducting attestation work.

222. The chief difficulty experienced was in the adjudication of claims to proprietary rights in holdings, and all these cases were finally disposed of by myself.

Cases of Maliks Muk-booza disposed of by Settlement Officer.

223. A few words are called for as regards other miscellaneous rights exercised or claimed by various members of the community.

Miscellaneous rights.



224. Irrigation as elsewhere observed is almost entirely carried on from wells, the rights in which rest in the persons by whom or by whose ancestors they may have been sunk. Occasionally these rights have been made the subject of transfer by sale or otherwise. These particulars are recorded in the Khuteonee in the column of remarks opposite the field in which the said well may be situate, and also details of occupancy are recorded in the "Nuksha Chahat" which forms part of the misl.

225. Under the old Maharatta Government a great variety of dues were exacted from the people under the general denomination of Sayer or Sewaee, such as "Ghur Khadee," a tax on houses, "Pat dam" a tax on remarriage, "Bazar Oogae," cesses levied on all articles exposed for sale in market, and an immense variety of vexatious imposts. These were sometimes levied direct, sometimes they were farmed out to Contractors, but in the smaller villages the levying of them lay with the Patels. These have all been abolished and the levying of them by any persons declared illegal.

226. The Pandree or house tax on persons other than Agriculturists has been maintained, but this is levied by a special machinery quite apart from the Settlement of the land revenue.

227. The items known as Sayer or Sewaee comprise the income derived from spontaneous forest products, such as the flowers of the Mohwa tree, the fruit of Mangoe, Tamarind and Char or Chironjee trees and such like, rent paid for grazing and termed Ranwa, and generally all profits derived from sale of similar spontaneous products of nature.

228. These items are recorded in a paper termed the "Furd Rukoomat Sewaee" filed along with the settlement misl. The right over these miscellaneous products vests in the Proprietors alone who make their own terms with the tenants for the realization or usufruct of them in accordance with custom.

229. The rights of all tenants to grazing ground as also to grass; firewood and timber required for agricultural purposes free of any extra charge is duly set forth in the village administration paper.

230. It is hardly necessary to add that in the case of valuable fruit trees that have been planted, the property in the same vests in the person by whom they have been planted, and after him in his descendants.

231. These rights exist quite independantly of the occupancy of the land in which the trees may be situate, and in cases of dispute have been made the subject of a regular enquiry.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ASSESSMENT.

232. I now come to the revision of the land revenue, and as the first assessments were brought out above the ghats I shall begin with that portion of the district.

Land revenue.

233. Owing to the want of any regular records it is not easy to give any details of the past history or revenue management of the district. The general facts however are as follows :—

Former revenue management.

After the peace of Deogaon in 1802, the dominions of the Nagpore state, though greatly diminished in extent, were yet made to produce the same revenue as before the dismemberment. A regular system of extortion and rack-renting was put in force and continued until the war with Appa Sahib, when the country came under British management during the minority of the late Rajah. At that time great part of the Chindwara district was utterly waste, what villages there were, had been reduced to utter poverty by years of extortion and misrule. The good effects of our rule were soon apparent. Remissions of old balances and revenue were made to a large extent and every encouragement was given to settlers to take up land. During the following years population and revenue increased hand in hand and the improvement has lasted more or less to the present day. The assessment however was always extremely high leaving little or no profit to the Malgoozar. The latter derived his chief profit from the cultivation of the cheer land. Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered that villages were perpetually changing hands. Much also depended on the will or caprice of the Soobah ; he had friends to serve or enemies to spite and a Malgoozar might at any moment be removed to make way for another. Again during unfavorable seasons the tenants would fail to pay their rents and little or no allowance would be made for this in collecting the revenue. The defaulting Malgoozar would be sold up and the village made over to the first speculator who might come forward and be in a position to produce the necessary security.

234. I have said that the profit allowed to the Malgoozar was very small, generally speaking, it came to 15 per cent on the rental including the seer land. Out of this, beside the pay of the Kotwar and Putwaree the amount of which was left to his discretion, he had to pay a small sum towards the maintenance of the district revenue establishment, also towards certain charitable payments and allowances, and he was also liable at any time to be called upon to pay an extra Cess or Burgun as it was called, over and above the regular juma. These causes, combined with the very

Profits of the Malgoozar.

low prices of grain prevailing, had brought the Malgoozars to a very low state at the time when the country finally was annexed to the British dominion in 1854. At the first settlement made under our regime a large remission was given, extra cesses were abolished and a general feeling of security was imparted to the landholders. A sensible improvement has since then taken place, and the people generally may be said to be now better off than they ever were before.

235. The system hitherto prevailing was the one carried out under the former Maharatta Government viz., triennial settlements; originally settlements were made annually but Mr. Jenkins when Resident at Nagpore during the minority of the late Rajah, as an experiment, introduced the system of biennial and afterwards of triennial settlements and these being found in practice to work well were maintained:

Former Maharatta Settlements.

These settlements were based upon the village "Lagwans" or roll annually prepared by the Putwarees and submitted by the Malgoozars; these were supposed to show actual rents and mutations of holdings and there can be no doubt that they were in almost all instances true returns except in so far as the value of the seer land might be underestimated; as regards the payments received from the tenants they were substantially correct.

236. The Settlement being ever liable to revision and at such times every effort being made by the district officers to get the most possible out of the land it would have been hopeless on the part of the Patel to attempt any concealment.

Village papers a true record.

237. In former times the Government Revenue was made to amount to very nearly the entire rent-roll and in some cases it even exceeded it. The entire control over the assessment as over all other matters lay in the hands of the Soobah whose interest it was to rack-rent the people as far as possible during his tenure of office, so as to make as good a return of revenue as possible; on the annexation of the country after the late Rajah's death it was found imperative to grant reduction in the assessment, (amounting to about Rupee's 48,025 in all) in order to allow a sufficient profit to the Malgoozars, and the last summary settlement was made at about 80 per cent. on the gross assets, and in some cases even at a higher rate when there was any amount of good culturable waste land. Taking the district generally there was no great extent of land so lying waste except in the poorer hill villages, and after making all allowances for the late rise in prices and the improvements in the land which might be looked for under a settlement fixed for a long term of years, it was still evident that a settlement at half assets must lead to a reduction of the revenue.

Former assessments heavy.

238. Thus then at starting it was my task to see that the land-holders should receive their due share of the profits in accordance with the liberal terms of the settlement now being introduced, while at the same time it was necessary to protect Government by seeing that the land was rated at its proper value.

Increased profits to be allowed the Malgoozars.

239. It is a fact that for the past years of British rule rents have been for the most part stationary owing to an impression which seems to have prevailed among the Malgoozars that the rules of our Government forbade the enhancement of rent upon a cultivator in possession, hence it was naturally to be inferred that at the new settlement an increase in the total rental of the district might be looked for and consequently the less necessity for any great reduction in the Government demand,

Rents stationary of late years.

240. The next question was what rates to assume in order to form an estimate of the proper value of the land, there was nothing to guide me in the past fiscal history of the district as all previous settlements had been made summarily upon the recorded assets.

Rates.

241. I consequently assumed the same rates as had been applied to the adjoining district of Baitool which was so very similar as regards soil climate mode of agriculture and so forth. After testing the operation of these rates over a certain number of villages I found the result to be a certain increase in the rental, (such as I have above remarked was to be looked for) and that a settlement made at half assets would give a reduction of about ten per cent on the present Government demand, giving a total Government demand of about 70 per cent upon the assets as recorded previous to settlement and the adjustment of rents.

Rates derived from those of the Baitool district.

242. Looking to the recent increase of prices which I think are not likely now ever to revert to their former low level, and the consequently enhanced value of the land, and to the great room existing for improvement by means of extended irrigation and better cultivation of the soil (which should be looked for under a settlement fixed for a term of years) I came to the conclusion that the above rates would be a sound basis for me to ground my new proposals upon.

Reasons for assuming these rates.

243. As regards the way in which I deduced my rates for the Baitool district I have enlarged upon the point in my report on that settlement, I would now only briefly remark that they were founded partly on rates used in previous assessments on experience derived from local enquiry and reference to suits for rent of land, the rates said to prevail in other districts and also on actual rents as recorded in the village Lagwans on jumabundies.

Method of deducing rates.



244. I append a table of the rates as applied to the different qualities of soil ; the plough rates are deduced on an average of the soil rates on the assumption that one plough ought to till 20 acres of land, but as in reality a large number of cultivators have holdings of much smaller extent for which a plough is equally needed, the calculation is not of much value except as a comparative test.

Description of Soil.	I			II			III		
	Chuk.			Chuk.			Chuk.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Irrigated land ... ..	3	0	0	3	0	0	No rate ap-		
Kalee 1st or Dol ... ..	1	8	0	1	4	0	plied to the		
Kalee 2nd class ... ..	1	6	0	1	2	0	3rd class vil-		
Moorund .. .. .	1	2	0	0	14	0	lages.		
Khurdee ... .. .	0	12	0	0	8	0			
Retaree ... .. .	0	6	0	0	4	0			
Burdee ... .. .	.....			.....					

245. The produce rates were framed by me after considerable enquiry and calculation as to the average yield of each particular product in one acre, and taking value at the average of prices prevailing for the ten years preceding. The rates have been calculated at one sixth of the gross produce ; in these calculations I was guided partly by my own past experience and partly by collating the opinions and estimates of various members of the agricultural community.

246. The rent plough jumas have been calculated as follows :—

Chuk	I per Plough.....	Rs. 15.
Chuk	II do. ....	„ 12.
Chuk	III do. ....	„ 5.

Table of Estimated produce rates of one acre above the Ghats.

Crop.	Produce per acre.	Value.			Rate.		
		Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
Wheat	... In Kalee, 1½ khundie ..	5	0	0	0	13	4
Do.	... In Moorund, 15 kooros ..	3	0	0	0	8	0
Gram	... In Kalee, 1½ khundie ..	5	0	0	0	13	4
Do.	... In Moorund, 15 kooros ..	3	0	0	0	8	0
Alsee	... In Kalee, 10 kooros ..	2	0	0	0	5	4
Mahsoor	... In Kalee, 1½ khundie ..	3	12	6	0	10	5
Do.	... In Moorund, 1 do. ..	3	4	0	0	8	0
Teora	... In Kalee, 1½ khundie ..	3	12	0	0	10	0
Do.	... In Moorund, 1 do. ..	3	0	0	0	8	0
Rice	... In Do. 2½ do. ..	7	8	0	1	4	0
Jowaree	... In Do. 15 kooros ..	1	5	0	0	7	6
Moong	... In Do. 8 kooros ..	1	8	0			
Oorud	... In Kalee, 1 khundie ..	3	8	0	0	9	4
Kodo	... In Burdee, 2½ khundies ...	3	4	9	0	9	6
Kootkee	... In Do. 2½ do. ...	3	13	9	0	10	3
Jugnee	... In Moorund, 10 kooros ..	1	10	0	0	4	4
Do.	... In Burdee, 5 do. ..	0	13	0	0	2	2
Tilee	... In Khurdee, 10 do. ..	2	8	0	0	6	8

247. I may add that these same rates have been applied to all the Pergunnahs situate above the ghats saving only the resumed Jagheer of Harrakot which lies on the borders of the Nerbudda valley.

Same rates applied to all Pergunnahs above the ghats.

248. Having thus stated the data by which my assessments were regulated, I will proceed to notice the operation of the same in detail; for purposes of convenience my new assessments were brought out Pergunnahwar, each Pergunnah forming a district chuk or circle, and being reported on separately.

Details of assessment.

249. The general incidence of the rates and other statistics will be best seen by reference to the totals of the assessment statements compiled chukwar to be found in the Appendix to this report.

Statistics to be found among the appendices.

#### CHUK MOHKHAIR.

250. This Pergunnah comprises 201 villages, of these seven are held in Mokasa and 9 on Mukta tenures, eight others have been excluded from settlement as being virtually waste, thus leaving a total of 177 villages now assessed.

Number of villages.

251. This portion of the district lies above the ghats, which form its southern boundary, some few of the villages are situate on the slopes leading down to the lower country. On the three other sides, there are no naturally defined boundary marks. The general nature of the tract, however, may be described as follows: through its centre running nearly due east flows, the Kolbira river, having a valley of fertile soil extending on an average for about two miles on either side; to the south lie stony hills, and broken ground abutting on the ghats, to the north also lies a tract of stony hills sparsely cultivated and producing little. The country thus naturally divides itself into three different classes of villages which I have formed into separate chuks for purposes of assessment.

Situation.

252. The first comprises the villages lying in the open basin above described. They have, generally speaking, a fine black soil, little or no waste land, facilities for irrigation, and produce the more valuable kinds of crops. Another group naturally forms itself out of the poor villages, situate on the slopes of the ghats, and on the rocky hills which I have mentioned as bounding the Pergunnah on the north and south. The soil of these villages is stony and poor, water is scarce and in places very difficult to obtain, only inferior kinds of grain are grown except in a few instances. The inhabitants are chiefly Gonds, a poor class of cultivators, and from their migratory disposition ever ready to throw up their land during unfavourable seasons. These villages form my third assessment chuk. The second chuk holds an intermediate place between the two others and partakes in a degree of their several charac-

Chuks for assessment.

teristics. These villages enjoy a portion of the fertile valley, and its accompanying facilities, but the soil is shallower, water, as a rule, less easy to obtain, and there is a large proportion of poor land. This is the general principle I have followed in framing chuks, but in point of fact, I have been unable to draw the line between the three different classes with any precision; in other words my chukbunde has not been entirely topographical. In a hilly district like this, where there is no where any great extent of open level country, neighbouring villages often vary considerably in their facilities for cultivation. Thus some of the richest villages may happen to lie in juxta position with some of the poorest, and in such cases, I have had to use my own judgement looking to the character and caste of the population, and peculiar features of each village, as also to the average run of rents in so far as I have been able to ascertain them. In short my classification may be said to be in the main topographical, but modified according as local peculiarities have rendered it desirable to do so.

253. The Pergunnah under report contains no large towns or seats of trade. The mass of the population depend on agriculture or manual labour for subsistence. Every facility exists for the disposal of agricultural produce. The highway from Nagpore to Chindwara passes through the tract and there are also tracts suitable for laden bullocks which lead down to the country below the ghats, where there is a ready sale for all species of grain owing to the large extent of land devoted to cotton and other crops other than cereals. As regards natural facilities for irrigation many of the villages, especially those in the 1st class chuk, are very well off. Water in places is found near the surface, and numerous streams exist, the water of which is turned to some account, although with a little energy and expenditure of capital great improvement might be effected in this respect. The villages in the second group are not so favored, as the rock comes near the surface but occasional Jheels or valleys occur where water can be obtained to any extent. In the third class villages there is but little irrigation, partly owing to the nature of the soil and partly to the inferior knowledge of agriculture possessed by the inhabitants. In the first and second groups the bulk of the soil is devoted to sowing the rubees or cold season crop for which it is best adapted, wheat is the chief crop raised, being the main article of food of the people. Gram is grown in limited quantities only, and a certain amount of Muhsoor, Teora and other pulses which serve equally as food for men or cattle. A little linseed is raised but only for local consumption.

254. During the monsoon months Jowaree is sown mixed with Toor or other vetches, but a very small portion of the soil is devoted to this crop, and it is chiefly grown for the sake of the stalks which serve as forage for the cattle during the dry months when grass is not obtainable. In the third group of villages it is chiefly the khureef or monsoon crop that is raised. There is but little of the black soil which wheat and other rubees crops require



and the population prefer the poorer grains, such as rice, kodo, koot-kee, rala &c., as articles of diet.

255. In the first and second groups the whole area to all intents and purposes may be said to be under cultivation. Area under cultivation. What waste there is is stony and poor, barely fit for cultivation. Occasionally a field or two may be fallow but this is generally reserved for grazing ground and pays rent along with the rest of the holding. In the third class villages, there is, no doubt, some culturable waste but it is poor in quality and the nature of the cultivation requires a considerable breadth of land to be always fallow. In some of the villages situate on the edge of the ghats there are tracts of excessive waste which have to be dealt with under the rules on the subject, but these are limited in extent and almost valueless except as grazing ground or for the growth of firewood. In very few places is there any valuable timber to be found.

256. As regards the question of rent and revenue rates. In all countries the value of land differs exceedingly, and especially in a hilly country where great varieties of soil and situation are found within a very narrow compass. Rates. Again in one village water may be plentiful and near the surface while in the very adjoining one owing to some local peculiarity well water is utterly unattainable. These and other causes render the general run of rents very variable. Again the people appear to possess no idea whatever of area or superficial extent; the size of a holding is simply estimated by the amount of seed required to sow it, and it is needless to say that all such estimates can only be approximately true. On the average a Khundie of wheat will sow between four and five acres, and the rent of a Khundie of land in the better villages varies from Rupees 4 to Rupees 7. Of course there are pieces of land paying much higher rents, such for instance as spots round villages manured by the natural drainage, and again some lands pay much less, but the above may be taken as the general run of rent for land capable of producing wheat and other valuable grains. An examination of the Khusra gives a similar result. Land as above described pays on the whole from 1 Rupee to 1-8 per acre. In all villages however there is a considerable extent of what is termed "Burdee," a poor stony soil incapable of continual cropping. This generally pays no separate rent but is included in a holding of superior soil and is used for grazing and occasional cultivation.

257. For the reasons above stated it has been impossible to deduce any definite value for a definite extent of any particular soil, but taking the average rents, Existing rates very various. as shown above, I have deduced a scale of rates as shown in the table. No separate scale of rent seems to exist for irrigated land, but I have assumed its value at double that of the highest dry land rent.

258. On the whole I have proposed a considerable reduction upon the present demand which I have found it necessary to do for the following reasons. The country I have above observed was nearly depopulated by over assessment at the time of the fall of Appa Sahib; subsequent good management during our temporary hold of the country restored it to a state of comparative prosperity, but the revenue demand still continued as high as it could well be fixed. Settlements were made every three years, and persons were frequently encouraged to bid against each other to enhance the revenue. In theory the settlement was at 85 or 90 per cent. of the assets, but the demand not unfrequently equalled, or even exceeded the then rental.

259. To meet the demand it was necessary for the Malgoozar in turn to put the pressure on the tenants. Tenant rights of any sort were utterly unknown, and these persons were entirely at the mercy of the Malgoozar. Of course it would be his interest not to carry measures to extremes; still to enable him to meet the regular Government demand, not to speak of the occasional extra cesses which were imposed from time to time to meet the various requirements of the Nagpore state, he was compelled to drive hard bargains with the Asamees. This state of things continued until the annexation, when a considerable reduction was made in the demand and all irregular cesses were abolished. Since then too, generally speaking, rents have not been much raised, the idea having some how or other prevailed that our rules of law forbade the doing so. The consequence has been an extension of cultivation and a great improvement in the status of all classes of the agricultural population, viewing this and the greatly enhanced prices of all articles of produce it may be supposed that rents admit of a considerable rise, but such, as a rule I do not believe to be the case as far as my experience goes. In the first place the rise in the price of grain has been counterbalanced by the high price of clothing and petty articles of luxury, while the scarcity and high price of cattle has had a very discouraging effect upon agriculture. Men who formerly held land have in many cases sunk to the rank of labourers from inability to plough their lands, or have had to sublet their holdings on unfavorable terms. The mass too of the cultivators have only small holdings raising sufficient only for their own wants and that of their families, and little or none of the produce finds its way to the market. The practice also of depending on the Malgoozar for advances of seed and also of subsistence grain has had the effect of rendering the people both wasteful and improvident, and however plentiful may be the harvest the end of the year finds nothing in store. The seer land is generally ample in extent and comprises the best soil, and from their more extensive resources the Malgoozars have reaped the full benefit of increased prices. I have taken into consideration the enhanced value of the seer land, but for the reasons stated above

I cannot calculate on any general increase in rents. Some villages there are where wells have been sunk and irrigation extended of late years without any further call upon the land, here of course a rise may be looked for. Again facilities for irrigation have been taken into consideration as also all probable sources of future improvement. Among these the extent of land now fallow and capable of being brought into cultivation holds the first place. I have said before that very little of such land exists, the columns of "Lately abandoned" and "Fit for cultivation" do no doubt show goodly figures, but too much reliance cannot be placed on these. These lands are generally very poor, capable only of occasional cultivation after long intervals or abandoned as not repaying the expenses of cultivation. Much of this land too is purposely kept fallow for grazing ground and in point of fact pays rent, being included in some tenant's holding for which he pays a lump sum. In the course of my inspection I have turned my attention most particularly to this point and in a very few villages only have I observed any good soil lying waste. When this is the case I have allowed for it in assessing. In a hilly district like this there will always be a considerable extent of light soil which is doubtless culturable but which under the rude system of agriculture prevailing, and in the absence of all manure or other artificial aids can hardly repay the expense of cultivation.

260. I have made these remarks to account for the very low rate at which the assessment seems to fall judged by the test of figures: there is no doubt that rates are a fallacious test and viewed by their light it will be supposed that the Government does not derive as much revenue as it ought to do from the land. The fact however remains that rents do not rise to any considerable extent and the assessment as now fixed is I think as high a one as can be imposed consistently with the liberal terms on which the present settlements have to be introduced, while at the same time it leaves an ample profit to the landholders and should encourage them to make further advances in the way of effecting improvement.

261. For purposes of comparison I append a table showing the average revenue of this Pergunnah.

Table of former revenue.

Former revenue Collections in the Years of					
1829-31	1832-34	1835-37	1838-55	1850-61	1862-63
56,263	49,820	46,337	41,650	36,528	35,162

262. The total reduction now proposed is Rupees 4,192 or about 11½ per cent.  
Amount of reduction given.

263. I append a table showing the rates of the past and of the new Settlement for each chuk and for the entire Pergunnah.  
Table of rates.

Chuk and Chuk.	Past Settlement.		New Settlement.			
	On Culti- vated area.	On Mal- goozaree area.	On Culti- vated area.	On Culti- vated area.		
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.		
I.	0 11 7	0 8 3	0 10 3	0 7 2		
II.	0 7 0	0 4 3	0 6 6	0 3 10		
III.	0 3 9	0 1 5	0 3 3	0 1 3		
Pergunnah.	0 8 6	0 5 1	0 7 6	0 4 6		

264. The highest and lowest rates of any village as follows :—

AREA.	Highest rates.			Lowest rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
On Cultivation .. . . .	1	3	4	0	1	8
On Malgoozaree ... . . . .	1	0	3	0	0	7

#### PERGUNNAH CHORYE.

265. This Pergunnah contains in all 151 villages; 2 are held upon a Mukta or Obaree tenure and 10 have been excluded from Settlement as waste, leaving 139 villages brought under the new Settlement.  
Number of villages.



266. The Pergunnah comprises at the same time some of the most valuable and some of the poorest estates in the part of the district lying above the ghats, it is naturally divided into several distinct portions, with broadly marked differences of soil, cultivation and population which I shall endeavour to describe in detail.

267. The tract under report is bounded on the east by the Seonee district and on the west mainly by the River Pench, on the north and south it merges into other parts of the district without any naturally marked boundary line. The central portion of the Pergunnah comprises an undulating plain, almost entirely under cultivation and certainly the most productive tract in this part of the district. It is traversed by the high road from Chindwara to Seonee, there is every facility for the removal of produce and in point of fact large quantities of wheat and gram are annually exported. To the north of this plain lies a tract of broken ground intersected with stony hills and comprising great varieties of soil and external features. South of the plain above mentioned lies an extensive tract of broken country containing a great deal of waste and unculturable land with occasional valleys of good soil, to the south-east. This tract ends in dense jungles which join on the Deolapar Forest tract of the Seonee district. To the south again and west along the banks of the River Pench there is some open land and well cultivated villages, but the general area is much broken up with ravines, the surface soil has been washed away by the rains of centuries and there are neighbouring jungles the wild animals from which devour the crops.

268. I have formed this Pergunnah into three chuks for assessment as follows. The first comprises the open plain above referred to, which is now almost entirely under cultivation and comprises the best land and facilities of every sort. The second chuk comprises the villages occupying the broken country along the bank of the Pench river, and some valleys in the broken country which I have described as bounding the open plain of the first chuk to the north and south; these villages are inferior as having a larger proportion of poor soil, an uneven surface intersected with ravines, and liable to be washed away by constant rains, proximity to jungles which harbour wild animals of all sorts, and a mixed population comprising Gowlees, Gonds, and other classes little skilled in agriculture, generally speaking too the soil is shallower and there are less facilities for irrigation. The third chuk comprises the Gond hamlets in the thick jungles on the frontier of the Seonee district, and other poor villages where there is but little cultivation owing to the poverty of the soil. The inhabitants of these are chiefly Gonds living from hand to mouth and with difficulty restrained from emigrating in unfavorable seasons.

269. This Pergunnah contains no large towns and but few villages of any size. The population are almost solely engaged in agriculture except in a few of the jungly villages where there are Gowlees, men of considerable wealth, possessing large herds of cattle, and exporting ghee, butter and other dairy produce to the large villages lying below the ghats. I have said above that the Pergunnah is traversed by the high road from Seonee to Chindwara; there are also good fair weather roads leading to the country below the ghats to which a great deal of wheat and gram are exported, that part of the country being devoted chiefly to cotton and jowaree. There is comparatively little irrigation in any part of this tract. The first class villages are almost entirely under cultivation with the rubee or cold season crop; wheat is the chief staple and occupies more than three fourths of the area; the rest is devoted to gram occasionally, generally speaking to Teora or Mahsoor, which serve for food for the cattle. In a few villages linseed and peas are raised. In many villages there is no irrigation whatsoever, this may be accounted for partly by ancient custom and want of energy on the part of landholders and tenants and partly from the nature of the sub-soil which in many places consists of hard trap rock. In many villages there is room for improvement in this respect, as wells might be sunk and there are streams of running water which might easily be taken advantage of. There are some few villages in which a large extent of land is under irrigation and valuable crops are raised but these cases are exceptional. In some of the second class villages water is tolerably plentiful, and owing to the poorer nature of the soil the people have turned their attention more to irrigation. There is a less extent of land capable of bearing rubee crops. The following grains are raised during the monsoon months, jowaree, toor, various oil seeds, and a little cotton; much of the land is only occasionally cultivated and requires long intervals of fallow. In the third class villages there is little irrigation worth mentioning and but little rubee crop is raised. The chief staples are rice, kodo, kootkee and other inferior grains and a few oil seeds.

270. The general style and system of agriculture is precisely similar to that prevailing in the Mohkhair Pergunnah which I have already described except that there is less irrigation on the whole. The crops so raised are sugar-cane and opium; potatoes and other vegetables are but little sown, Malees Kachees and similar castes being found in a very few villages only.

271. As regards prospects of future improvements, in the first group of villages the whole area has been long under cultivation, with the exception of some patches left purposely unturned to afford grazing and standing ground for the cattle during the intervals of agricultural labour. No extension

therefore of cultivation can be looked for to any appreciable extent. In some villages wells may be sunk and streams taken advantage of, in this respect a little improvement may be looked for during a long settlement. In the second class of villages there is some waste which may be taken up but generally speaking it consists of poor soil incapable of constant cropping in the absence of all manure. Want of population also forbids any hope of immediate extension, the want of hands to till the already cultivated land being even now severely felt. In the third class villages there is of course a good deal of culturable waste, but not of good quality. The badness of water, unhealthiness of the climate and dread of wild animals are an effectual bar to the introduction of a better class of inhabitants. Much of these lands will now be reserved under the waste land Circular, and it will remain to be seen whether any sales will be effected, but so poor is the soil that I think the present price will effectually discourage all speculations in land. In some of the jungles there were some valuable timber trees but most of these have been cut down of late years for sleepers and other purposes.

272. As regards rents and assumed rates. The nature of the soil, system of cultivation and general character of the population are exceedingly similar to those of the Mohkhair Pergunnah, rents as I have ascertained by close personal enquiry run very much alike; area is estimated by seed sown, the khundee being the standard adopted. This will sow from four to five acres and is rented at from Rupees 4 to Rupees 7 which may be roughly put down at from Rupee 1 to Rupee 1-8 per acre. This was the result of my calculations on the Mohkhair Pergunnah and I have accordingly adopted precisely the same assumed rates for the pergunnah under report. My plough and produce jumas are also based on the same estimates and the results as compared with the present statistics of rent and revenue are much the same.

273. The revenue of this Pergunnah for the last five years of the former British administration under Mr. Jenkins averaged Rupees 32,280 and that of the last settlement under the Mahratta Government was Rupees 35,980, that just expired amounted to Rupees 32,159 while the present proposed revenue is Rupees 28,027 this gives a proposed reduction of Rupees 4,132 or about 12½ per cent.

274. I append a table showing the rates of the former and new assessments on each chuk and upon the whole Pergunnah.

Table of rates.

## ASSESSMENT RATES

Chuk and Pergunnah.	Past Settlement.			New Settlement.				
	On Cultivated area.		On Malgoozaree area.	On Cultivated area.		On Malgoozaree area.		
	R.	A. P.	R.	A. P.	R.	A. P.		
I.	0	9 0	0	6 5	0	7 9	0	5 6
II.	0	6 5	0	3 2	0	5 7	0	2 9
III.	0	3 9	0	1 7	0	3 3	0	1 5
Pergunnah ... ..	0	7 2	0	4 2	0	6 4	0	3 7

275. The highest and lowest rates in any village will be seen from the following table.

AREA OF	Highest rates.			Lowest rates.		
	R.	A.	P.	R.	A.	P.
Cultivation ... ..	2	10	3	0	1	3
Malgoozaree ... ..	0	8	9	0	0	6

## PERGUNNAH CHINDWARA.

276. This Pergunnah comprises 123 villages, 2 of which are held on a Mokasa or rent-free tenure, and 1 has been excluded from settlement as waste, leaving 120 villages now brought under assessment.

277. Owing to its natural configuration it is not easy to give a good general description of this Pergunnah, nor does it divide itself naturally into chuks presenting broadly marked varieties of soil and cultivation. It forms a compact area centrally situate with the civil station as its centre. It is classed by a succession of irregular lines of rocky hill enclosing valleys of vary-



ing extent and capabilities for cultivation. The best and most open part of this tract lies to the north and east, bordering on the PENCH river which separates it from the Chowrye Pergunnah. Here there is a strip of land varying from 1 to 3 miles or so in breadth, between the river and the hills, highly fertile in places and containing some large village communities. This has been formed into my first chuk for assessment purposes. The rest of the Pergunnah can only be described in general terms as a succession of rocky hills quite unculturable, with intervening valleys or basins of good soil and various extent. To the immediate west of the civil station there is a sort of rolling plain extending for about six miles to the Kolbira river which forms the Pergunnah boundary, but the soil here is mostly sandy, much of it is quite unculturable and over grown with scrub jungle, and it is intersected by numerous ravines and small water courses. My second chuk has been formed out of the villages lying in the valleys above mentioned; these as a rule have a much larger proportion of poor and unculturable soil than those of the first chuk, and have on the whole a poorer population and are not so well cultivated. The third chuk comprises poor hamlets situate on high stony ground with a population of Gonds and other inferior classes of cultivators. These villages are scattered more or less over the whole of the Pergunnah.

278. With the exception of the town of Chindwara itself there is no village even of great size or importance, Towns, population, &c. &c. there are no seats of trade or manufacture, and the whole of the population are engaged in agriculture with the exception of a few low castes who spin and weave a sort of coarse cloth. The agricultural community consists in the first chuk villages chiefly of Lodhees, Rajpoots, Rukbunsees with a few Brahmuns and Koonbees, to the westward Koonbees and Rukbunsees are the prevailing element. The third chuk villages are inhabited by Gonds, Gowlees and various inferior orders of cultivators. The town of Chindwara has a large mixed population of all classes, the cultivators being chiefly Malees, Koonbees and Rukbunsees.

279. Centrally situated as it is this Pergunnah has every facility for the disposal of produce. Besides the large central mart of Chindwara itself, there are highways leading to Nagpore, Seonee, Baitool and Nursingpoor, which though not at all times passable for carts, are at least available to pack bullocks which are the means of carriage most common in these parts. Facilities for the disposal of produce.

280. On the whole this is a poorer Pergunnah than those of Chowrye and Mokhair, there is less extent of good soil, there are fewer large villages, less irrigation, and the general nature of the cultivation seems inferior in a majority of the villages. I am unable to state any definite reason why this should be the case, but still the fact is apparent to the eye. Inferiority of the cultivation.

281. The general character of the soils, agricultural population, crops raised, and method of cultivation are similar to those of the adjoining Pergunnahs of Chowrye and Mohkhair, and soil for soil there is no reason why it should pay a less revenue or be less productive. In assessing, I have employed precisely the same rates as in the above mentioned Pergunnahs, and it seems needless to take up time by again going into the question.

282. I have no records of what the revenue of this Pergunnah was in 1820, but the average of the last five years of the former British administration is stated at Rupees 18,000 in round numbers. At the time of the annexation the revenue had risen to Rupees 25,800 with a supposed nikasee of Rupees 28,300. A reduction was then made of a little over Rupees 3,000, but a rise has since taken place owing to increased cultivation.

283. The present revenue of the villages assessed is Rupees 24,074 and my proposed assessment is Rupees 20,726, giving a reduction of about 14½ per cent. I have dwelt in my former paras on the necessity of granting a reduction under the present liberal treatment of the landowners, and I need not again enter into details on this subject.

284. Some remarks are called for as to prospects of improvements likely to be effected in future years under a long settlement. In the villages in the first group almost all the good soil has now been taken up and we cannot look for much extension of cultivation; should the present rise in prices continue of course the market value of the land will rise also; besides something may be done by extending irrigation for which there are great facilities as regards the supply of water. The great draw-back however is that frost is peculiarly severe along the basin of the Pench river where most of these villages are situate, and sugar-cane which is the staple irrigated crop of these districts is unable to withstand frost in any unusual degree. In the second and third groups of villages there is certainly room for much improvement, both as regards extension and a better style of cultivation, as also by introducing irrigation for which there are facilities in many villages which are not taken advantage of. At present there is a want of population and the labour market is badly supplied so that time must elapse before any great change can be effected for the better.

Present rates.

285. I append a table of rates of the past and present settlements.

## ASSESSMENT RATES.

Chuk and Pergunnah.	Past Settlement.			New Settlement.				
	On Cultivation.		On Mal-goozaree.	On Cultivation.		On Mal-goozaree.		
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.		
I.	0	9 2	0	7 0	0	8 1	0	6 1
II.	0	7 3	0	4 3	0	5 9	0	3 6
III.	0	4 4	0	2 1	0	3 9	0	1 10
Pergunnah ... ..	0	8 0	0	4 10	0	6 11	0	4 3

286. The following table shows the highest and lowest rates in any village.

AREA OF	Highest rates.			Lowest rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Cultivation .. . . . .	0	12	6	0	2	6
Malgoozaree . . . . .	0	10	2	0	1	3

## PERGUNNAH AMURWARA.

287. This Pergunnah comprises in all 137 villages; of these 9 are held on a Mokasa or rent free tenure, thus leaving 128 villages now reassessed.

288. Owing to similarity of local situation, and circumstances of soil and general character of the cultivation, I have adopted precisely the same rates and other data for assessment which have been applied by me to the other Pergunnahs above the ghats previously assessed, and which have been detailed above. I will confine my remarks to those points which call for some special notice and the distinctive characteristics of the Pergunnah under report.

289. The Amurwara Pergunnah lies farthest north of any of the Khalsa lands of Chindwara; it is bounded on the south by the Pench and the Chindwara Pergunnah; on the north by the Hurrye Jagheer: on the east by the Adegaoon Jagheer and part of the Chowrye Pergunnah, and on the west by the Sonpoor Jagheer and part of the Omrait Pergunnah. It is divided into two distinct portions, severally known among the people as the Amurwara and Singhoree Pergunnahs; the latter occupies a belt of low land lying between the river Pench and a line of steep hills which run parallel at a distance of about 10 miles to the north. The former portion lies north of the said hills at a much higher elevation. The Singhoree Pergunnah generally is exceedingly broken and intersected by ravines and spurs of the hills, only in places is there any good soil, and the populations are of mixed character.

290. The Amurwara pergunnah has an extensive plateau of undulating land, with, in places, a very good soil, but on all sides this plain merges into hilly country and extensive tracts of jungle and waste land, such as the jagheer tracts mostly consist of.

291. Like in other pergunnahs I have divided this one into three different chuks for assessment. The first comprises a few villages on the eastern side of the Singhoree pergunnah on the borders of Chowrye, it comprises a few villages occupying an open plain of good soil with excellent facilities for irrigation. The remainder are situate on the upland plateau of Amurwara, they are open in situation, and have a considerable extent of good soil with facilities for irrigation. The second class villages are somewhat similar to the above, except that they have a more broken area and a greater proportion of poor land, while water is less easily obtainable. The third class comprises poor hill villages with a large proportion of unculturable land and a population of Gonds only.

292. The past history of this Pergunnah is very similar to that of the other portions of the district lying above the ghats. With this difference that from its situation in immediate juxtaposition to the hills it was longer exposed to the raids of the Gonds and other marauders and consequently lay almost entirely waste after the adjoining pergunnahs to the south had begun to be repopulated, and their lands once more brought under the plough. For this reason the lands of Amurwarra are said to be more fertile now than those of other pergunnahs as having been less time under cultivation; my own personal experience however does not lead me to place much reliance on this assertion, and as the various descriptions of soil are precisely similar, I have adopted the same rates as were applied to other similar localities.



293. In one respect this pergunnah presents a marked dissimilarity to the others, viz., the uniform nature of the population and the regularity of its distribution.

Uniform character of population.

294. The agricultural population in all the bettermost villages consists nearly entirely of Lodhees, who in some of the larger villages form large brotherhoods, all more or less connected and who have most of the land in their own hand. This is the case in the few villages of the first chuk lying in the low country of the Singhoree pergunnah. These few villages once formed an independant talook held under one settlement and are now inhabited by the numerous branches of one and the same family. The remainder of the Singhoree pergunnah is inhabited entirely by Gowlees and a few Gonds. The village proprietors are nearly all Gowlees who in addition to cultivation keep herds of cows and buffaloes from which they derive a large profit.

Agricultural population.

295. In the upper plateau of Amurwara all the open villages are tenanted by Lodhees, while the remainder are Gond colonies; in some few there are Gowlees, and in one or two there are a few Rajpoots but they form but a handful of the population.

Different castes.

296. The general method of agriculture is precisely similar to that previously described by me and calls for no special remark. Amurwara is chiefly known for its sugarcane which is the best grown in the district; much care is expended on its cultivation and the supply of water from wells is abundant. The high plateau of Amurwara abounds in streams, all of which are more or less available for irrigation. Of the unirrigated crops the rubees is the staple, and wheat the grain chiefly raised. There is also a certain proportion of grain, muhsoor and teora. In the second class villages a larger proportion of the soil is unfit for rubees and in it khureef crops alone are raised with certain intervals of fallow. In the third class villages much of the cultivation consists of dhya only.

System of agriculture.

297. As regards prospects of future improvement; in most of the villages the good land has been all taken up, so that much extension of cultivation cannot be looked for. Still more however may be done in the way of irrigation for which, as I have observed, there are great facilities everywhere.

Future prospects.

298. The general results of my assessments will be seen from the totals of the statements; the total present revenue is Rupees 20,304 and the proposed revenue is Rupees 17,818, giving a total reduction of Rupees 2,486 or 12 per cent. on the whole. In spite of the peculiar circum-

Result of new assessment.

stances of some of the villages, as instanced above, the present rents are quite as high and even higher than those existing in other pergunnahs.

299. The prevailing rent of land under the Mahratta Government was said to be Rupees 5 per khundee (that is about 4 acres,) for land producing rubee crops. The poorer soils were not taken into account. My rates approximate very nearly to that standard, no rate having been applied to "Burdee" soil. But where the amount of the latter seems excessive as compared with the superior qualities I have taken it into consideration in assessing; in the case also of villages held by Gowlees I have taken into consideration the fact of their deriving a considerable profit from the produce of their cattle, as owing to this source of income they are less inclined to advance cultivation as they might, and independently of that it is but fair that all sources of profit derived from the soil should be taken into consideration even where no definite data can be arrived at but recourse must be had to general considerations.

300. The rates will be seen from the appended table.

#### ASSESSMENT RATES.

Chuks and Pergunnah.	Past Settlement.				New Settlement.			
	On Cultivation.		On Malgoozaree.		On Cultivation.		On Malgoozaree.	
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
I.	0	8 8	0	5 11	0	7 8	0	5 1
II.	0	6 9	0	4 1	0	6 0	0	3 6
III.	0	3 8	0	1 10	0	3 0	0	1 7
Pergunnah ...	0	6 9	0	4 0	0	5 11	0	3 6

The highest and lowest rates of any village are as follows :—

AREA OF.	Highest rates.			Lowest rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Cultivation ... ..	0	10	6	0	0	11
Malgoozaree ... ..	0	7	6	0	0	3

#### PERGUNNAH KHUMARPANEE.

301. This Pergunnah contains in all 119 villages; of these 9  
 Number of villages. have been declared waste and excluded from Settlement. There remain 110 now brought under the revised assessment.

302. This portion of the district is bounded on the north by  
 General description. Pergunnah Mohkhair; on the east by the river Pench and the Dongurtal Pergunnah of the Seonee district, and on the south and west by the ghats leading down to the lower country of Tehseel Mohgaon; the south-eastern corner touches upon the Nagpore district.

303. This Pergunnah is inferior in every respect to those noticed  
 Poverty of the tract. above; there is no continuous extent of open cultivated land; it is intersected everywhere by lines of rocky hills and patches of barren waste and on all sides but the north it is shut in by dense jungles. To the south, immediately above the ghats, there is a plain of good soil entirely almost under cultivation, but it is of limited extent and nowhere out of reach of the wild animals from the neighbouring jungles; with one or two exceptions there is not a village but has a considerable portion of jungle or barren land within its area.

304. The mass of the population consists of Gonds and Gowlees;  
 Population. the latter have been attracted by the abundant grazing ground afforded by the jungles, it is only in a few of the better villages and those adjoining the open Pergunnah of Mohkhair that a better class of cultivators is found, namely Koonbees Rajpoots or Lodhees; cultivators from elsewhere are deterred from settling by the reputed unhealthiness of the climate and bad quality of the water; my own experience does not bear out this idea, but popular estimation has given this Pergunnah the character of quite a penal settlement. I mention this to account for the fact of rents generally being very low, and as a reason for imposing a moderate assessment.

305. From 1250 Fuslee to 1258 Fuslee the entire Pergunnah was leased to one Chandabhai, a speculator from Nagpore, who made his own terms with the Malgoozars, though the ordinary triennial settlements still continued to be made nominally under the supervision of the district authorities. The result of this system may easily be imagined, Chandabhai employed numerous agents, who in every possible way defrauded both the people and their employer, and thus while cultivation and population kept on falling off, the lessee himself became none the richer, and the district authorities appear not to have interfered with any effect. Thus it was that on the accession of our Government, this portion of the district was in a very bad condition, but since then steady and rapid improvement has been taking place, population has increased and waste lands have been taken up, and there now remains but little good soil unbroken by the plough.

306. In dealing with such a broken tract of country possessing varieties of external feature which repeat themselves so to speak at irregular intervals, it has been almost impracticable to adopt any well defined topographical classification for purposes of assessment: the best land and the densest jungle occasionally lie in immediate juxtaposition, and the value of any given estate affords no clue to that of the one adjoining. In this respect therefore I have followed my own judgment as derived from personal inspection, regard being had to the extent of open cultivable land as also to the nature of the agricultural population, their caste and resources as evidenced by the sinking of wells or other additions to the value of the land.

307. Hitherto in assessing I have divided the villages of a Pergunnah into three chuks more or less defined by distinctive characteristics and capabilities; in Khumarpanee however with perhaps two exceptions I know of no village equal in any respect to those included in the first class chuks of the other Pergunnahs above the ghats, and I have consequently formed the whole into two groups corresponding to the second and third chuks previously assessed.

308. The rates applied are precisely similar to those of the corresponding chuks of the other Pergunnahs above the ghats before mentioned, though actual rents may be slightly lower, still the actual quality of the soil and the nature of the crops raised warrant me in employing the same data as criterions of value.

309. Poor as is this tract of country generally, it yet possesses in places an excellent soil, the more fruitful in many instances that for reasons previously recorded it had enjoyed the benefit of a fallow until a comparatively recent period; but its natural capabilities are often neu-



trahized by want of skill or of energy or of capital on the part of the cultivators, or by the inroads of the wild animals from the neighbouring jungles; in places also more land has been broken up than the population suffices to cultivate properly, and the evil reputation of the air and water is a bar to the introduction of new settlers. Add to this that the means of communication are extremely bad, a road passable for loaded carts leads from Khumarpanee, situate about the centre of the Pergunnah towards Chand in the north, the remainder of the Pergunnah is cut off from all communication except by stony paths practicable only for pack animals, and these form the sole means of intercourse with the country below the ghats, the great market for cereals of this part of the country.

310. The crops raised and the mode of agriculture are very similar to that of other portions of the district above the ghats above described. The formation is basaltic, consisting of lines of rocky hills with interlying valleys of good land; in these wheat, gram and other autumn crops are raised, as also sugar-cane where means of irrigation exist. Water is in some places abundant and wells easily sunk; a good deal has been done in this way in places, but improvement may yet be effected. Towards the south, as I have observed before, there is an open plain of some extent; this is almost entirely under cultivation with rubees crops, with occasional irrigation, but wells are not so easily sunk here as in the lower-lying valleys; the light soils are sown with kodo, kootkee and other poor grains raised during the monsoon and with various kinds of oil seeds. Some of the poorer villages have little of any other cultivation.

311. As observed before, there are very large tracts of jungle which have had to be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Book Circular LXXII No. 1696 A of 23rd December 1862.

312. Most of these are utterly barren with but little culturable soil, the most extensive lie on the banks of the river Pench, and it is intended I believe to form this into one with the Dongurtal Forest Reserve,

though timber of any value does not now exist, exhausted as the resources of the Forest have been for the supply of railway sleepers. In this matter I have had to take into consideration the rights of the Gowlees who have hitherto used these jungles for grazing; the breed of

Khumarpanee cattle is celebrated both for its size and make, and the cows are excellent milkers, but it is only during the rains and the commencement of the cold season that the cattle are retained near home; after that they are driven off in large herds to the abundant pastures of Raegurh Bichva and Mundla. I think therefore that a moderate allowance of jungle, such as I have made, will suffice for the ordinary wants of these people; I have made allowance for the diminution of the area in assessing the juma, and if further grazing ground be required I conceive that the Forest Department will concede it on moderate terms, and as the profits derived from

cattle breeding are notoriously large it will be no real hardship for these graziers to pay something for what they have hitherto enjoyed almost gratuitously; had I seen cause to confer Proprietary right in these wastes I should have had to make a corresponding increase in the demand, so that in reality the people are not losers by the change that will be made in the tenure of the land. In some of these villages a large income is derived from the sale of mohwa, hurra and other jungle produce; this has now been excluded from my calculations, and will after the settlement be realised as an item of forest revenue. There is little if any of this land which in my opinion is likely to meet with a sale, as the great bulk of it is entirely unfit for cultivation, consisting of rocky hill sides and such like impracticable ground.

313. I have said that this is a poor jungly Pergunnah; no great improvement can therefore be looked for: most of the good soil has now been taken up and what culturable waste exists is for the most part light sandy soil from which little return can be expected: something may yet be done for extending irrigation of which at present sufficient advantage is not taken, but looking to other parts of the district which are so much more favored as regards situation, climate and character of the agricultural population, I can only say that my expectations of any material improvement upon the whole are but slight. Individual instances there are where progress may be looked for and these I have taken into consideration in assessing.

314. The present revenue of the Pergunnah is Rupees 7178 and the proposed juma is Rupees 6637, being a reduction in all of Rupees 541 or about 8 per cent.

315. Subjoined is a table showing rates of the past and present assessment.

#### ASSESSMENT RATES.

Chuks and Pergunnah.	Past Settlement.				New Settlement.			
	On Cultivated area.		On Malgoozaree area.		On Cultivated area.		On Malgoozaree area.	
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
II	0	5 7	0	3 6	0	5 1	0	3 2
III	0	2 9	0	1 2	0	2 6	0	1 0
Pergunnah.	0	5 0	0	2 6	0	4 3	0	2 4

316. The highest and lowest rates in any village of this Pergunnah are as follows :—

Area of	Highest rates.			Lowest rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Cultivation . . . . .	1	8	1	0	0	10
Malgozaree . . . . .	0	8	9	0	0	4

#### PERGUNNAH OOMRAIT.

317. This Pergunnah comprises in all 258 villages, of these 15 are held in Mokasa or rent-free tenure and 2 in Mukta or Oobaree, there thus remain 241 Khalsa villages, of these 29 have been excluded from assessment as being waste, thus leaving a balance of 212 villages now brought under assessment.

318. The area of the Pergunnah is large and presents great varieties of soil and other external features. To the south and east there is an open undulating plain almost entirely under cultivation; in places there is a considerable breadth of good land producing wheat gram and other grains; on the higher ground the soil degenerates into a mixture of sand and broken particles of gneiss and other metamorphic rocks. Irrigation exists in places. To the north and west again there is another patch of open country, forming the valley of the Pench river and bounded on the north by the hills of the Mohtoor and Pertabgurh Jagheers. Here there is a good extent of open cultivation, but it is much intersected by the streams that feed the Pench. There is very little irrigation. The rest of the Pergunnah forms a sort of irregular belt of jungle and rocky land running from north-east to south-west between the two open chuks previously described. In places where the basalt rock exists there are patches of good cultivation in valleys; in places where the formation is sand stone or metamorphic the whole soil is of the poorest possible description.

319. I have divided the whole into two chuks for assessment purposes. The best villages of the two open tracts above mentioned are very similar in their general capabilities to the second class villages of the adjoining pergunnahs previously assessed, and I have applied the same rates. Owing however to their natural separation and to difference in the cultivation and character of the population I have kept the two chuks distinct. The remain-

ing villages have been formed into one general chuk to which no rent rates have been applied.

320. The chuk to the south I have called after the name of the chief town situate in it, viz. Oomrait. The other chuk I have termed "Dulka" being the name applied by the people themselves to that strip of country.

321. The Oomrait chuk, as I have said before, has an undulating surface with great varieties of soil; it is watered by no stream of any note but in most places there are facilities for irrigation. The agricultural population comprises all castes and I can specify no one in particular as prevailing.

322. The "Dulka" chuk is quite otherwise; it is traversed by the deep bed of the Pench and intersected by numerous small tributaries; water generally is not found near the surface and so very few wells exist, but on the other hand water is procurable from numerous streams; again the general quality of the soil is inferior to that of the other chuk, the surface soil being continually washed away; but the greater proportion both of proprietors and tenants are Gowlees who derive quite as much profit from cattle keeping as from agriculture; This part of the district has suffered for several years from a local failure of crops and much remission of rent has had to be given, hence the present nikasee must not be accepted as the true average. In assessing I have looked generally to the assets of the five preceding years.

323. Regarding the third chuk I need make very few remarks. It presents great varieties no doubt of soil and general capabilities, but in almost all the greater proportion of the area is barren; many are overrun with dense jungles, and the bulk of the population consists of Gonds. There are some few villages which form an exception to the above but from local situation they have necessarily formed part of the same group.

324. There is in places great room for improvement by means of irrigation; in places where the trap rock prevails the sinking of wells is very precarious and uncertain, but in the sandstone and metamorphic formations it is quite otherwise. I will give as an example the town of Oomrait. This has very little really good soil but water is found near the surface and irrigation is applied to the ordinary dry crops, such as wheat &c. which otherwise would not grow at all; there are many other villages where a similar energy and outlay of capital might produce a similar result; I look for much progress in this respect in the course of the present settlement and I have allowed for this in making my assessments.



325. All over the Pergunnah and chiefly in the "Dulka" tract Gowlees are to be found who derive a considerable income from cattle keeping; it is almost impossible to represent these profits in tangible figures but I have taken the item into consideration in assessing. In some villages a considerable profit is derived from jungle produce, but much of this will now be lost by the demarcation of the waste lands.

326. The total present revenue of the assessed villages is Rupees 16,183 and the proposed juma is Rupees 14,533 which gives a total reduction of Rupees 1,650 or about 10½ per cent. upon the whole.

327. Subjoined is the table of rates.

Table of rates.

ASSESSMENT RATES.									
Chuk and Pergunnah.	Past Settlement.					New Settlement.			
	On Culti- vation.		On Mal- goozaree.			On Culti- vation.		On Culti- vated area.	
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	
Chuk II.	0	6 0	0	3 4	0	5 5	0	3 0	
Do. "Dulka"	0	5 4	0	3 1	0	4 11	0	2 10	
Do. III.	0	3 8	0	1 10	0	3 2	0	1 6	
Pergunnah. ...	0	4 9	0	2 6	0	4 3	0	2 3	

328. The highest and lowest rates in any village are as follows :—

RATES.	On Cultivation.			On Malgoozaree.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Highest . . . . .	0	10	6	0	6	9
Lowest . . . . .	0	1	3	0	0	6

**PERGUNNAH ASSAIR.**

329. This Pergunnah extends over a very large area and forms in itself the whole of a separate Tehseel,\* it is however a very wild tract sparsely inhabited and badly cultivated and overrun with large tracts of jungle and Forest land. It contains in all 292 villages : of these 8 are held on Mokasa or rent free tenure. Of the remaining 284 Khalsa villages 95 have been excluded from settlement as waste ; this leaves a balance of 189 villages now reassessed.

330. For the purposes of assessment I have divided the Pergunnah into two Chuks corresponding to the second and third Chuks of the cultivated Pergunnahs above the ghats. The first Chuk comprises a few open villages situate near the Bail river on the borders of the Baitool District, and a few other villages from different parts of the Pergunnah which were superior to the others as regards soil and character of the agricultural population. These villages have some extent of open land under rubeecultivation. The other Chuk consists chiefly of Gonds or Gowlee hamlets where there is little or no cultivation except of the poorest possible kind, the inferior grains and a few oil seeds being raised in the rains. The population derive their chief subsistence from the maize or beans grown in the garden patches attached to their dwelling places, and from the flowers of the mohwa tree, the fruit of the char or chironjee and other jungle produce.

331. I need say no more in this place than that this is the very poorest portion of the Khalsa part of the district and though there is no doubt room for much improvement both by introducing irrigation extending cultivation, yet looking to the nature of the population and and the unhealthiness of the climate I cannot look for any great immediate improvement even under a settlement of 30 years duration.

**REDUCTION NOW PROPOSED.**

Former juma.	Proposed juma.	Total reduction.	Per centage of reduction upon the whole.
9,214	8,796	418	4½

\* N. B. Which has since been broken up and the Pergunnah divided between the Baitool and Chindwara districts.

332. It will be seen from the annexed table that I propose but a small reduction in the assessment as the present demand is very reasonable, in fact no reduction would have been required on the whole but for the exclusion of the excess wastes from the Malgozaree area the income derivable from these wastes will much more than counterbalance the small reduction now quoted.

Chuk rates.

333. The chuk rates will be seen from the table herewith appended.

#### ASSESSMENT RATES.

Chuks and Pergunnah.	Past Settlement.				New Settlement.			
	On Cultivated area.		On Malgozaree area.		On Cultivated area.		On Malgozaree area.	
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
Chuk II.	0	3 9	0	2 2	0	3 6	0	2 1
Chuk III.	0	3 3	0	1 5	0	3 1	0	1 3
Pergunnah ...	0	3 6	0	1 8	0	3 6	0	1 6

334. I should add that no rent rates have been applied to the third class of villages and for the following reasons. The cultivators are almost entirely Gond, a migratory race attached to no particular spot and possessing little aptitude for agriculture. They are only kept to their villages by low rents and generally liberal treatment, consequently rents bear very little proportion to the relative value of the land and vary in every village. In point of fact the Malgozars are glad to get what they can out of their tenants irrespective of the intrinsic value of the land. It is therefore almost impossible to deduce any average system of rents from existing payments, and I have thought it useless to fabricate a fictitious rent roll not based upon any foundation of fact. I have been guided in assessing by past payments and the present rent-roll, while plough and produce jumas have been applied as some guide to the resources of the village and the real value of the land, but in fact it is impracticable to frame an assessment upon these and I have accordingly attached but little weight to them. I may add that I adopted this system in assessing a precisely similar class of villages in the Baitool district, and my assessments were generally approved of.

## TALOOKA HURRAKOT.

335. Talooka Hurrakot comprises in all 44 villages, but of these 28 have been reserved from settlement as waste leaving 16 in which Proprietary Right has been conferred.

336. This tract was formerly held in Jagheer by Bubootsing one of the three hereditary priests of the Mahadeo cave, but was confiscated owing to rebellion on part of the said Bubootsing in 1858. Owing to the revision of boundary line between the Hoshungabad and Chindwara districts the greater portion of the talooka has been transferred to the former district including all the proprietary villages; there remain a few waste villages to the south of the Mahadeo hills now taken into the Boree teak Forest.

337. Like the other Jagheer estates of this district this was much neglected and little or nothing was ever done to effect improvement; with the exception however of the villages now to be settled, the whole tract consists of mountain and jungle of the wildest character with very little culturable land; the villages now assessed occupy an open plain in the banks of the Dainwa river and are further cut off from the Nerbudda valley by a line of low hills covered with jungle, the present population is very poor, and though the land is good in places yet from defective cultivation the produce derived is much less than it might be. Much improvement may be looked for during the present settlement as the neighbouring valley of the Nerbudda affords a ready market for produce of all kinds, and cultivation will be stimulated.

338. The rent rates have been derived from an average of the actual existing rates for different qualities of soil as under the peculiar circumstances of the talooka I have thought it desirable to make the settlement as light as possible.

339. I give a table of the rates applied.

Description of Soil.	Existing average rates.			Assumed rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Kalee 2nd class .. .. .	0	7	6	0	12	0
Moorund.. .. .	0	6	6	0	8	0
Khurdee ... .. .	0	4	4	0	6	0
Retaree .. .. .	0	2	9	0	4	0
Burdee ... .. .	0	2	6	0	3	0



340. The assessment rates of the past and present settlement will be seen from the following table.

Settlement of	Rates on area of					
	Cultivation.			Malgozaree.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Past	0	2	5	0	0	8
Proposed	0	3	3	0	1	0

341. As this talooka is now to be transferred to the Hoshungabad district, its statistics have not been included in the tabulated statements of this district, but are recorded separately and will be found in the Appendix to this report.

342. I now come to the assessment of the chuks below the ghats to which entirely different rates were applied from those adopted above the ghats.

#### PERGUNNAH PANDOORNAH.

343. This Pergunnah comprises in all 88 villages, of these 2 have been declared waste and excluded from settlement. It forms a portion of the present Saosur Tehseel.

344. This tract lies entirely below the ghats; it is bounded on the north by the ghats and the jungly Talooka of Ambarra belonging to the same Tehseel, on the east by the Mohgaon Pergunnah, on the south by the Katol Tehseelee of the Nagpore district, and on the west by the river Wurda and Berar. It comprises a great variety of soils and villages varying from the wealthiest to the poorest to be found in the whole district.

In describing the general features of the tract I will at the same time explain the chuks which I have formed for purposes of assessment.

About the very centre stands the large town of Pandoornah. It has a very large population of all classes, mercantile, agricultural and laboring; it lies at one end of a rich basin of black soil inferior to none that I have yet seen in these Provinces: the said basin contains about twenty different villages more or less possessed of a similar soil and similar facilities, and these I have formed into my first assessment chuk. To the north and east of this basin the spurs of the main line of ghats begin to rise in irregular confusion out of the plain; the ghats here can

hardly be said to exist as a defined range, merging as they do into the plain through innumerable spurs and undulations rolling one over another.

Here then, as may be expected, great varieties of external feature are presented. Generally speaking the soil is of a poor stony nature, and the population consists mostly of the inferior orders of agriculturists, but here and there, and especially on the borders of the open country there are some valleys with good soil well cultivated. The villages so situated have been grouped into my second chuk, while the poor hill villages have gone into the third chuk. Again to the south of the open basin, above referred to, there is a considerable tract of broken hilly ground, also presenting great varieties of external feature and agricultural capabilities. Some villages there are possessing a certain extent of good open land, though the soil is more or less shallow, with a rocky sub-soil. Again other villages are a mere collection of Gond huts, the soil light and stony, with a large area totally unculturable. These villages have been grouped into the second and third chuks respectively.

345. The Pergunnah under report formed part of the ancient division of the Mahratta empire, known as Deogurh below the ghats, and like the rest of the Chindwara district formed an integral part of the Nagpore State until A. D. 1854. It came under our temporary management after the fall of Appa Sahib in 1818, and the task of settling the revenue then fell to Captain Gordon who was given the charge of the Nagpore district. The state of this part of the Chindwara district then differed materially from that of the parts above the ghats : owing to their open situation near the capital and at a comparative distance from the mountain haunts of the Gonds and other marauders, these villages, though no doubt at times harassed by the raids of Pindarees and other freebooters, were yet able on the whole to maintain themselves and did not fall into that state of desolation which I have before mentioned as prevailing above the ghats. Mr. Jenkins in his report on the Nagpore State mentions the tract of Deogurh below the ghats as being a generally well populated and well cultivated country ; the exactions of the Mahratta Government, however, between the years 1803 and 1807 had been pretty universal, and this portion of the country was no exception to the rule. Captain Gordon found the country very much over-assessed and consequently impoverished and he set himself at once to the task of granting relief by a considerable abatement of the demand. Since then again the revenue has gone on rising, though but little new land can have been taken up, and so high was the demand at the time of the annexation in 1854 that a very large amount of reduction had to be given : since then however an increase has taken place at each succeeding settlement, and the present demand is certainly very high if judged by the amount of the declared "nikasee" which has formed the basis of all previous settlements.

346. The chief, and in fact only, town of any size in this Pergunnah is that of Pandoornah, there is no peculiar staple manufacture, but all ordinary trades are represented, and there are several wealthy money dealers and Mahajuns. Resources, population &c. Town duties are collected and a town police force maintained; there is also a large and accessible market for produce of all descriptions. The other villages in the Pergunnah are almost purely agricultural and but few of them are of any size; the mass of the population not immediately engaged in trade seems to have centred itself in the town of Pandoornah alone. Besides the ready market here presented, there is the highway leading from Nagpore to Baitool and the Nerbudda valley, and the neighbouring territory of Berar ready to absorb any amount of produce, not to speak of the large towns in the adjacent Nagpore district and those of Pergunnah Mohgaon, so that it may be said that every possible facility exists in this respect. At present the roads are all but impassable in the rains, but it is to be hoped that in time something will be done to establish permanent, means of communication, both with Baitool and Nagpore, and also with the rest of the Chindwara district, from which at present it is somewhat isolated owing to intervening jungles and absence of any decent road.

347. In the first group of villages the agricultural community consists almost entirely of Mahratta Koonbees. Agricultural community. In the second group there is an admixture of Rajpoots, Bhojers and inferior castes, while in the third group the population consists almost entirely of Gonds and a few low castes who live by labour and are found in almost every village. In some few villages Malees are found but not in any number. The general style of agriculture, at least in the two first groups, is of a very superior order to that of the parts of the district lying above the ghats, much labour is expended on the preparation of the soil, all available manure is applied to the land, weeding is carefully gone through and in fact the most is done to secure a good crop. There is comparatively little irrigation however, which I can only account for by ancient custom; what wells there are however are frequently turned to account to irrigate the ordinary dry crops when suffering from drought.

348. I have said that the majority of the non-agriculturists have centred themselves in Pandoornah. This system of centralisation has also been followed somewhat by the cultivators not only around Pandoorna, but also in some other of the larger villages; the consequence is that a number of villages, comprising in some cases the best land to be found in the Pergunnah are, as it is termed, "reeth" without habitation and cultivated pyekasht entirely. Number of villages cultivated Pyekasht. By the custom of the country no manure is allowed to go outside the limits of the village where it is collected, and consequently lands tilled pyekasht receive no artificial aid except in cases where the cultivator builds a cattle shed on his land, solely with

the view to storing manure. Again land held by pyekasht cultivators, is generally more or less at a distance from the residence of the cultivator, who is consequently unable to devote so much time to it, as he has to waste so much of it daily on the road to and fro. This will account for the great disparity now existing in Pandoornah itself and other large villages, and those in the immediate neighbourhood.

349. The staple crops in the first class villages are jowaree, cotton and toor, the latter being generally sown in rows alternately with cotton. These two crops occupy more than three-fourths of the area. The breadth of land under cotton has materially increased of late years, so much so that the amount of grain grown is said not to suffice for local consumption, and it has consequently to be imported from elsewhere. Gram, wheat and linseed are sown in small quantities and chiefly for the sake of rotating the crop. In the second class villages generally speaking there is less jowaree and cotton, and more of the rubee crops, wheat gram, muhsoor and others. This is partly owing to the nature of the soil and partly to inferior agriculture, as the rubee crops require nothing beyond ploughing the land and sowing the seed, whereas the khureef crops of cotton and jowaree to be successful require a certain amount of manuring and a good deal of subsequent labour in the way of weeding and hoeing. In some of the villages bordering on the Nagpore district the dye-plant Al or Morinda is cultivated to a certain extent, it is sown only by a tribe of Rajpoots called Alkurees, and these all reside in villages in the Nagpore territory, cultivating pyekasht. The plant is three years in the ground after which it is dug up with great labour, and the dye is extracted from the roots.

In the third class villages the rubee and kureef crops are about equally grown, but the style of agriculture is very inferior. What irrigation there is, is chiefly confined to the growth of sugar-cane, and in some few villages of vegetable produce. Hardly any opium is grown. In other respects the general mode of agriculture is similar to that pursued above the ghats.

350. Previous to assessment I divided the villages into chuks as above described according to natural qualifications. I then proceeded to test the actual rates of rent on each description of soil as shown by the khusra, first in single villages, and then on the totals of each group, and the result gave me a standard to go by, from which I deduced a graduated set of rates but slightly modified from those in actual existence, looking not only to the mean average but also to the highest rents prevailing in certain villages, and which it was fair to assume might also hold good in villages possessing similar facilities.



Rates.

351. I append a table of rates per acre.

DESCRIPTION OF SOIL.	Chuk I.				Chuk II.				Chuk III.									
	Deducted rates.		Assumed rates.		Deducted rates.		Assumed rates.		Deducted rates.		Assumed rates.							
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.						
Kalee, 1st Class ... ..	2	1	7	2	12	0	0	15	2	1	12	0	1	4	0	1	0	0
Do. 2nd do. ... ..	2	3	7	2	4	0	0	15	5	1	8	0	0	7	6	0	12	0
Moorund ... ..	1	3	6	1	8	0	0	13	2	1	0	0	0	6	4	0	8	0
Khurdee ... ..	0	8	11	0	12	0	0	7	0	0	8	0	0	4	3	0	6	0
Raetaree ... ..	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	5	3	0	6	0	0	3	0	0	3	0
Burdee ... ..	0	9	1	0	10	0	0	2	9	0	4	0	0	3	5	0	3	0

On all irrigated land I have assumed a rate of Rupees 5 which is in about the proper proportion to the dry land rates.

352. The above represent my assumed rates which are partly founded on existing ones; but while my highest rate is Rupees 2-12-0, there are some lands paying nearly Rupees 4 per acre, and similarly in the second chuk, while the highest assumed rate is Rupee 1-12-0 there are lands paying as much as Rupees 2-12-0 per acre and so on.

353. In applying these rates I have found the result to vary exceedingly even in adjacent villages possessing apparently a very similar soil, in fact I am quite at a loss to account for the very great difference existing in the present rates between estates immediately co-terminous. I can only put it down to the want of all previous measurements, or knowledge of area on the part of the people and ancient custom which has been followed from father to son, although during the Mahratta Government rents were regularly revised more or less at each triennial settlement. I have confidence in the accuracy of my measurements, still in assessing I have found it impossible to go simply on my rates, fair as I consider them and based on existing rents, but I have proceeded in a more general manner as follows:—

354. I have said before that under the Maharatta Government, rents were always kept up to meet the pressure of the Government demand; for the last ten years however this has not been the case, and the great rise in the value of produce has greatly enhanced the value of land; however temporary this present state of prices may be, at least as regards cotton, there is but little chance I think, seeing the manner in which communications are being opened up throughout the country, that prices will ever revert to their former low standard. I assumed therefore that a decided rise in rents may be looked for, and I was given to understand that rents were being raised in the adjacent parts of the Nagpore district, I have therefore assumed, to begin with, that a decided increase may be looked for in the rent-rolls. If this were all however, and if assuming that the rentals would rise even 25 per cent, a half asset assessment would very considerably lower the revenue. Besides such a proceeding would be indiscriminate and bear no relation to the capacities of individual estates. I have merely assumed the rise in rents as a reason for not giving any general and indiscriminate reduction. I have said that the present rates vary exceedingly. I have accordingly taken up villages by groups, similar as far as possible in all circumstances. I have taken the general rate on cultivation in each, and have thus arrived at a sort of standard to which all might I think be made to conform; the rate on cultivation as opposed to rates on each kind of soil may be the better resorted to here, as the value of the soil depends not so much on its intrinsic quality as on the mode of cultivation, viz ploughing, manuring and weeding; in this respect the agriculture of this portion of the district varies immensely from that of the portions situate above the ghats, and a different method of assessment may be resorted to. Thus then assuming a standard rate, looking to my deduced rates and the rent-roll with its prospects of increase, I have endeavoured to equalize the demand, giving relief where it seemed wanted and enhancing the demand where I thought the circumstances fully warranted it. That present rents are low as compared with the value of the produce is, I think, shown by my produce jumas which are immensely in excess of the estimates by rates, but which in fact are founded upon a very moderate estimate of productiveness, in many cases from the statements of the people themselves, and I have taken the average of the market prices for the last ten years. These estimates were in the first instance framed for the Mohgaon Pergunnah, where existing rates are rather higher, but the soil in point of fact is intrinsically inferior, and I could not therefore assume a less ratio of productiveness in this case.

355. I append a table of my rates for the chief articles of produce of the Khureef crops, the value depends so entirely on the mode of cultivation that I have taken one standard for all soils alike of vegetables, two or more crops being raised in the year, I assumed a value double that of Sugar, Rupees 12.

Crop.	Produce per acre.	Value.		Rate.	
		Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
<i>Khureef.</i>					
Cotton	80 seers kupas or 40 lbs. clean cotton	8	0 0	1	6 0
Jowaree	2 Khundies	10	0 0	1	12 0
Toor	160 Seers	6	12 0	1	4 0
Oorud	1 Khundie	7	0 0	1	3 0
Tilee	20 Kooros	10	0 0	1	10 0
Moong	1 Kundie	5	0 0	0	14 0
Arundee	15 Kooros	6	0 0	1	0 0
<i>Rubee.</i>					
Wheat in Kalee	2 Khundies	14	6 0	2	8 0
Do. in Moorund	25 Kooros	9	1 0	1	8 0
Gram	2 Khundies	14	6 0	2	8 0
Alsee	1 Khundie	11	0 0	1	4 0
Mahsoor in Kalee	2 Khundies	14	12 0	2	8 0
Do. in Moorund	30 Kooros	11	1 0	1	14 0
Teora or Lakh as Mahsoor		0	0 0	0	0 0
Koosum	2 Maunds	8	10 0	7	7 0
<i>Miscellaneous.</i>					
Sugar-cane	1 Khundie of Goor	35	0 0	6	0 0
Opium	3½ Seers	23	0 0	3	8 0
Al or Dye plant	2½ Maunds in 3 years	28	0 0	1	8 0

356. These are but rough estimates but they are approximately correct and at any rate do not exceed the average production; still the rates give a result immensely over that of rent rates, and are useless for purposes of assessment. In the second chuk villages I have taken two-thirds of the above rates, and in the third chuk one-half.

357. This Pergunnah like other parts of the district has always been highly assessed, and even though we may look for some rise in rents, still if anything like a half asset settlement is now to be made, a reduction must take place in the Government demand; on the whole therefore I am proposing a reduction though not to any great extent, as the people generally are well off, and the present assessment though high is not oppressively so. The present jumas vary from 80 to nearly 90 per cent. upon the total nikasee, allowing rents to rise 25 per cent, which is the very utmost that can be expected in any case; supposing this rise to take place equally over the whole, a settlement at half assets would entail a reduction of at least 15 per cent and in some cases even of more.

358. The amount of the revenue for the first year on record was Rupees 24,679, but much reliance cannot be placed on the recorded jumas of those times, as they were frequently only collected in part, the amount so collected varying each year of a settlement. At the annexation of the country the amount was Rupees 30,391 which at the next settlement under our rule was reduced to Rupees 26,281, and my present proposals come to Rupees 24,485, which gives a total reduction of about 7 per cent. on the whole.

359. The following is the table of rates.

#### ASSESSMENT RATES.

Chuk and Pergunnah.	Past Settlement.				New Settlement.							
	On Cultivation.		On Mal-goozaree.		On Cultivation.		On Mal-goozaree.					
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.				
Chuk I.	0	14	8	0	13	0	0	14	0	0	12	0
Chuk II.	0	6	8	0	4	9	0	6	6	0	4	6
Chuk III.	0	4	4	0	2	4	0	4	0	0	2	0
Pergunnah ...	0	9	3	0	6	6	0	8	6	0	6	0



360. The Plough jumas have been deduced from an average of the rent rates on the assumption that one plough ought to cultivate 20 acres of land, and the calculation is as follows :—

Chuk I. per plough .....	Rs. 19.
Chuk II. „ .....	„ 12.
Chuk III. „ .....	„ 5.

361. The highest and lowest rates of any one village in this Pergunnah are :—

AREA	Highest rates.			Lowest rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
On Cultivation .. . . .	1	9	6	0	1	9
On Malgoozaree . . . . .	1	8	3	0	1	0

#### PERGUNNAH MOHGAON.

362. This is the richest of all the Pergunnahs in the district, the best populated and the best cultivated. It contains in all 177 villages, of these two are held on mokasa, and twenty-eight in mukta tenure, while sixteen have been reserved from assessment as waste ; this leaves a balance of 131 villages now assessed.

363. The Pergunnah is bounded on the north by the line of ghats which separate it from the Balaghat or upper country of the Chindwara district ; some few of its villages are situate amid the jungles of the ghats. To the east the Pergunnah is bounded by spurs of the main line of ghats which as it were form the basis of the Khumarpanee Pergunnah, which is also above the ghats but a somewhat lower level ; westwards the Pergunnah merges without any definite line of demarcation into the Pandoornah Pergunnah ; to the south it is separated from the Nagpore district by a tolerably well defined line of rocky hills. The central portion of the Pergunnah may be described as a tolerably level basin drained by the river Kunhan, and one of its chief tributaries the Jam which flows from the direction of Pandoornah ; it has been proposed by the Chief Commissioner to form this basin into a vast tank by damming up the Kunhan where it escapes at the south-eastern corner of the district through a narrow pass between the hills of Khumarpanee and of Nagpore. As above described this basin is shut in on three sides by

high hills; it is further intersected in several places by lines of hill, and to the westward also it merges into high broken ground formed by spurs from the ghats which here trend a long way to the southward. Almost the whole of this basin is now under cultivation chiefly with the Khureef crop, cotton, jowaree and toor being the great staples.

364. I have formed the tract into three chuks for purposes of assessment. The first comprises all the villages occupying the main portion of the basin above described; the second comprises the villages lying in unfavorable situations among the broken ground bordering upon the surrounding hills, and the third chuk comprises all those villages actually situated in the jungles and also some of the poorer ones on the borders of the open country.

365. The villages in the first class are almost entirely under cultivation; they possess generally a level surface but the quality of the soil varies very much; more however depends upon the mode of cultivation and the labour expended upon the soil than upon the intrinsic quality of the soil itself; thus by means of manure and careful husbandry some apparently very poor soils are made to yield excellent crops of cotton, jowaree and toor. Comparatively little of the soil is adapted to the growth of rubee crops and these are not held in much account. Irrigation is not much resorted to except in a few villages where this style of cultivation is carried to the greatest perfection; generally speaking much improvement might be effected in this respect, but just now the cultivators are so intent on growing cotton that they pay little attention to the subject of irrigation; the second chuk of villages has a somewhat similar but rather poorer soil; the crops raised and mode of cultivation are also very similar; much of the land in these villages is cultivated Pyekasht from the larger villages of the first class: land so cultivated loses the benefits of manure, as by local custom manure may not be removed from the village where it is formed. The third class villages present a great variety of feature, and possess almost every kind of soil, but the cultivators are chiefly Gonds and but inferior crops are raised.

366. The mass of the cultivators in the two first classes of villages belong to the Koonbee caste and speak the Marhatta language; there are also in places a few Rajpoots, and on the borders of the Pandoornah Pergunnah there are some large villages of Bhoys; the large towns of Mohgaon and Lodeekhera possess a large mixed population of all castes and trades; the latter town is especially famed for the produce of its looms, and for its brass and copper manufactures. The mass of the cultivators must be pronounced to be well off; the last few years especially as high prices have raised many of them to a state of independence never before known by them, but so improvident are they in their habits that should a sudden revulsion in prices take place they will sink as suddenly as they have risen.

367. Regarding my mode of assessment and the grounds upon which I have based my proposals, I would refer to my remarks on the Pandoornah Pergunnah, which contains briefly all I have to say on the subject.

368. I here append a table showing the actual average rents as deduced from the Khusras, and the assumed rates that I have framed from them.

DESCRIPTION OF SOIL.	CHUK I.			CHUK II.			CHUK III.											
	Deduced rates from the Khusra.			Assumed rates.			Deduced rates from the Khusra.			Assumed rates.								
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.						
Irrigated land.....	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Kalee 1st Class.....	3	10	9	3	12	0	0	15	8	1	8	0	0	10	1	1	0	0
Kalee 2nd Class.....	2	4	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	4	0	0	10	0	1	0	0
Moorund.....	1	6	10	1	12	0	0	13	9	1	0	0	0	6	1	0	8	0
Khurdee.....	0	14	1	1	0	0	0	9	8	0	8	0	0	6	4	0	8	0
Raitaree.....	0	9	7	0	12	0	0	6	10	0	8	0	0	5	2	0	6	0
Burdee.....	0	8	9	0	10	0	0	5	4	0	4	0	0	2	1	0	2	0

369. The Pergunnah or deduced rates have been actually worked out from the rents paid by different soils as entered in the columns of Khusra, and the assumed rates have been framed partly with a view to the highest rates actually existing in some villages and partly on the supposition that rents admit of a certain increase.

370. The Produce estimates are precisely the same as were applied to the Pandoornah Pergunnah, as also the estimates by Ploughs; the former are based on the most moderate calculations of the productiveness of the several crops, but they will be found to be much in excess of my rates upon soils; the latter however have been my chief guide in assessing, as I deem it quite impracticable to base proposals upon calculations of supposed productiveness which at best can only be approximately true, and form no true test of what land can pay for a succession of years irrespective of the accidents of seasons.

371. As regards prospects of improvement, the village of the first chuk are almost entirely under cultivation, and so no extension of the cultivated area can be looked for, more irrigation might be introduced but at present the cultivators are more intent on growing cotton than any thing else and do not care to sink their money in wells. In the second group of villages there is much room for improvement, at present many of them are uninhabited and the land is cultivated pyekasht which renders rents lower than they might be with a resident population, there is also a considerable extent of culturable waste; this is owing partly to want of population and to the neighbourhood of jungles which render the profits of agriculture very precarious, owing to the incursions of wild animals which both devour a proportion of the crop and entail a considerable expense for watching. In the third class villages I can look for no great improvement, as the unhealthiness of the climate and the scarcity of water added to the dread of wild animals form an effectual bar to the introduction of a better class of cultivators, and as long as Gonds form the mass of the population the cultivation of the soil will never reach any perfection.

372. The total present revenue, including mukta or quit-rent villages, is Rupees 70,695, and my revised assessments give a total of Rupees 66,405, being a reduction of Rupees 4,290 or about 6 per cent upon the whole.

373. The following is the table of rates showing past and present settlements.

Table of rates.

#### ASSESSMENT RATES.

Chuks and Pergunnah.	Past Settlement.			New Settlement.				
	On Cultivation.		On Malgoozaree.	On Cultivation.		On Malgoozaree.		
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.		
Chuk I.	1	0 10	0	13 11	0	15 7	0	13 0
Chuk II.	0	8 0	0	5 9	0	7 6	0	5 6
Chuk III.	0	5 8	0	2 1	0	4 9	0	1 9
Pergunnah ...	0	12 6	0	9 3	0	11 9	0	8 9



374. The highest and lowest rates of any one village in this Pergunnah will be seen from the following table.

REVENUE RATES.

AREA OF LAND.	Highest rates.			Lowest rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
On Cultivation .. .. .	2	0	0	0	1	1
On Malgoozaree .. .. .	1	12	3	0	0	4

TALOOKA AMBARRA.

375. This is a small Talook subordinate hitherto to Pergunnah Mohgaon. It lies partly above and partly below the ghats which at this point are very straggling and irregular in their formation. It comprises in all 64 villages; of these 20 villages have been excluded from settlement as being totally waste.

376. Previous to the annexation of the country the whole Talooka was held as a single mukta tenure, and formed an appanage of the Rajah of Nagpore; since then it has been held in Malgoozaree by Janojee Rajah with whom three several settlements have been made for each village. The enquiry into proprietary right has resulted in the recognition of the claims in some instances of Theekadars of long standing who have been declared under-proprietors; in the greater number of cases however proprietary right has been conferred on Janojee Rajah: the latter has never exercised any interest in these villages beyond receiving the rents, he is an absentee and holds none of the land in his own hands: hence the tenants generally have been left very much to their own resources and these being very limited little has been done to effect improvements.

377. In assessing these villages I have followed the principle pursued by me in regard to other Gond properties; no rent rates have been applied; plough and produce rates have been adopted from those applied to the third Chuk of villages of the Pandoornah Pergunnah. The present assessment is high as compared with the assets and the value of many of the estates has been curtailed by the demarcation of waste lands, I have accordingly proposed what I consider a fair reduction in the demand the more so that I cannot look forward to any very great improvement beyond what the rise in the value of land generally must effect.

- 378. Appended is the table of rates, the latter as will be remarked fall extremely low, but it could not be otherwise in so wild and poor a tract.

On revenue of assessed villages.	Assessment rates on area of.					
	Cultivation.			Malgoozaree.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Past settlement .. . . .	0	2	11	0	1	6
Proposed settlement .. . . .	0	2	6	0	1	3

879. The highest and lowest rates of any one village of this Ta-look are as follow.

AREA OF.	Revenue rates.					
	Highest rates.			Lowest rates.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Cultivation ... ..	0	13	4	0	0	9
Malgoozaree ... ..	0	5	0	0	0	6

380. I have thus briefly endeavoured to illustrate the principles upon which my assessments have been based without entering into needless details, and I trust I have succeeded in conveying some idea of the country and its natural resources.

Principles of the Assessment.

- 381. The district is now beginning to recover from the effects of former misgovernment and over-assessment. Cultivation has now been carried to that extent that no great improvement can be looked for except by means of extended irrigation, which must be a work of time fostered by a light and equitable settlement; until within the last ten years rents have ever been subjected to periodical adjustment which has kept them high. The last settlements were made about 80 per cent of the assets, and under the

General reflections.

liberal policy now adopted towards the landholders a reduction of the Government demand has been rendered imperative, but in judging of the amount of reduction to be so given I have taken into consideration the enhanced value of produce and the probable improvements that will be effected during a settlement of thirty years duration.

382. I am aware that it is thought that in this, as well as in other districts, of the Central Provinces the land yields Land revenue apparently very little revenue for its capabilities, and this is very small. certainly true to a certain extent. Still existing facts cannot be overcome and a settlement to be worth anything must be founded on facts and not on mere suppositions. It would not be honest to assume a certain rental as possible without any prospect of its ever reaching to that amount. Such a procedure would be to render a half asset settlement a mere farce. As we have made a profession of liberal principles we must be content to make a corresponding sacrifice of revenue.

383. The following table shows the fluctuations of the revenue.

Name of Pergunnahs.	Revenues of		
	Average for period of 5 years ending 1861.	In 1864	Present.
Mohkhair	35,440	37,088	33,393
Chorye	29,874	32,157	28,027
Chindwara	22,388	24,074	20,726
Amurwara	18,068	20,304	17,818
Omrait	16,133	16,501	14,894
Assair	8,371	9,214	8,796
Talooka Hurrakot	442	442	552
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>1,30,716</b>	<b>1,39,780</b>	<b>1,24,206</b>
Pandoornah	25,690	26,281	24,485
Mohgaon	72,220	70,714	66,405
Talooka Ambarra	1,067	1,370	1,189
Khumarpanee	5,675	7,178	6,637
<b>Total....</b>	<b>104,652</b>	<b>105,543</b>	<b>98,716</b>
<b>Grand Total...</b>	<b>2,35,368</b>	<b>2,45,323</b>	<b>2,22,922</b>

384. I also append a table showing the entire rent-roll of the district previous to settlement, and that as recorded after adjustment of rents, in both cases the rent of the seer land is included.

Pergunnah.	Rent roll.	
	Previous to settlement.	After settlement.
Mohkhair .. .. .	49,392	52,874
Chorye ... .. .	39,699	42,833
Chindwara .. .. .	30,764	33,127
Amurwara .. .. .	26,797	27,466
Oomrait ... .. .	22,028	22,754
Assair .. .. .	12,920	14,574
Talooka Hurrakot .. .. .	730	744
Total.....	1,82,330	1,94,372
Mohgaon .. .. .	87,221	96,020
Talooka Ambarra .. .. .	2,007	2,253
Pandoornah .. .. .	32,156	32,603
Khumarpanee .. .. .	9,903	10,100
Total	1,31,287	1,40,976
Grand Total....	3,13,617	3,35,348

385. All the assessments have been reported in the form prescribed by the Settlement Commissioner, these statements are submitted along with this report. They have supplied the place of the statement No. II. as it was termed in which the assessments of the North Western Provinces were reported. The various columns speak for themselves and require but little further notice.

386. The items of area include the waste lands which have been excluded from the settlement but where land has been so reserved the extent of it is entered in the column of remarks.