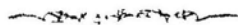


REPORT
ON THE
LAND REVENUE SETTLEMENT
OF THE
BAITOL DISTRICT,
NERBUDDA DIVISION, CENTRAL PROVINCES.
EFFECTED BY
W. RAMSAY, B.C.S.
1866.



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1867.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Map of the Baitool District.	
Letter from Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, No. 719, dated 25th February 1867	1
Letter from the Settlement Commissioner, No. 268, dated 25th January 1867	5
Report on the revision of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Baitool District—	
Introduction	25
Section I. Topography	27
II. Village Communities.....	33
III. Population	38
IV. Landed Tenures.....	49
V. Agriculture	59
VI. Commerce and Trade	78
VII. Former Assessment and past Fiscal History..	81
VIII. Data and Statistics of present Assessment ..	90
IX. Jagheer and Maafee Land	122
X. Forest and Jungles	125
XI. Financial Results—Conclusion	136
Supplementary Report by Mr. A. M. Russell, Officiating Settle- ment Officer.....	139
Statements I. to IV.	

No. $\frac{719}{37}$

From the SECRETARY to the CHIEF COMMISSIONER,

To the SETTLEMENT COMMISSIONER,

Central Provinces.

Dated Nagpore, 25th February 1867.

SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge your letter No. 268, of the 4th February, forwarding Mr. Ramsay's final report upon the Baitool Settlement, and recommending that the revised Settlement be now confirmed for thirty years.

2. From Mr. Ramsay's report the Chief Commissioner gathers that the *Khusreh* measurements were not so well done in the Baitool district as in other parts of these Provinces. And there is, it would seem, a possibility that the professional Survey may show some of the measurements to have been incorrect. But on the other hand the Settlement Officer appears to have made efforts for rectification, and to have effected something to remedy the errors; and further the *Khusreh* measurements are fairly correct for the open and plain tracts of the district, while it is in the hilly country, where villages are small, and cultivated patches are much scattered, that errors of measurement may, it is feared, exist.

3. In December 1862, when Captain Hector Mackenzie visited the Baitool district on special inspection duty connected with the Settlement, it was reported that the *Khusreh*

maps and papers were apparently good. The revised Settlement has now been working successfully for three years; the Commissioner of the division, Major Hector Mackenzie, considers that the new assessments are on the whole working tolerably well; the people of the district appear to be satisfied; and the inhabitants of neighbouring districts regard the revised Baitool Settlement as being very moderate. On the other hand the fiscal interests of the State have not been lost sight of, for the land revenue of the district is now 32 per cent* above what it was under the former Settlement.

4. Looking to this general *consensus* in favour of the Settlement, the Chief Commissioner decides not to withhold confirmation from the Baitool Settlement, on account of the supposed inaccuracy of some of the measurements. Professional Survey parties cannot enter the Baitool district for another year at least. They would not be able to furnish data for testing the entire *Khusreh* measurements until the year 1871, and by that time the Settlement would have been seven or eight years in operation. It would impair the confidence now felt in the Settlements of surrounding districts, and it might provoke wide distrust, if a regular remeasurement of any villages in Baitool on the *Khusreh* system were now to be undertaken. There is no ground for supposing that such inaccuracy as there may be in the measurements has entailed any fiscal loss on the State; and it is quite certain that any small additional land revenue a remeasurement might bring would be dearly bought, if its price were the creation of any general distrust in respect of the permanency of the assessments; and in respect to the security against any enhancement.

* This is exclusive of all future income to be derived from excess wastes, now for the first time marked off as State properties. In the year 1866-67 this income amounted to Rs. 16,000 in the Baitool district.

5. After weighing fully all these considerations, the Chief Commissioner hereby confirms the Baitool Settlement for a period of thirty years, with effect from the 1st July 1864. The Deputy Commissioner of Baitool will be instructed to publish as widely as possible to the people of his district the fact that their Settlement has now been confirmed.

6. While acknowledging the diligence and ability which Mr. Ramsay brought to bear on the Settlement and especially on the expeditious completion of the assessments, the Chief Commissioner cannot accord unqualified commendation. He considers that the Settlement Officer ought to have earlier and more prominently brought to notice the defects in the measurements, if indeed they be defective. The proper remedy could then have been applied, and the errors would have been corrected. Again, the inaccuracies and omission in the record of rights--since set fully right by Mr. Russell--though due in the first instance to the inefficiency of the Superintendent, are yet partly attributable to the want of supervision by the Settlement Officer. And, as observed by yourself, Mr. Ramsay is responsible for the quality of the work done under his immediate superintendence. The Chief Commissioner hopes to be able to give fuller and less qualified praise to the Chindwarra Settlement, now rapidly drawing to a close under Mr. Ramsay's supervision. And it is expected that Mr. Ramsay will take such warning from the experience of the Baitool Settlement as may ensure that the shortcomings here commented on may not recur.

7. The Chief Commissioner's thanks are due to Mr. Russell, officiating Settlement Officer, who by dint of diligence, care, and firmness, corrected the Baitool Settlement records, supplied omissions, and has finally made the Settlement papers over to the Deputy Commissioner and to the people in a complete and reliable state.

8. The Baitool Settlement report, with your letter under acknowledgement, and this despatch, may be printed under your supervision.

I have, &c.

C. BERNARD,
Secretary to Chief Commissioner.

Herewith returned.

No. 268 of 1867.

From J. H. MORRIS, Esq.,
Settlement Commissioner, Central Provinces,

To the SECRETARY TO CHIEF COMMISSIONER,
Central Provinces.

Dated Jubbulpore, the 25th January 1867.

SIR,—I have the honour herewith to submit for final sanction the Settlement report of the Baitool district, together with the Statements noted in the margin, furnished by the Settlement Officer, Mr. W. Ramsay. This report is dated 8th April 1865, and was submitted by the Settlement Officer upwards of a year and a half ago; but as it had become apparent, soon after the submission of the report, that the Settlement misls were far from complete, and required amendment and modification, these matters were, in the absence of Mr. Ramsay on leave, made over to Mr. Russell for completion, and the submission of the report for final sanction was consequently delayed. ✓ Mr. Russell has now furnished a report regarding the revision of the records and final completion of the papers; and I beg herewith to annex copy of the same as a supplement to Mr. Ramsay's report; and as I have now every reason to believe that the Settlement works well and is complete in all essential particulars, I have the honour to solicit that it may receive the confirmation of the Chief Commissioner for 30 years from the 1st July 1864, the date of the amendment of the revised assessment.

- 1 General Statement in Acres—1 Vol.
- 1 Do. do. totals arranged according to Chuks, Talooks, Pergunnahs and Tehseels.
- 1 Annual Jumma Statement—1 Vol.
- 1 Comparative Statement of Area, &c. &c.
- 1 Statistical Statement of the District.
- 1 Map of the District, illustrative of the report.
- 1 Statement of Judicial work.

2. Mr. Ramsay has furnished a full and elaborate report on all the more important points connected with Settlement operations which have been more or less in progress in the Baitool district for the last 10 years, with the exception of the preparation of the record of rights, which, as above stated, has been reported on by Mr. Russell; and as the Chief Commissioner's local knowledge of the district is almost as great as that possessed by myself, I need not follow Mr. Ramsay through all the points he has noticed, but observing the order of his subjects, will advert only to such points as seem to require particular notice.

3. Before proceeding to generally describe the district, Mr. Ramsay notices in his opening paragraphs the nature of the measurements completed before he took charge of the Settlement, and the measures adopted by him to test the statistics. The result is not altogether satisfactory, but still I am hopeful that there has been no real loss as regards the Government revenue, as might have been the case in a more highly cultivated and fertile district, where the assessment would have been directly based on returns of area and soil, rather than on more general considerations of locality, population, rental, &c.

4. To Mr. Ramsay's general description of the district, as given in Section I. of his report, I have not much to add, as it contains nearly all that can be said regarding the topography, climate, general character, and natural resources of this part of the country. I would however draw passing attention to the following facts, viz. that little more than $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the total area of the district is cultivated; that notwithstanding the existence of numerous rivers, little or no use is made of them for irrigation, that though the means of communication generally are good, still that some of the more important roads, such as that between Baitool and Chindwarra, are almost impassable during the rains, and that the district is without any towns or cities of importance.

5. In Section II. Mr. Ramsay adverts to the village communities, and describes the hereditary village officers and village servants. His description is not without interest, and I would beg leave to draw attention to his remarks regarding the village accountants (Pandiahs), and to add the following observation regarding this class of village servants, as also the Kotewars and Joshees.

6. Mr. Ramsay has, I think, correctly described the position of the Putwaree (Pandiah) at the commencement of Settlement operations in this district; and he is, in my opinion, right in saying that the hereditary tenure dates from our time, and that the office had been more or less regulated and interfered with at each successive Settlement. Under these circumstances I concurred with him in considering that no great advantage would be gained by reverting to the state of things preceding 1856, and I therefore sanctioned his proposal to leave matters in *statu quo* as far as possible, merely removing incapables and new men, and modifying the circles, so as to equalize the revenue derived from each, and fix a fair remuneration for each incumbent. The necessity also of leaving the mode of remuneration to be privately adjusted between the proprietors and the Putwaree was duly impressed on the Settlement Officer; and he was informed that all dues hitherto realized from cultivators should continue to be paid as usual.

7. It is satisfactory to observe from the Settlement Officer's report that the payments fixed on, together with the perquisites from cultivators make the remuneration of the Putwarees amply sufficient: but I must not omit to mention that, since the submission of Mr. Ramsay's report, it was brought to my notice that the dues or perquisites formerly realized from cultivators, had been authoritatively compounded into money payments, and that the cultivators were, in consequence, generally dissatisfied. On this the matter was

again taken up, and the Officer in charge of the Settlement was directed to cancel any such unauthorized arrangement, and take measures for carrying out the proposals originally submitted by the Settlement Officer and sanctioned by me. This I have reason to believe has now been done; and as no complaints have reached me either from proprietors, cultivators, or Putwarees, I trust the arrangements now in force will work well and prove satisfactory.

8. The Kotewar, as described by Mr. Ramsay, is essentially the village drudge, and it would appear from paragraph 37 of the report now submitted, that though purely and solely the servant of the proprietor, his status and rights were defined in the village administration paper. On inquiry however it became manifest that the arrangements regarding Kotewars had not been carried out so completely as they might have been, and that further steps were necessary to define and record their rights, position and perquisites in accordance with the instructions conveyed in the Settlement Code, and the various Circulars issued on this subject. The matter was therefore again taken up, and has now, through the exertions of Mr. Russell, been completed in a satisfactory manner.

9. The Joshees or village astrologers are by no means a numerous or influential class in this district; it will be observed that Mr. Ramsay states that "the Joshee only occurs in a few villages, and that the rent free grants formerly enjoyed by this class of village servant have most of them been resumed." On this point I would add that these resumptions were made in accordance with former orders, and prior to the issue of the Chief Commissioner's recent instructions, and that I may consequently perhaps find it necessary to address you separately on this matter.

10. In Section III. of his report Mr. Ramsay treats of the population, and gives an interesting account of the various castes by which the Baitool district is populated, with details

of their customs, habits, and general character as agriculturalists. As the census lately taken is to be considered part and parcel of the general Settlement operations, I would suggest that Mr. Ramsay's report be supplemented with the statistics lately acquired as regards the present population, the average number of persons to the square mile, &c. &c. I would also draw attention to Mr. Ramsay's detailed notice of the hill tribes of Gond and Korkoos, who are found in large numbers in this district, and whose existence exercises an important influence on the character and habits of the population generally.

11. Section IV. is devoted to the notice of landed tenures, and a detailed description is given not only of rights in land as at present existing, and of the manner in which they have been treated and recorded, but the past history of the tract is reverted to, and an attempt made to trace the various steps which have led to the present state of affairs. That many of the old Wuttundar Patels disappeared, and that others had to make way for a race of speculating farmers is in a great measure true, but still the majority of these changes are by no means of recent date, as will be seen by reference to the annexed statement extracted from paragraph 108 of Mr. Ramsay's report :—

Tenure.	No. of cases.
Prior to British rule	566
From period of first Settlement, viz.	
A.D. 1822	309
From do. of last Settlement, viz.	
A.D. 1837	91
Since do. and prior to 1850	39
Subsequent to do.	87
Total cases of proprietary right	1,092

12. From the above, it would appear that more than half the villages of the district are still in the possession of persons whose ancestors held prior to British rule, whilst of the remainder, considerably more than a half changed hands at the first Settlement in 1822, and have since then been held continuously by the same parties, thus showing that out of 1,092 estates, 875 or nearly four-fifths had been uninterruptedly in the possession of the same parties for nearly 40 years, when proprietary right was conferred. The above cannot, in my opinion, be regarded as other than a fairly satisfactory result, for it proves incontestably that notwithstanding the disappearance, in a great measure, of the Wuttundar Patels, and the issue of instructions to the effect that present occupancy and continuous possession should, rather than an ancestral title, form the basis of the award of proprietary right, still that, as a general rule, strangers have not been introduced as proprietors, or proprietary right been conferred on others than holders of very long standing.

13. The majority of the proprietary right cases of the district, as also the appeals from the decisions of the Settlement Officer, having been decided and disposed of prior to my assuming charge of my present office, I am unable to give the result of my own experience in the matter; but judging from such cases as have come before me, I should be inclined to affirm without hesitation that substantial justice has been done, and the balance fairly held between claims resting on ancestral title, on the one hand, and those based on present occupancy and long continuous possession on the other.

14. There is one point, however, in connection with this subject of the award of proprietary right which calls for notice, and that is the very small number of persons who have been declared proprietors of their holdings. From paragraph 98 of Mr. Ramsay's report one would be led to infer

that in many estates old Wuttundar Patels still existed "as cultivators, struggling to keep up a position in the village of which they formerly had been the head;" and it was expressly to meet the claims of this class of persons that clause 3 paragraph 5 of my Circular No. 4 dated 27th October 1863, was with the sanction of the Chief Commissioner introduced, but from the table given in paragraph 114 it would appear that only 11 such have been declared entitled to the superior position of proprietors of their holdings, a fact which would prove either that descendants of the former proprietors have, as a general rule, disappeared altogether, or that as stated in paragraph 115, they declined the honour thus about to be conferred on them, and preferred to remain in the position of tenants.

15. In treating of the subject of landed tenures, Mr. Ramsay has dwelt at some length on the question of tenant right as formerly existing in this district. The Settlement Officer asserts that under the Mahratta Government no such thing as a prescriptive right of occupancy existed, and I am inclined to endorse this opinion, and to add that tenant right if it exists at all, has been created by the action of our Courts and the revenue system in force since the introduction of British rule into these Provinces. My views on this important subject having, however, been already laid before the Chief Commissioner in detail in my No. 1125, dated 18th April 1864, I will not dwell further on this now, but will proceed to notice briefly the results as given in the report.

16. Proceeding on the 12 years' rule, and regarding all cultivators who have held continuously for and above that period as hereditary tenants, *i. e.* tenants with rights of occupancy, Mr. Ramsay gives the following details. Hereditary cultivators 9,428; Tenants at will 20,904. The above figures would, however, appear to be incorrect, and as Mr. Ramsay's report was submitted before the issue of Circulars G. and G I.

in which detailed instructions were given regarding the sub-division of hereditary cultivators into two classes, viz., those with an absolute right of occupancy, and those with a right conditional on the non-alteration of the occupancy clause in Act X. of 1859, I beg to supplement the Settlement Officer's report with the following figures, taken from a statement submitted by Mr. Russell:—

Tenants with absolute rights of occupancy.	5,087
Ditto conditional ditto 2,977
Tenants-at-will 10,001

17. In connection with the subject of tenants, Mr. Ramsay has also dwelt on that of rents and their adjustment, a matter of which I will defer any detailed notice until I come to review that of revision of assessment, but I beg attention to the remarks in paragraph 103, and to endorse Mr. Ramsay's statement, that "the rule of our Courts fixing 12 years as the period, constituting a title to hereditary occupancy, was generally construed as giving permission to hold on the same fixed terms as heretofore, quite irrespective of the increased value of produce and consequently of land." So much in fact was the native, and in some instances the official mind impressed with this idea, that very detailed and explicit instructions were necessary to eradicate it, and even yet the baneful results may be traced in the very low rents paid by many of the so-called hereditary tenants.

18. In Section V. Mr. Ramsay gives a good description of the agriculture of the district. His remarks on the various soils and their capabilities, and his description of the different crops and methods of cultivation will be found interesting and worthy of perusal. The account given in paragraphs 145 to 158, of the cultivation of sugar-cane and opium is valuable, especially as regards the latter (opium), as this is the only district in these Provinces where this crop is regularly grown.

19. I entirely concur with what Mr. Ramsay says regarding the very inferior nature of the cultivation, and I would beg to draw attention to this fact, as it is in a very great measure owing to this, combined with the general sparseness of the population, that the average rate of Government demand falls at so low a figure. The absence of irrigation is also worthy of note, and goes far to confirm Mr. Ramsay's opinion as to the apathetic character and habits of the agricultural community of the district.

20. Section VI. on Trade and Commerce does not appear to call for any special remarks. The only indigenous manufacture worthy of note is pottery, and that is not by any means superior as regards trade, the exports consist of opium which is sent to Malwa, raw sugar (goor) which goes to Hooshingabad, jungle produce to the Berars, and a little rice to Boorhanpoor, whilst the imports comprise chiefly salt, cotton cloth, brass and iron vessels, and sundries.

21. In Section VII. Mr. Ramsay treats of the former assessment and past fiscal history of this district. His remarks generally are well worthy of attention, specially as regards the disastrous effects of the high assessments fixed during the early settlements. For facility of reference I annex details of the several Settlements made since 1803 A.D.

Period of Settlement.	Amount fixed.	Amount realized.
Previous to 1803.....	1,66,490	Not known.
From 1804 to 1816	2,46,649	Ditto
From 1821 to 1825 1st Settlement under British rule	2,86,580	2,55,600
2nd Do. from 1826 to 1828	2,03,471	Not stated.
3rd Do. from 1829 to 1833	2,00,510	1,84,898
4th Do. from 1834 to 1836	1,61,224	Realized in full.
5th Do. from 1837 to date or 20 years' Settlement.....	1,40,000	Ditto

22. From the above it will be seen that all the Settlements made from 1804 to 1833 were excessive, balances having accrued from year to year, and the people been reduced to a state of actual poverty and destitution, whilst from 1834, or for thirty years, the district has been in the enjoyment of a moderate assessment; the result also being as stated by Mr. Ramsay, that during that time the value of much of the land had been greatly increased, both by the sinking of wells, and the great rise in prices, so that now throughout the open parts of the district, the whole of the culturable land has been brought under the plough, and even in the wilder parts great inroads have been made upon the domains of the forest. The conclusions drawn by the Settlement Officer from the above results will be found clearly stated in paragraphs 228 and 229 of his report, and I am of opinion that he was fully justified in assuming therefrom that the Government revenue might be considerably increased without departing from that basis of moderation which was necessary to the future prosperity of the district.

23. In Section VIII. paragraphs 231 to 315, the data for assessment and statistics of the present Settlement are given. Mr. Ramsay has described his "modus operandi" so fully that it does not seem necessary for me to follow him through the various stages by which he arrived at the final result; but I would draw attention to the fact that, although fully justified in demanding an enhancement, the Settlement Officer aimed carefully at fixing a moderate assessment. One of the chief difficulties the assessing officer had to contend with was the absence of any fixed standard of rent rates for the various qualities of soil and produce. That as a general rule very light rents had prevailed for the last 25 years, and that these had in a great measure come to be regarded as stereotyped was obvious; and also that the rise in rents would be a gradual process, and that too great and sudden an

increase in the Government demand would have to be avoided, were inferences naturally following on the above, but in addition to these considerations, come the fact that rent rates varied, in almost every village, to such an extent that the Settlement Officer states "to ensure uniformity of practice, each village would require a set of rates of its own," so that we must not be surprised to find that in practice, the rates finally determined on were regarded rather as a general test than fixed standard according to which the Government demand was to be determined, and also that they (the rates) formed only one out of the many modes of determining the assessment; for Mr. Ramsay remarks that in assessing, the following points were also carefully looked to: situation, proximity to markets and means of communication, prevailing quality of the soil and nature of crops raised, facilities for obtaining water, proximity to jungle and haunts of wild animals, and character of the agricultural population.

24. For general purposes of assessment, the district was divided off into groups or circles of villages, fixed on according to their geographical position, and each circle (or *chuk* as it is technically termed) was subdivided into three classes, determined chiefly on the considerations alluded to at the close of the preceding paragraph. The following would seem to have been the six principal circles or *chuks*, viz., *Baitool* and *Ponee*, *Sainkhera* and *Patun*, *Mooltye* and *Dunawa*, *Amla*, *Devgaon* and *Nusserrabad*, *Atnair*, comprising the open and well cultivated parts of the country. In addition to these was *chuk Raneepoor*, *Shapoor* and *Dhoba*, which though not very well cultivated, still was superior to the remainder of the district, which consisted of tracts thinly inhabited, but partially cultivated, and more or less overrun with jungle.

25. The principles which have guided the Settlement officer in dealing with these last mentioned tracts will be found recorded in paragraphs 300 to 302 of his report. I would

merely state here that the assessments have been made talookwara, each talooka being considered as a chuck by itself, an advisable arrangement in my opinion, as each talooka will generally be found to be complete and compact in itself though differing in geographical position and other little particulars from any of its neighbours. There would seem to have been six chuks or talookas thus dealt with, viz., *Jhullar*, *Bordah*, *Jamgurh*, *Kaisea*, *Neemagurh* and *Cheerapatta*, together with ten wild talooks of the *Saoligurh* pergunnah, all belonging to one proprietor, Govinda Patel, a Korkoo, which were separately assessed for reasons given in paragraph 309 to 311 of the report.

26. For facility of reference I annex two statements, one showing the rates generally adopted by the Settlement Officer in fixing the jummas of each chuck, and the other, the rates on malgoozaree and cultivation and the fiscal result of his revision of assessment in the principal chuks or circles.

STATEMENT No. I.

CHUKS.

Description of Soil.	Baitool and Pownee.		Sainkhera and Patun.		Mooltye and Dunawa.		Amla.	
	1st Class.	2nd Class.	1st Class.	2nd Class.	1st Class.	2nd Class.	1st Class.	2nd Class.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Irrigated land	1 5 0	1 0 8	1 8 0	1 3 3	1 5 0	1 2 0	1 6 0	1 4 7
Kalee, 1st Class.....	0 14 0	0 10 0	0 12 0	0 8 0	0 10 6	0 7 6	0 10 3	0 9 4
Ditto 2nd Class	0 12 3	0 8 4	0 9 0	0 7 3	0 7 10	0 6 9	0 8 5	0 7 7
Moorund	0 10 6	0 6 8	0 7 0	0 5 7	0 6 1	0 5 3	0 6 6	0 6 0
Khardce	0 5 3	0 5 0	0 4 0	0 3 3	0 3 6	0 3 0	0 3 9	0 3 5
Retaree	0 3 6	0 3 4	0 3 0	0 2 5	0 2 7	0 2 3	0 2 9	0 2 7
Burdee	0 1 9	0 1 8	0 2 0	0 1 7	0 1 9	0 1 6	0 1 10	0 1 9

STATEMENT No. II.

Name of Chuk.	Total former Jumma.	Total revised Jumma.	Percentage of increase.	Rate of revised Jumma on Cultivation.	Rate of revised Jumma on Malgoozaree.	REMARKS
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	
Baitool and Pownee	34,005 0 0	44,164 0 0	29·9	0 6 11	0 5 0	
Sainkhera and Patun	19,044 0 0	24,898 0 0	30·5	0 7 4	0 5 9	
Mooltye and Dunawa....	28,778 0 0	38,146 0 0	32·48	0 4 3	0 3 0	
Amla.....	4,065 0 0	5,825 0 0	43·3	0 5 2	0 3 6	
Deogaon and Nusseerabad.	11,602 0 0	15,996 0 0	37·87	0 6 9	0 5 3	
Atnair	28,503 0 0	36,829 0 0	29·2	0 3 10	0 2 2	
Raneepoor, Shahpoor, and Dhuba	6,251 0 0	10,628 0 0	70·	0 3 4	0 1 4	
Jhullar	700 0 0	1,000 0 0	43·	0 4 7	0 2 9	
Boodah.....	Not known, be- ing Jagheer.	1,500 0 0	..	0 2 6	0 0 9	
Jamgurh	230 0 0	293 0 0	27·4	0 1 7	0 0 3	
Kaiseea	265 0 0	410 0 0	54·7	0 2 3	0 0 8	
Neemgurh	425 0 0	560 0 0	31·76	0 2 9	0 0 8	
Cheerapatha	150 0 0	135 0 0	..	0 4 3	0 1 1	Decrease 10 per cent.
10 Talooks of Pergunnah Saohghur	4,435 0 0	3,655 0 0	..	0 2 2	0 0 8½	Ditto 17·6 ditto.

27. From the above, it will be seen that with the exception of two of the milder and more jungly tracts, enhancement has been imposed on all the chuks at rates varying from 27 to 70 per cent., the highest percentage of increase is 70 per cent., but even with that the rate per acre of the revised jumma on cultivation does not exceed 3 annas 4 pies, which fully bears me out in what I formerly stated as to the Settlement Officer having aimed carefully at fixing a moderate assessment, that in every way justified in demanding an enhancement. Column 5 of Statement II. which gives for each chuk the rate per acre of the revised jumma in cultivation is worthy of attention. At first sight, these rates may appear very low; but that they are not too low, and that the Government demand has not been unduly sacrificed may be relied on from a consideration of the following circumstances: the poorness of the soil in all but the most favored localities, the inferiority of cultivation, the absence of irrigation and manuring, the low yield of produce per acre, the lowness of rents caused by the sparseness of the population, and the great want of cultivators as compared with the large amount of land to be cultivated; and lastly, the tenure on which the land is held, which renders it necessary to leave a larger margin of profit to suffice for both landlord and tenant.

28. The financial result of the revision of Settlement in the whole district has been a total increase of Rs. 44,591, the assessment having been raised from Rs. 1,40,000 to Rs. 1,84,591, or nearly 32 per cent. The revised jumma falls at the rate of 0-4-7 per acre in the cultivated area, and absorbs 69 per cent. of the gross rental realized by the landlords from all sources, and including the profits of their own "seer" lands. In the above is included the new rental, as given by the recent adjustment of rents, which has however only resulted in a very trifling increase on the former rents, as will be seen by referring to paragraph 105 of the report;

but then it must be borne in mind that rents in this district are very far as yet from having been finally adjusted, even with reference to prevailing prices and the present state of things; that the rise in prices has been so sudden and so great, that anything like a corresponding rise in rents cannot be overlooked for some years to come: that the former idea regarding the fixity of rents has not yet had time to be properly effaced or put aside, and that notwithstanding all these drawbacks rents are daily rising and their adjustment is going on so regularly year by year, that it may fairly be predicted that before half the term of this Settlement has expired landlords will, as a rule, be in the enjoyment of profits very nearly if not quite equal to the Government demand.

29. In Section IX. mention is made of the rent-free land, but the subject is not of much importance or one that requires special notice, as regards the Baitool district, the amount of land held revenue free being but trifling, and the greater portion even of that being only alienated for the lives of the present incumbents.

30. In Section X. the Settlement Officer treats at some length of the forests and jungles. Considering the general character of the district, the subject is one to which a considerable amount of importance attaches, and although the Settlement Officer's remarks might perhaps have been of a more practical character, still they are by no means devoid of interest and will well repay perusal. A list of trees indigenous to the district will be found in paragraph 332 which, as the Settlement Officer remarks, gives those which are most common, and the majority of which are good timber trees.

31. A very important point in connection with this subject of forests and jungles, is the manner in which the rules for the exclusion of excess wastes have been carried out, and on this point Mr. Ramsay's report affords full information; the reservations proposed by him also strike me as judicious,

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for whilst the Government interests have not been sacrificed, still all reasonable rights, derived from long occupation, &c., have been admitted. The total area reserved amounts to upwards of 1,078 square miles, in which are included 219 entire villages, which were declared wholly waste, and in which no Settlement operations have taken place. Since the exclusion of the wastes, inaccuracies were found to exist in some of the village papers, whilst in other cases the boundary marks, formerly laid down were found to have disappeared. These have now all been corrected, some of the more important errors on the spot by Mr. Ramsay himself, and it is now reported that boundary marks of a permanent nature have been laid down, so that no difficulties will, I trust, arise in future.

32. Mr. Ramsay has not devoted any separate portion of his report to remarks on the preparation of the record of rights, which is to be regretted, as it is in this matter of the record of rights that Mr. Ramsay's supervision has not proved to have been so complete and satisfactory as it might. It is however only fair to state that the additional charge of the Chindwarra Settlement, which Mr. Ramsay received in September 1863, obliged him to make over the final stages of the work to the Superintendent, Luchmun Sing, who unfortunately proved anything but an efficient officer, and it was chiefly this which led to the existence of the errors and omissions which were afterwards discovered in the Settlement records, and for the correction of which Mr. Russell was, after Mr. Ramsay's departure for England, placed in charge of this Settlement. I do not, however, consider it necessary to dwell further on this portion of the subject, as the nature of the errors and omissions above referred to, the measures taken for their correction, and the manner in which these measures were carried out, and the Settlement record finally completed and made over to the district office, will be found clearly stated in Mr. Russell's No. 82 dated 15th October 1866, to

my address, copy of which is herewith appended as a supplement to Mr. Ramsay's report.

33. The cost of the Settlement is stated by Mr. Ramsay to have amounted to Rs. 1,34,570, to which must be added a subsequent expenditure of Rs. 5,600 on account of revision of records, thus making a total cost of about Rs. 1,40,000 or 75 per cent. on the annual revenue of the district, which though certainly very high, still is not to be wondered at, as the district is essentially a poor one, and does not pay revenue in proportion to the expense incurred on it. The fact also of the very long period over which the measurements extended, consequent on interruptions caused by the mutiny and other unavoidable causes should not be lost sight of, and when to this is added the reflection that the increase in the revenue will cover the whole expenditure within a little more than 3 years, the general result, may I think, be regarded as very fairly satisfactory.

34. The only subordinate noticed by Mr. Ramsay in his report is Superintendent Luchmun Sing, to whom I have before referred, and whose shortcomings it is not necessary to notice further, as he is now no longer in Government employ. Mr. Russell in paragraph 19 of his report ascribes the credit of the revision of the records to Superintendent Nanuk Chund, and I desire to add my testimony to the good services of this officer in this respect. It also gives me much pleasure to commend to the favourable notice of the Chief Commissioner the highly satisfactory and judicious manner in which Mr. Russell himself supervised the by no means easy task of correcting and finishing the records made over to him for completion. Lastly, I earnestly commend to the favourable notice of the Chief Commissioner and of Government the merits and services of Mr. Ramsay himself. As stated at the close of his report, he joined the Settlement "new to the

work and totally without practical experience of the revenue system existing in these Provinces ;” he laboured hard at the assessments (the measurements having been completed before he took charge) and acquired a good practical knowledge of the people and agriculture of the district. The task before him was one of considerable difficulty in many respects, but still it was performed with ability and judgment, and I believe that the result of his labours, especially as regards the assessments, will be found in the good practical working of the Settlement.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. H. MORRIS,

Settlement Commissioner, Central Provinces.

BAITOO DISTRICT.

REVISION OF THE LAND REVENUE SETTLEMENT.

From W. RAMSAY, Esq.,
Settlement Officer, Baitool.

To J. H. MORRIS, Esq.,
Settlement Commissioner, Central Provinces.

Dated 8th April 1865.

INTRODUCTION.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit my report on the completion of the Baitool

General Assessment Statements, Chucks and Talooks, in 3 books.

1 General Statement in acres.

1 Do. Do. totals arranged according to Chucks, Talooks, Pergunnahs and Tehseels.

1 Annual Jumma Statement.

1 Return of Comparative Statement of area, &c., &c., &c.

1 Do. Statistical Statement of the District.

1 Map to illustrate Report.

Settlement for a term of 30 years from the 1st July 1864. I subjoin the papers and Statements as per margin.

2. Measurement operations were first commenced in 1855

under Mr. Sinclair, Deputy Collector; the mutinies interrupted the work for a time until July 1859, when operations were recommenced under Mr. Cline, Deputy Collector; with a few exceptions, measurements were brought to a completion by the end of the hot season of 1862. ✓

3. I took charge of the office in July of that year; my immediate attention was turned towards disposing of the outstanding proprietary right cases, the bulk of which had been previously disposed of by the Deputy Commissioner under whose superintendence Settlement operations had been hitherto conducted. Local inquiries and examination of the Khusra Misls led me to entertain some doubts of the accuracy of the statistics collected, but Captain Mackenzie inspected

the whole Settlement in that year, and on my representations an "am purtal" or entire testing was started. The result of this was to show certain discrepancies both in area and quality of soil: these were accounted for by the changes in cultivation which had taken place in the years that had intervened between measurement and assessment. I had the papers corrected, and then felt myself justified in proceeding to assess upon the amended statistics.

4. The first assessments were brought out in January 1863, but they had to be returned in consequence of certain orders issued meanwhile by the Chief Commissioner. Assessments were finally brought out in April, and by the end of September the entire assessment of the district was revised, and proposals submitted for 1,073 villages.

5. The attestation of rents and khewut operations were commenced under my own supervision in August. In November I proceeded to take charge of the Chindwarra Settlement, and the immediate conduct of the Baitool Settlement devolved on the Superintendent, Luchmun Sing, who brought the work virtually to a close in July last.

6. The Settlement operations under my control have accordingly extended over a period of rather more than two years from the time of taking charge, and of about eight years in all from the commencement of measurements. The latter as shown above were completed before my time. I have already stated that measures were taken by me to correct errors and supply deficiencies: one misfortune was the length of time over which measurement operations extended, it often happening, especially in the case of villages only partially under cultivation, that at the time of assessment cultivation and holding had so changed, that the old khusra had lost much of its value as a record, owing to the majority of the tenantry having been changed.

7. I have made these remarks to show the difficulties to be contended with in assessing, which have led me to base my calculations more upon general principles than upon strict figures and data recorded; of the principles on which I proposed to base my proposals for assessment I shall speak elsewhere.

8. The district has been so long under British rule, and so few events of any importance have occurred within its narrow limits, that I think it unnecessary to enter into any details of its past history; suffice it to say that it was once the seat of a Gond dynasty, and was known by the name of "Sirkar Kherla," so called from the fort of Kherla, which was the seat of the Government. As in other parts of Central India, successive waves of conquest have swept over the land; first came the Mahomedans and afterwards the Mahrattas, under whom the district formed a portion of the vast empire of the Rajas of Berar; it continued to form a part of the curtailed kingdom of Nagpore until the war with Appa Sahib in A.D. 1818, at the conclusion of which the youthful Rughojee was placed upon the musnud, and Kherla, or as it was henceforth termed Baitool, was along with other territories formally made over to the British Government, under which it has continued ever since.

SECTION I.—TOPOGRAPHY.

9. The district of Baitool lies wholly upon the high land comprising the main ridge and shoulders of the Sautpoora line of hills, which divide the plains of Nagpore and Berar to the south from the fertile valley of the Nerbudda on the north, and is situate between the 21st and 22nd parallels of North latitude and the 77th and 78th of east longitude: it has a mean elevation above the sea of about 2,000 feet, though some points of course are much higher, reaching to little short of 3,700 feet above the sea level. It is essentially a highland tract, but possessing every variety of external feature, from the valley smiling with corn and sugarcane, to the rugged precipice and mountain torrent brawling through the primeval forest. It divides itself naturally into several distinct portions, differing both in outward appearance, character of soil, and geological formation.

10. The chief town of Baitool is centrally situated, and lies in a level basin of rich soil, traversed by the perennial streams of the Machna and Sampna, and shut in by abrupt lines of stony hills on all sides but the west, where it is bounded by the deep valley of the Taptee, clothed on either side

with dense jungle. This tract is almost entirely under cultivation, and is studded with numerous and thriving village communities. To the south lies an extensive rolling plateau of basaltic formation, having the sacred town of Mooltye, and the springs of the river Taptee at its highest point, extending over the whole of the southern face of the district, and finally merging into the wild and broken line of ghats which lead down to the lower country of the plains; this part of the district consists of a succession of stony ridges of trap rock, enclosing valleys or basins of fertile soil of very varying extent and capabilities, and to which the cultivation is mostly confined, except where the shallow soil on the tops of the hills admits of being turned to account. The whole of the culturable soil has now been taken up, there are but few trees, and the general aspect is bare and uninviting.

11. To the north of Baitool there lies a tract of poor country, thinly inhabited and sparsely cultivated, terminating in the main chain of the Sautpooia hills, where a considerable fall takes place in the general level of the country. North again lies an irregular plain of sandstone formation, having in places the appearance of a vast park, well wooded, with a scanty population and little cultivated land; much of it is virtually unfit for the plough.

12. To the extreme north the district is bounded by a line of hills which rise abruptly out of the great plain of the Nerbudda valley. The western portion of the Baitool district is a wild tract of hill and jungle inhabited almost wholly by Gonds and Koorkoos; it has but a few hamlets, isolated by long tracts of waste land, and when seen from the tops of some neighbouring hill presents the appearance of a vast unbroken wilderness.

13. Politically the district is divided into four pergunnahs, that of Baitool comprising the central and northern portion, Atnair the southern, Mooltye the eastern, and Saoligurh the western. These pergunnahs are again subdivided into smaller talookas. There are two tehseelees, that of Baitool embracing the Baitool, Atnair and Saoligurh pergunnahs, and that of Mooltye the small but well populated pergunnah of that name.

14. The total area of the district is about 23,04,000 acres or 3,600 square miles, and of this it may be roughly stated that 6,42,640 acres only are under cultivation.

15. The principle river of the district is the Taptee which is supposed to rise in the large tank at Mooltye though in reality it rises about two miles off. The river runs nearly due west right through the district, until it emerges into the wild district of Gangra, a dependency of Berar.

16. In the same high plateau of Mooltye rise the Wurda and Bail rivers; the latter, one of the chief affluents of the Kunhan, which flows by Kamptee and ultimately into the Wyngunga. Mooltye thus sends its water both to the western and eastern coasts.

17. Other rivers are the Maohna and Sampna, which rising in the hills that shut in the rich basin of Baitool, unite their waters at the civil station of the district, thence forcing their way through the main chain of the Sautpoora hills, join the Tawa below Shapoor on the eastern edge of the district.

18. The Tawa rises in the Chindwarra district, and flows only for a short distance through the north-east corner of this district, and eventually flows into the Nerbudda above Hoshungabad.

19. Another largish river is the Moorund which runs north through the greater part of the Saoligurh pergunnah on the west and leaves the district near the town of Seonee in Hoshungabad.

20. These are the only rivers of any size, but throughout the district, and more especially in the Mooltye and Atnair pergunnahs amid the trap formation, there are a number of smaller streams which retain water in places all the year round. Some use is made of these for irrigation, but not so much as might be.

21. The means of communication throughout the district are generally good; in fact, I believe few districts in the Central Provinces are so well off in the matter of roads. The road from Hoshungabad to Nagpore traverses the length of the district and is more or less bridged. From Baitool to the frontiers of Hoshungabad the road is passable

for vehicles throughout the monsoon ; then there is a road from the civil station to Ellichpoor partially bridged ; good cleared fairweather roads also exist, one running through Saoligurh to Seonee in Hoshungabad, and another eastward towards Chindwarra. This latter just now is the worst, as it passes through a great deal of rich cultivated soil, and it becomes almost impassable after rains. This road in my opinion is the one now chiefly requiring attention, as better means of communication between the Baitool and Chindwarra districts are much needed.

22. Along the made road that traverses the district there are Serais at convenient intervals for travellers, but they have not been made much use of owing to the exaction of a certain fee ; steps have now been taken to put these on a better footing, and render them more generally useful to all classes of travellers.

23. A district possessing in places so high an elevation above the sea level would be thought to contain some spot suitable for a sanitarium ; the only place where there is any plateau at a high level is the hill of Khamla in the south-west corner of the district ; this forms part of a range adjoining the hills of Gawulgurh and Chikulda in Berar, and attains a height in places of 3,700 feet above the sea ; the plateau above referred to is somewhat lower, but it is almost out of reach of the hot winds, and would no doubt be an agreeable residence during the hot season ; it is also immediately accessible from the road leading from Baitool to Ellichpoor ; the present difficulty is the want of water, all efforts to obtain well water having hitherto failed, and all supplies of it have to be brought a considerable distance from the base of the hill ; considering how many preferable sites for sanitarium there are in the Central Provinces, it is not likely in my opinion that any resort will be made to Khamla, still it deserves a passing notice in a report of this sort.

24. There are no towns of any importance in the district, none in fact having a population of more than about 3,500 souls ; the largest villages are to be found in the open part of the district to the south ; comparatively few of the houses are tiled ; the majority of them are miserable structures of

sticks and mud with a thin thatched roof; the streetways are narrow and irregular and generally in a filthy condition; some few of the larger villages possess the remains of old mud forts, relics of the times of the Gond and Pindaree raids; in other respects they are totally devoid of all means of fortifications, and thus differ widely in appearance from the walled villages of the Berar and parts of the Nagpore country.

25. The villages are generally surrounded with patches of garden-land which are highly manured, and produce heavy crops of Indian corn, tobacco, beans and other vegetables; the poorer class of the population derive their chief means of subsistence from these gardens.

26. The jungle villages inhabited by Gonds or Koorkoos have a primitive appearance, but are as a rule much neater and cleaner than the Mahratta or other villages of the open country; they consist generally of one open roadway or street with houses on either side extending sometimes to a considerable length; the houses are generally constructed of bamboos or other rafters wattled together and plastered over with mud; the roof consists of a thin thatching kept in its place by stones and poles laid over it.

27. The villages of Gowlees and Aheers have a more straggling appearance, as attached to each dwelling house are one or more enclosures for tending the cattle at night; in other respects they resemble the Gond villages, but are not so clean; the houses themselves however are generally neat and kept in good order; in this respect the jungle villages contrast very favourably with those of the richer parts of the district. Personally, however, the Gonds are not remarkable for cleanliness.

28. The climate of Baitool, at least to Europeans, is highly salubrious; its height above the plains, and the neighbourhood of extensive forests, moderate the great heat of the sun, and render the temperature pleasant throughout the greater part of the year: during the cold season the thermometer at night continually falls to several degrees below the freezing point; little or no hot wind is felt before the end of April and it ceases after sunset; the nights in the hot season are invariably cool and pleasant; during the monsoon the climate is very damp

and at times even cold and raw, thick clouds and mist enveloping the sky for many days together.

29. In the denser jungles, of course malaria prevails for months after the cessation of the rains, but the Gonds do not appear to suffer much from its effects, travellers and strangers are liable to fever of a severe type at almost all seasons of the year.

Among the objects of interest in the district may be mentioned the old fort of Kherla situate on a small isolated hill within a few miles of the present civil station; this was the seat of Government under the Gonds and preceding rulers, and hence the district was until the time of its annexation to the British dominions, known as "Kherla Sircar." The local legend is that the fort was originally built by one Rajah Jespal, the founder of a Chutree dynasty many ages ago; the place afterwards fell into the hands of the Mahomedans, as many parts of the building now remaining are unmistakeably the offspring of Moslem art. Another remarkable fort is that of Borghur near Shapoor, it occupies the crest of a small isolated mass of granite scarped on all sides but one, which has been apparently upheaved in a mass out of the ridge of the Sautpoora hills which now forms its base; other old forts now existing only in name are those of Jamgurh in the north, Saoligurh in the west, and Jaitpoor in the east. The latter was once the seat of a minor Gond dynasty; a descendant of the family still holds a village in that part of the district.

30. To the lover of nature the Baitool district presents many objects of attraction; the resources of its forests are described elsewhere; it is equally rich in plants, flowers and ferns unknown to the regions of the plains. The fauna comprises specimens of most of the animals to be found in the southern portions of India; the predatory tribes comprise the tiger, panther, leopard, wolf and hyena; of deer the sambar, spotted deer, nilgaae, various kinds of antelopes and jungle sheep are plentiful, and herds of wild hog roam through the jungles; birds of varied plumage and song enliven the forests and attract the notice of the most casual wayfarer; to the geologist special features of interest present themselves

owing to the diversity of the formations; the south has its trap and the north its sandstone formation; while about the main range of the Sautpoora which bisect the district, trap, granite, sandstone, lime and other volcanic and metamorphic rocks are found in wondrous confusion, the evidences of some great convulsion of nature.

31. Coal is found along the bed of the Machna and Tawa rivers to the eastward of the town of Shapoor, and again to the west near the base of the Jamgurh hill; attempts have been made to work the veins, but the downward dip of the stratum would render the operation of mining exceedingly expensive, and it is doubtful whether the intrinsic quality of the coal would repay the outlay.

SECTION II.—VILLAGE COMMUNITIES.

32. In theory the village communities in this district were originally on the same footing as those in other parts of the Mahratta empire, comprising the "Bara Bullotee" or complement of twelve hereditary village officers. In fact, however, few if any villages have ever had the full number, and in the majority of cases only a few of the more necessary village servants are found. Such as they are, however, I will describe them.

33. First of all stood the Patel or headman of the village in matters of revenue and police. His position and duties I have elsewhere described under the head of landed tenures and I need say nothing more in this place.

34. The Havildar is more properly a private servant of the Malgoozar, who looks after the village affairs and collects rents in his absence; he is generally appointed or otherwise by the Malgoozar, but he receives the allowance of one kooroo or about 8 seers of grain from each plough in the village, termed by the people merhkooroo.

35. The Kotewar is essentially the village drudge; he belongs to the Dher caste; not only is he made useful on all occasions, such as bringing the tenants together at rent times, serving as the village messenger, and in general

doing the Malgoozar's biddings, but he is also supposed to be a general referee on all points connected with village boundaries, tenure of land, ancient customs, &c., and in fact is supposed to know more about the village concerns than any one else. The office has hitherto been hereditary in the same family, but generally in every village there is a large number of relatives, and by mutual agreement they select one of their number every year to perform the duties, the nominee being termed "Chureedar," from the stick which he carries as the badge of his office.

36. Formerly his only remuneration was an allowance of two kooros, or about 16 seers of grain from each plough, besides perquisites, such as the carcasses and skins of dead cattle; at the last Settlement, however, a field varying from 5 to 10 acres in extent, according to the size of the village, was set apart rent-free for the special remuneration of the Kotewar. In some few cases he cultivated it himself, but generally from want of bullocks and capital he had no resource but to sublet it for what he could get.

37. This system has been so far maintained that the proprietors have agreed to relinquish all demand for rent for land so enjoyed by Kotewars, but no regard has been had to this in fixing the Government demand, as it has been decided to look on the Kotewar as purely and solely the servant of the proprietor, who will be at liberty to dispense with his services should he wish it, subject to the control of the district officers. Such as he is, however, his status and rights are defined in the village administration paper.

38. The Burhaee is the village carpenter; he is bound to keep in repair all the agricultural instruments of the tenants for which he receives an allowance of about 4 kooros of grain from each plough: he also gets allowances of goor from each sugar-cane mill that he repairs. For new work done he is separately remunerated, as also for work done for other villages or strangers.

39. The Lohar is the village blacksmith, his duties and mode of remuneration are similar to those of the carpenter.

40. The Joshee is the village astrologer; he is a mendicant Brahmin, supported partly by an allowance of grain and partly

by receiving alms. Besides assisting in certain village ceremonies he is supposed to point out favourable times for commencing farming operations, proper places in which to sink wells, and so forth. He only occurs in a few villages. He formerly also enjoyed some rent-free land, but these grants have most of them been resumed.

41. The Bhoomuk is only occasionally found; he is generally a Gond, and is supposed to have the power of charming away tigers from a village, and to possess a certain power over evil spirits. To this day when any village has particularly suffered from the ravages of a tiger, it is the practice of the Malgoozar to get a Bhoomuk to settle by granting him land and other allowances.

42. The Garpugaree is the religious mendicant, whose duty it is to avert hail from the crops; he receives a certain allowance of grain, but is said not to be paid in those years when hail actually falls.

43. The Chumar repairs all leather work, but receives no fixed remuneration. The Nae or barber stands also on a similar footing, being generally paid in money by private agreement.

44. Not the least important member of the village community is the Putwaree, or Pandia as he was termed by the Mahrattas. It would appear that under the former Government there was no regularity in practice regarding the appointment of these persons; in many villages they did not exist and where they did they were looked upon more as private servants of the Patel by whom they were remunerated than as Government officials: they also received an allowance of grain from each plough in the village termed "merhkooroo," and also 4 annas at the close of the agricultural year and time of rendition of accounts; this was termed "farighutana" or release, signifying that all accounts had been settled.

45. The first innovation was introduced by Mr. Clarke in 1822, who regularly appointed a Pandia to each village, leaving the details of his remuneration to be fixed by mutual agreement between him and the Patel, on the understanding that it was not to be less than from five to six rupees per mensem, besides the allowances of grain from the cultivator.

46. This system was still further elaborated at the quinquennial Settlement made in A.D. 1828 by Major Low, who divided the whole district into small talooks or hulkas in such a way that each Putwaree should receive not less than five rupees per mensem, while the aggregate charge should fall at not more than 3 per cent. upon the revenue: this was the general principle adopted, but the hulkas were not of any very uniform extent, nor did they always embrace villages immediately contiguous, as it was arranged that when a Malgoozar held several villages, he should have one and the same Pandia for the whole of them; but though five rupees was fixed as the minimum monthly salary, private agreements for a larger remuneration were both respected and in case of need enforced.

47. Under this system the Pandia was regarded as equally the servant of Government as of the Malgoozar, and upon complaints of inefficiency or misconduct or otherwise he was punished, or even removed from office by the district authorities. This state of things continued until the idea of a percentage on the revenue was lost sight of, and the payments of the Putwarees as they were thenceforth termed, assumed the form of regular fixed salaries.

48. The Government demand was lowered at each successive Settlement, while the pay of the Putwaree remained the same, and consequently the proportion it bore to the revenue was greatly enhanced; a few slight changes were introduced at the Settlement of 1834, but the general principle remained the same.

49. At the twenty years Settlement in 1837 Major Ousely assigned grants of land from each village for the remuneration of the Putwaree and Kotewar; as regards the former his action was overruled and the money payments were continued as before, and no change took place until the commencement of measurement operations in 1856, when it was deemed advisable for khusra purposes to divide the district into chuks of contiguous villages with one Putwaree to each.

50. In this way the Putwarees of almost all villages were changed more or less, and this distribution was held good until the present time. The salaries of individuals have also

been modified by the changes in their hulkas, the payment from each village remaining the same as before.

51. Among other questions arising at the present Settlement, this one of the future status and remuneration of the Putwarees was not the least important. I found the state of the case thus : There were 144 Putwarees with a land revenue of about Rs. 1,40,000, or more than one Putwaree to Rs. 1,000 of revenue ; their average remuneration in cash, exclusive of the allowances from the cultivators, came to Rs. 70 per annum, or 7 per cent. on the jumma ; a much smaller body of men would have been perfectly sufficient for carrying out the simple duties of village accountants.

52. Having given the subject every consideration, I made the following recommendations : It was clear that under the former Government the Putwaree was a mere creature of the headman of the village ; under our rule the office was consolidated and placed upon a fixed basis ; its duties, liabilities, and remuneration were all defined by authority. In the course of years the tenure began to assume an hereditary element which it had not formerly possessed, and as a fact (except in cases of clear incapacity or misconduct) the office did descend from father to son. On the introduction of the hulkabundie system in 1856 the majority of the circles, except in the jungle parts of the district, were changed ; some incapables were removed and new appointments made in their place. It seemed to me there were two courses open to adoption, either to continue the system created by our Government of a Putwaree recognized as a public servant, whose status and pay should be regulated by the revenue authorities, or to revert to the ancient system of a village Pandia wholly and solely the nominee and servant of the proprietor. It has been seen that the so-called hereditary tenure dates only from our time ; and that the office has been more or less regulated and interfered with at each successive Settlement. The office then in its present state being maintained as a creation of our own, it was quite competent to remodel it in any way that might seem desirable.

53. My proposal was as far as possible to leave the circles in *statu quo* ; they had been often changed before ; the last

change was now some seven years old, and the people had become accustomed to the new distribution: there would be no immediate advantage in my opinion in reverting to the state of things preceding 1856. By removing a few incapables and the new men appointed at the commencement of the Survey, I could reduce the numbers to the necessary amount; at the same time the increase in the revenue from Rs. 1,40,000 to 1,84,000 admitted of sufficient remuneration for the reduced number without the percentage exceeding $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon the revenue.

54. My proposals received the sanction of the Settlement Commissioner, and I have carried them out accordingly. Some men have been removed, and their villages added to the adjacent circles. The circles themselves have been slightly modified so as to equalize the amount of revenue derived from each. As far as possible the cash remuneration has been left to private arrangement, and in a great many cases the proprietors have agreed to continue the payments on their former footing; in other cases I have fixed it at about Rs. $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the jumma, but in no case will it fall less than Rs. 5 per mensem. The allowances from the cultivators will of course continue to be paid as usual, and these together make the remuneration amply sufficient.

55. I have briefly described the village communities as they exist. In theory the Mahratta villages possessed besides the "Bara Bulotay" the "Bara Alotay," making a complement of twenty-four officers besides the Patel; but of the latter institution I can find no traces in this district. It comprised a variety of trades, including the sonar, water-carrier, tailor, piper, ramoosee or watchman, and others.

SECTION III.—POPULATION.

56. In the Survey papers the population has been divided into three classes, viz. Hindoos, Mussulmans, and Gonds, the latter including the cognate tribe of Koorkoos; the present returns are not very trustworthy, but it may be assumed that the entire population numbers about 240,000 souls; of

these in round numbers we may assert that 202,500 are Hindoos of all castes, 2,500 are Mussulmans, and 35,000 Gonds and Koorkoos.

57. The area of the district is about 3,600 square miles, thus giving a population of about 66 to the square mile; allowance however must be made for the extensive jungle tracts which are of course very sparsely inhabited. The open pergunnah of Mooltye with an area of about 545 square miles has a population of some 60,000 souls, giving an average of 110 to the square mile; but here also there are extensive tracts of jungle on the edges of the ghats. The large forest reserves and other tracts of waste land do not average on the whole more than 4 or 5 souls to the square mile.

58. Of the agricultural community the prevalent caste are the Mahratta Koonbees; they are found chiefly in the talookas of Baitool Khas and Ponee; talookas Deogaon and Nusseerabad of the Saoligurh pergunnah, the Patun and Sainkhera talookas of the Mooltye pergunnah, and more or less throughout the Atnair pergunnah. They occupy the southern parts of the district and are supposed to have originally immigrated from Nagpoor and Berar; generally speaking they are found in the best and largest villages, few of them are found where much labour has been required to overcome natural difficulties of soil or situation. They have the best lands in the district in their hands, but are on the whole slovenly cultivators and not prompt in effecting improvements. ✓

✓ 59. Distinct from them are the Purdese Koonbees, a race from Upper India, speaking the Hindustanee language. These are confined to the Khās Baitool talooka, whither they immigrated along with the grandfather of the present half proprietor of Baitool, Taizee Sing; his father Sheodeen held most of the villages in the district in Malgoozaree at one time or other; he began his career as a spy with the British armies in the war of 1817; he did good service to our Government and was rewarded with a jagheer; numbers of his caste relatives came to settle in Baitool, and their descendants are now for the most part substantial cultivators, most of them possessed of wells and having large holdings; of

the Koonbees there are several subdivisions. The bulk of the Mahrattas are Tirolees and Lonarees.

60. Besides the Purdesee Koonbees above noticed there are the Daisee or Dholewar Koonbees who also speak the Hindustanee language; these are chiefly confined to a few villages of the small talook of Raneepoor.

61. Next to the Koonbees in point of numbers come the Bhojurs, a race said to have come originally from Upper India; they are hard working and industrious cultivators, thoroughly alive to the advantages of irrigation, and generally expending much labour and capital in the sinking of wells. ✓ They are unfortunately much addicted to drink, which is said to have led many of them into debt and difficulties; they are found chiefly in the Mooltye pergunnah; many jungly and apparently poor villages have been reclaimed by them and rendered valuable by means of irrigation; they generally use the Hindustanee language among themselves, but they speak the Marathi as well when required.

✓ 62. Rajpoots are found in the Mooltye pergunnah in the villages adjoining the Chindwarra district, and also in some few of the villages of the Atnair pergunnah in the south; their numbers are very inconsiderable.

63. Rugbunsees are confined to a few villages of the Mooltye pergunnah; they form a branch of the Rajpoot race, from whom they are said originally to have been descended. The number of them in the district is very inconsiderable; as cultivators both they and the Rajpoots are inferior in industry to the Bhojurs, but superior in my opinion to the Mahratta Koonbees.

64. The most skilful cultivators are the Malees; a sprinkling of these is to be found throughout the whole of the open parts of the district, but they do not exist in any great numbers; they are found chiefly in the Baitool and Patun talookas; besides sugar-cane, which they cultivate in great perfection, and opium, they raise a variety of vegetables, including pepper, onions, garlic, turmeric, sweet-potatoes, and others; rents generally run higher in villages tenanted by Malees; the caste termed Kachee is not found in the district.

65. Kirars are the next in importance of the agricultural community, and are about equal in numbers to the Malees; similarly they are distributed more or less all over the district; as regards social status they are inferior to the above-mentioned castes, who maintain a general feeling of social equality, though of course keeping completely apart in all ceremonial observances; the Kirars are hard working and industrious, but the majority of them are poor, and not very good cultivators. ✓

66. These are the only agricultural classes properly so called, by which I mean, those who live exclusively by the cultivation of the soil or by labour connected therewith. There are numerous other castes however who occasionally engage in agriculture; foremost among these are Telees, who are found in all the towns and many of the large villages of the district; their chief trade beside the manufacture and sale of oil is the exportation of grain, oilseeds, goor, mhowa, and other jungle products on pack bullocks, in return for which they import salt, cocoanuts, and sundries. This trade is chiefly carried on with Berar.

67. Even throughout the wilder tracts of the district there are numbers of Telces engaged in this trade; they obtain jungle products at a cheap rate from the Gonds and make a large profit on them: in addition to this trade they also occasionally cultivate land, but the actual preparation of the land, the sowing and reaping, is performed by hired servants who are either "Bursalees" paid on annual wages or mere "Hurwaees" who receive a percentage, generally a fifth of the crop raised.

68. Next to the Telees I should mention the Kulars; their nominal avocation is the distilling and retailing the common spirit made from the flower of the mhowa tree, but they also carry on a trade on pack bullocks similar to that of the Telees; frequently also they cultivate land, and many of them possess villages; they have generally gained possession of them from some Gond Malgoózar whom they plied with liquor, for which he could not pay, and for which he had to pawn his village; similarly the Kulars used to get large quantities of fine teak timber from the Gonds in return for

drink, and hence the wholesale destruction of the forests; formerly the Kular's stills were scattered all over the country, but the introduction of the Sudder distillery system has made a great change in this respect.

✓ 69. Mussulmans are only found in the larger villages or towns; many of them are Pinjarees or cotton carders, and many are employed in service of some sort; only a few are engaged in agriculture.

70. Brahmins are found in all the towns but chiefly Baitool and Mooltye; they are mostly Decanee Brahmins, a Mahratta race; their numbers are inconsiderable; they are employed as Putwarees or as writers by Mahajuns and others; a few only are engaged in agriculture for which they have to keep hired labourers; they themselves never handle the plough.

71. Rujurs are a low caste of Hindoos; they are employed chiefly in labour, but in places there are entire village communities of them; they have not much enterprise and do not make good cultivators.

72. Gowlees are found throughout the wilder parts of the district; the largest colonies of them are in the Shapoor and Bordah talookas on the north, and parts of the Bhiesdie talooka to the south-west. They keep cows and buffaloes and live by the sale of ghee and other dairy produce; ✓ generally speaking they do not carry on any regular cultivation, but till small patches of land round their dwellings within the limits of the village site; hitherto they have paid no rents for such plots, but they have now been called upon to do so in many instances.

73. There are a very few of the kindred caste of Aheers.

74. Gadrees keep sheep and goats; they weave coarse blankets from the wool; few if any of them are engaged in agriculture.

75. Of the Dhers or Kotewars I have spoken under the head of village communities. There is a considerable colony of them in every village; those not immediately connected with the office-bearer, maintain themselves by spinning and weaving coarse cloth or by agricultural labour; they sel-

dom have the means to engage in cultivation on their own account; the tendency to drink is also their bane, otherwise they are generally industrious and intelligent; the rent-free land allowed by the proprietor to the Kotewar in office is generally let for a few rupees; allied to the Kotewars but still distinct are the Kutyas who follow similar occupations; they both belong to the class of Dhers.

✓76. The village artizans I have mentioned elsewhere; all of these occasionally engage in agriculture, such as the Burhaee, Lohar, Nae or Barber; the Koomhar, Chumhar, Sonar, and Durzee seldom cultivate land.

77. Bunneas are only found in the large villages or towns where there is a weekly market; a few of them carry on cultivation by means of servants; the total number in the district is very small.

78. There are a few Marwarees; some of them have acquired villages or fields in satisfaction of some debt, otherwise they do not meddle with husbandry. The remaining Hindoo castes form but a small fraction of the population and do not call for any detailed notices; they comprise the following: Bhats, Gosaeens, Byragees, Garpugarees who are supposed to avert hail, Rungarees, Purdhans, Dheemurs, Bunjaras, Bidoors, Busods who spin hemp and flax. ✓

79. Some separate notice is called for of the hill tribes of Gonds and Koorkoos, who are found in large numbers in this district. The Gonds are found in all the wild and jungle villages, and also in some of the more open ones, where they live chiefly by manual labour in the fields, following the plough or tending cattle. ✓

80. The Koorkoos are almost entirely confined to a few talookas of the Saoligurh pergunnah which belongs to a Koorkoo proprietor Gainsa Patel; some of the Koorkoos are very industrious in the cultivation of rice, a description of which I have given elsewhere, but the majority of them are very similar to the Gonds in character and disposition; these latter have no idea and no wish beyond living from hand to mouth, taking no thought for the morrow, and consequently obliged to put up with little food and scanty clothing. Their favourite mode of livelihood is by cutting

grass and firewood, which they sell in the nearest market, but they also carry on a certain amount of agriculture chiefly that method termed *Dhya*, and which I have described in another place; they are thoughtless and improvident beyond measure, and greatly addicted to drink, to obtain which they will put up with any sacrifice; on the other hand they possess that great merit of most rude and savage tribes, viz., truthfulness, which is developed in them to a remarkable degree, the more so when compared with the opposite character of the Hindoos generally in that respect.

✓ 81. The Gonds are found more or less over the whole of the range of the Sautpoora hills as far as Umurkuntuk to the east and also north of the Nerbudda in Bhopal. The Koor-kooos are found more to the west as far as Boorhanpoor; westward of that they are termed Mowassees and are intermingled with the Bheels; there can be little doubt I think, that all these tribes, though now perfectly distinct in religion, language, and ceremonial observances, are the representatives of the aboriginal people who inhabited India prior to the times from which authentic history commences. The short but well knit figure, the flat features, dark complexion and abundant locks, of almost all the various hill tribes of India, mark them as the descendants of a common stock, though history and tradition alike fail to give any satisfactory clue to the many changes which time, and the many convulsions to which the country has been subjected, must have wrought before the various tribes had fallen into their present shapes.

82. The Gonds themselves, and especially the higher class of them, who pride themselves on the name of Raj Gonds, the branch of the race from which the reigning family of the old Gond kingdom was sprung are said to be of Rajpoot descent, and their Takoors or Chiefs many of them even at this day effect the bearing of Rajpoots; but little trace however of the Rajpoot origin can be seen either in their language, their customs, or their physical features.

83. The Koorkooos at the present day are an essentially different race, speaking a different language, and having a perfectly different religion; they also however claim a Rajpoot origin, and I believe that some of their Chiefs on the

hills adjoining Berar still arrogate to themselves the title and privileges of Rajpoots.

84. It is popularly believed that the Gonds are divided into 12½ gots or tribes corresponding to the 12½ castes into which the Hindoos have been divided, but I believe this to be a mere invention of modern times put forward by some of the Purdhans or the priest class of the Gonds in affectation of Hindooism; the gots of the Gonds are properly family distinctions, marking different branches of the original stock, as a proof of which I record the fact that only members of different gots are allowed to intermarry, the wife being adopted into that of her husband. I believe that originally there were but two well recognized gots termed "Dhoorwa" and "Weeka;" from the former the royal race and the chief Takoors or Chiefs are said to have sprung, and from the latter the remainder of the population; at the present day the number of recognized gots is very great, so much so that I have failed in meeting any person who pretended to know the names even of all of them.

85. As far as I have been able to discover, there are 22 gots belonging to the "Weeka" branch of the race, and 24 to the "Dhoorwa." Besides the gots there are a number of "Jats" as they term them; such are the Pungudyas, Purdhans or priests, Dhotya, Duburyas makers of liquor to be used at ceremonies, Chirkyas and Ojahs musicians employed on similar occasions, Kotyas who make images of deities, and various other professional divisions; these again are subdivided into the gots. The whole subject is involved in great obscurity owing to the want of any records on the subject, and the utter ignorance and want of education among even the better situated Chiefs and Takoors.

86. The Gond religion is a peculiar one; besides the sub-division of the race into gots, the gots themselves are again divided into classes according to the gods they worship; there are three classes generally recognized, worshipping seven, six and three gods respectively; the first class comprises I believe the Raj-Gonds, the priest caste, and perhaps some others; the second class comprises the bulk of the gots

as its followers, while the three-god worshippers are termed "Muraskolas"; there are said to be some gots that worship five and some four gods, but this is a matter of some doubt. This is the theory of the religion as expounded by their "wise men," but the great bulk of the nation know little of these distinctions; they follow in the steps of their fathers in the ceremonies attending marriages, births, and deaths, some of which are very peculiar, all involving more or less outlay on drink, and they all know some god to whom they make their customary offering at stated times. The religion generally of the Gonds may be divided into two heads which, for want of better terms, I would call "precative" and "deprecative," the one addressing itself to the powers of good and calling for a blessing, the other addressed to the powers of evil and intended to avert calamity; the latter rites frequently involve the shedding of animal blood as an expiation: of course with such an ignorant race, almost every object of external nature is made at times to serve as the visible symbol of the divinity; the lowest class of the Gonds, a sort of outcaste tribe called "Dhooryam," are even said to worship the dung of pigs; it is hardly possible for the imagination to carry one lower than that.

87. It is worthy of remark that one of the ceremonies after a death consists in killing a cow and sprinkling its blood over the grave; in default of this it is said that the spirit of the departed refuses to rest and returns upon earth to haunt its relatives in life; from my own experience I am convinced that this ceremony is by no means universally acted up to, and not at all in the case of Gonds living in the open country and in contact with Hindoos. The Gonds as a rule bury their dead, but I have been informed that in the case of Gonds who as it is expressively termed "die in their beds," that is, in easy circumstances and better position than the mass, they are burned after the manner of Hindoos. Another peculiar custom of the Gonds is that of serving for a wife in her father's house precisely as Jacob did for Rachel; the period varies from 7 to 10 years; I might enumerate other curious customs of the Gonds, but it would take up too much space in a report of this nature.

88. The language of the Gonds is quite peculiar to themselves and as far as I know of it contains no element of Sanscrit, or the other roots of the present Hindoo languages. The language and religion of the Koorkoos are perfectly distinct; the former has a decided affinity to Teloo goo; their religion consists chiefly in the worship of Mahadeo, whose symbol is the "Lingum"; they also worship the sun; altogether they are much more allied to the Hindoos than are Gonds both as regards their language and their religion.

89. I have endeavoured thus briefly to show the different classes of which the population consists; the people are on the whole contented and well off; the light Settlement just expired and the great rise in prices of late years, has placed the cultivating classes on a sound footing of prosperity. Those dependent upon labour on the other hand have suffered from the rise in prices, as wages have not been increased in a corresponding degree. Time, however, will set this inequality right, and even within my own experience I have observed that the rights of labour in this respect are being recognized.

90. There are but few wandering tribes, and professional criminals are but a handful, this would naturally be the case in a purely agricultural district, possessing no large towns; all have some employment more or less, and consequently the chief incentives to crime are wanting; occasionally dacoities are committed by Bunjaras, but these occurrences are few and far between; formerly the Gonds were the chief offenders in this respect, but they have now been greatly reclaimed from their former habits, and now seldom break out into crime except under the pressure of want; as I have said before they live entirely from hand to mouth, during the intervals of the harvests they subsist mostly on jungle produce; during seasons of failure they are utterly dependant on the bounty of the Malgoozar, and if the bountiful hand be withheld, want will necessarily drive the sufferer to extremes.

✓ 91. Education must be pronounced to be still in a low state throughout the district generally, though improvement is gradually taking place in this respect; the fact is, there are but comparatively few persons totally independent of manual

labour; the best of even of the cultivators have to attend to their fields in person as well as assist in all other agricultural operations. Each season brings its own duties; the sons as soon as they are old enough are called upon to assist, and no time is found for their attendance at the school; thus education except in the case of the families of a few of the wealthier proprietors, who are but a handful, is confined to the non-agricultural classes, such as Brahmins, Bunneas, and a few others who form not a tithe of the population.

92. As yet education has not found its way among the Gonds, and I see little prospect of its doing so for very many years to come, or until they have made further advances in general civilisation.

93. There are four town schools in the district with an average attendance of about 125 boys, and 19 village schools with an average of over 500 scholars; a girls' school was lately introduced in the small town of Shapoor, but I am unable to state any thing of its working from my own knowledge. In none of the above schools is the English language taught; there is a very good school in the Kotee Bazar of the Civil Station, where some of the pupils have made considerable advance in Euclid and Trigonometry.

94.. Besides the above there are 18 indigenous schools with an average attendance of about 112 scholars.

I append a table showing the percentage of the different classes of the population :—

Brahmins	1½
Koonbees.....	14
Bhoyurs ..	6
Rajpoots	2
Rugbunsees	1½
Malces.....	3½
Bunneas, &c.	2
Sonars	1½
Telees ;.....	4
Kulars	3
Aheers and Gowlees	5
Gonds	10
Koorkoos.....	7

Dhers and Kotewars	8
Purdhans	2
Kirars	2
Lohars	2
Burhaees	2
Naees	1½
Koomhars	2
Bunjaras	1½
Chumhars	1½
Daislas	1
Mussulmans	1½
Dhobeas	1
Gosaees, &c.	1
Gadrees	1
Dheemurs	1
Other castes	10
Total	100

SECTION IV—LANDED TENURES.

96. In describing the tenure of land in the Baitool district it will be necessary to revert to the history of the past and observe the steps which have led to the present state of affairs.

Under the old Mahratta Government the system was very similar to that now existing in the Bombay Presidency, where the ryotwaree system of assessment prevails. Each village had its Patel or head man, who had certain duties to perform and enjoyed certain privileges in return. In the first place he had to collect the rents from the tenants and pay them into the Government treasury. The amount of these collections had been previously fixed by the District Revenue Officer by an ijmailee or estimate based on the collections of the past year and the changes calculated on for the current year: the Patel was supposed to receive an eighth of the gross collections for his own share, but as owing to the uncertainties of seasons, and other causes, the collections were precarious, and as all deficiencies had to be made good by him, the Patel seldom reaped the full inam that he was entitled to, and in fact was often involved in loss.