
REPORT
ON
THE REVENUE SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT
IN
BRITISH BURMA
For the year 1878-79.

(20)

REPORT
ON
THE REVENUE SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT.
BRITISH BURMA
For the year 1878-79.

The work of this Department may be classed under the following four heads :—

- (1) Demarcation ;
- (2) Cadastral survey ;
- (3) Regular settlement ;
- (4) Provincial settlement.

The first of these embraces all the operations connected with the marking off of boundaries preparatory to cadastral survey ; the second includes the field and recess work of the survey department ; the third is concerned with the regular assessments and record of rights which follow upon cadastral survey ; the fourth includes all proceedings connected with the existing system of annual measurements, revision of assessments on expiry of leases, and the like ; in fact, all settlement business not connected with cadastral survey.

Demarcation work was started about the middle of December 1878, in the tracts destined for cadastral survey. It was undertaken in the Rangoon district in preparation for the survey party which commenced work a few weeks later ; and in the Bassein district in preparation for the survey party expected next cold season. At the request of the Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Surveyor-General, Major Sconce, had drawn up a code of rules for the guidance of the demarcation staff as a tentative measure. Three officers of the late " Provincial Survey Department " were appointed for the work—two in the Rangoon district and one in Bassein. The survey was to be by holdings. The demarcation rules dealt therefore chiefly with—

- (a) the marking off of the " kwengs " or blocks of culturable land ; and
- (b) the marking off of the holdings within these " kwengs ".

It had been decided that all boundaries, whether of kwengs or holdings, should be marked off with cylindrical drain-pipes. The manufacture of these pipes was commenced accordingly. It was soon found however that the supply of pipes could not keep pace with the demand for them. Wooden posts were therefore resorted to, the pipes being sunk in their places as they came in.

Being the first work of the kind undertaken in this province no data were available for guidance. The operations of the season were not expected to be more than an experiment by which experience would be gained for the systematic and economical prosecution of regular operations next year. The cadastral survey had to break ground in Rangoon in January, so that the demarcation had but little time to make head. The staff was new to the work and the subordinates were of necessity foreigners from India with no knowledge of the country and no local influence. The physical labour to be undergone was considerable, and many

obstacles arose to impede progress. Dense jungle had to be cut through which had never been cleared before; the season was unfavourable for obtaining the necessary labour—February, March and April being the three principal rice-shipping months—and, it need scarcely be added, labour was out of all proportion costly. It is scarcely matter of surprise that, under such circumstances, there is not much in the way of positive results to record. The experience gained however is invaluable as disclosing both the difficulties to be provided against and the mistakes to be avoided in future seasons. The cardinal mistake made was in demarcating the holdings without first demarcating the exterior boundaries of “kwengs.”

The cost of the demarcation, including expenditure on pipes, has been approximately Rs. 60,000, of which nearly one-half represents the outlay on the manufacture and carriage of pipes, and the other half the pay of establishments.

The experience of the season shewed that, to be thoroughly useful for survey purposes, the system of demarcation would have to be recast. This has now been done.

The staff and the work are still both of them to be special. The staff however is to be entirely local. Pipes have been abolished and the survey is now to be by fields, so that holding demarcations are no longer needed. The settlement officer will in future determine the fields which belong to each holding.

A new and complete set of demarcation rules have been issued, a copy of which is attached to this report. The work is now going on both in Rangoon and Bassein and it is believed that the survey parties will have everything ready for them in good time next season.

PART II.—CADASTRAL SURVEY.

Captain Sandeman with a half-party started survey in the Syriam township of the Rangoon district in the middle of January.

Apart from the defective demarcation of which mention has already been made, a number of obstacles arose to impede progress. Indigenous labour was hard to obtain and was very costly and inferior in quality; locomotion was difficult owing to the net-work of ~~thick~~ creeks all over the country; the staff was ignorant of the vernacular; the survey was new to the people; and the crops were still on the ground. Work was pushed on notwithstanding. The survey had been commenced by fields but was subsequently changed to one by holdings. The total area cadastrally surveyed during the season was approximately 121,000 acres, or a little short of 200 square miles, of which 21,000 acres were by fields and 100,000 acres by holdings. Owing to the great size of many of the holdings numbers of the “kweng” maps present the appearance of huge blank plans with a few irregular intersecting lines scattered here and there over their surfaces. The holdings seem to have varied from 200 acres to 25 acres.

The Chief Commissioner, after a careful consideration of the subject, and after obtaining statistics of holding areas all over the Pegu division, came to the conclusion that a field-to-field survey would in the end be the most economical and by far the most useful for the province. The Government of India was accordingly addressed on the matter with the result that His Excellency in Council has sanctioned a field-to-field survey in the Rangoon and Bassein districts.

The total estimated cost of the cadastral survey from the date of its arrival up to the end of September next is Rs. 52,000, or nearly seven annas per acre surveyed.

A draft bill for the regulation of boundary demarcation and survey operations has been submitted for the approval of the Governor-General in Council.

Next season the Bassein district as well as Rangoon will come under survey. Had the survey department been able to supply the necessary staff the district of Prome might have been commenced. The Surveyor-General has been communicated with but it does not seem probable that more than a strength sufficient for Rangoon and Bassein will be available.

PART III.—REGULAR SETTLEMENT.

The operations of regular settlement are those of assessment and registration rights in the land based on the data supplied by the cadastral survey. Nothing

therefore ~~has~~ been done yet. The areas with which the settlement officers will have to deal from year to year will be, in the main, those which have been mapped and measured by the survey parties in the preceding season; although it is intended that, if the survey programme admit of it, assessment shall also to some extent proceed *pari passu* with survey; the settlement officers as the season advances being furnished with the maps of the areas surveyed in the beginning of the season. It is hoped that the survey department will be able so to arrange as to supply, within the working season, maps and area statements of at least a portion of the area surveyed, and thus allow of rapid progress in assessment. In the meantime statistics are being gathered in from the districts of the province and enquiries are being made with the view of determining both the mode in which the assessing officers shall go to work and the form which the record of rights shall take.

PART IV.—PROVINCIAL SETTLEMENTS.

This branch of the department is concerned with all land assessments not being the regular assessment made after cadastral survey.

In March last attention was drawn to the inadequacy of the present rates of land revenue in many parts of the Pegu division. Within the last three or four years prices have risen so high and facilities for transit have been so augmented by the opening of the Railway and other minor communications that the rates which ten years ago may have been fair both to the State and the land-holder are now manifestly too low—representing in the more favored tracts little more than a nominal share of produce. The regular settlement is no doubt coming on, but as it must follow in the wake of cadastral survey, years will necessarily elapse before it can overtake many parts of the country which are relatively paying the lowest rates.

It was accordingly decided to select those parts of the Pegu division which had profited most conspicuously by the rise of prices and opening up of the country and summarily raise the revenue rates in them. The Chief Commissioner fixed the maximum enhancement at 25 per cent. and issued orders for the necessary local enquiries by the Deputy Commissioners. These enquiries were to be directed to ascertaining in what circles high prices acting directly through improved communication had markedly enhanced the local value of rice. It was known that, owing to the changed state of things in the country, the pressure of the land revenue was very unequally distributed; and it was for this reason that the Chief Commissioner limited the margin of summary enhancement to 25 per cent. believing that among land-holders who were known to be making enormous profits from rice this slight additional assessment would make no practical difference in the relative pressure of the demand. From four districts—Rangoon, Bassein, Thonkwa and Tharrawaddy—reports arrived in time for the issue of orders before the 1st of April, after which, according to the law, no changes in assessment can take effect till the following year. Orders were passed regarding these four districts and the revised rates are now in force in them. The rates in the most favoured parts of the other three districts of the Pegu division—Henzada, Prome, and Thayetmyo—will be subjected to summary revision during the present year; and orders have been issued to the Commissioners of Arakan and Tenasserim to set on foot enquiries similar to those made in Pegu, with a view to a similar revision. The net amount of additional revenue obtained by the summary enhancements made in the four districts of the Pegu division is not yet known.

There is still a considerable area under lease in the province, chiefly in the Pegu division. The leases however have not long to run. The last to expire are those of the Tenasserim division, and they fall in on the 31st March 1884. The Chief Commissioner has decided that it will be expedient to maintain the system of annual measurements all over the province, granting no further leases until the regular settlement shall have made a final assessment and equitable apportionment of the Government demand, when it will be open to the people to choose upon what terms they shall hold their lands.

This report being the first of the kind, and of the nature of a preliminary memorandum submitted in order that the Government of India may know

generally what has been done and what is proposed. Next year a report will be submitted in more suitable form with all necessary returns and statistical information.

By order of the Chief Commissioner,

D. M. SMEATON,
Revenue Settlement Secretary.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEMARCATION OF KWENGs, GRAZING-LANDS, VILLAGE SITES, AND
WASTE LAND GRANTS PRELIMINARY TO CADASTRAL SURVEY.

The demarcation of boundaries as hereafter described is to be made by the Thoojyee, under the immediate orders and superintendence of the Myooke, and subject to the general direction and control of the Deputy Commissioner.

2. In any township in which the Deputy Commissioner is satisfied that the Myooke cannot undertake the duty in addition to his ordinary duties, the Deputy Commissioner is authorized to relieve the Myooke from ordinary duty, and to appoint temporarily another Myooke in his place, reporting his proceeding for the sanction of the Chief Commissioner.

3. The Cadastral Survey maps are to be maps of kwengs. It is therefore indispensable that the circles which are to be surveyed should be carefully parcelled out into kwengs. A list should be made of all kwengs in the circle, and the kwengs in each circle should be numbered in serial order.

4. Every waste land grant whether large or small, must be made into a kweng by itself. If in any circle the lands of any waste land grant are at present included along with other lands in a kweng, they should be now separated from such other lands and made into a new kweng with a separate serial number.

5. No divisions intermediate between a circle and a kweng, and no divisions smaller than a kweng, except grazing-grounds and village sites (paras. 18 & 19), are to be demarcated. But every circle and every kweng within that circle are to be demarcated.

6. When in any circle a number of kwengs exist, known by separate names, but lying all massed together, never having been divided one from the other by fixed marks, such kwengs must now be divided one from the other and boundary marks must be put up to show the divisions.

7. When in any part of a circle, by reason of the land being all, or nearly all, waste or jungle, the boundaries of kwengs have never been fixed, kweng boundaries must now be fixed and demarcated.

8. In dividing kwengs one from another (para. 6) the boundaries usually acknowledged by the people should when possible be adhered to, unless the areas of the kwengs be inconveniently large (see para. 9(a)) and it be therefore deemed advisable to sub-divide them into smaller kwengs.

9. When, in dividing kwengs one from another (para. 6) the boundaries usually acknowledged by the people cannot be adhered to, or when it is necessary to fix boundaries of kwengs (para. 7), regard should be had to the following considerations:—

(a) the kweng area most convenient for survey purposes is about two square miles, or from 1,200 to 1,300 acres. It will be generally possible, no doubt, to parcel off kwengs of such dimensions as to include approximately this area.

(b) conspicuous natural features of country should, where such exist, be adopted as boundaries of kwengs, unless the adoption of them will make the areas of the kwengs much in excess of two square miles.

10. When the boundary between two kwengs runs through cultivated land, or through open land not covered with obstructive vegetation, the line should be marked off by wooden posts. A post must be erected at every angle of the boundary, without exception; and when the line is straight, or nearly straight, or curved, a post should be erected at every 150 yards.

11. When the boundary between two kwengs runs through jungle, or long grass, or other obstructive vegetation, the line must be cleared so as to allow a width of six feet absolutely clear. Within the cleared six feet, posts (as in para. 10) should be erected in such a way and at such distances that one can be seen from the other.

12. Posts should be sunk not less than two and a half feet in the ground, and should be not less than two and a half feet above ground; and should be so strong and so firmly fixed as to stand during the rains and till the survey is over.

13. Where any of the following five conspicuous features of country form the boundary of a kweng, viz. :—

- a creek,
- a river,
- a canal,
- the sea,
- a permanent road,—

no artificial marks or posts are necessary. But in all other cases artificial demarcation by posts must be made.

14. The land-holders or cultivators within the kwengs the boundaries of which are to be demarcated should be required to erect the posts along the line of boundary, as in para. 10, where such boundary lies through cultivated land, or open land not covered by obstructive vegetation.

15. In any kweng whose boundaries, any or all, run through jungle or long grass, or other obstructive vegetation, and must, according to para. 11, be cleared and marked off with posts, the land-holders or cultivators within the kwengs on each side of the boundary should be required to make the clearings and erect the posts.

16. If the land-holders or cultivators referred to in paras. 14 and 15 refuse to erect posts or clear the boundaries, procedure can be taken under section 54 of the Land and Revenue Act II. of 1876.

17. In any kweng in which there are no cultivators, or so few cultivators that the cost or labour of clearing and demarcation would be unreasonably heavy, the Thoogyee should employ hired labour, to be paid for by the Deputy Commissioner, unless the kweng be a waste land grant, in which case the grantee should be required to make the clearing and erect the posts.

18. If, in any kweng in which there is cultivated land, no area of waste-land has been already marked off for grazing-purposes, the Myooke should, subject to the orders of the Deputy Commissioner in each case, mark off and demarcate such areas with small wooden posts,—the cost or labour of erection of such posts to be borne by the land-holders and cultivators of the kweng. Any grazing lands already marked off should be likewise demarcated by small wooden posts.

19. Every village site should be demarcated in the same way as described in para. 18, the labour or cost of erection of posts to be borne by the residents of the village.

20. In a tract which is submerged, demarcation may be postponed till the floods have subsided ; but should be taken in hand again as soon as the floods have subsided.

21. Each Thoogyee shall be furnished with a map of his circle.

22. Immediately on the completion of the demarcation of a kweng, and before proceeding to demarcate another kweng, the Thoogyee should make an eye-sketch of its boundaries as he has demarcated them on the circle-map supplied to him under para. 21. This eye-sketch need not be by scale or measurement ; it will be sufficient if it indicate the boundary approximately so as to furnish a guide to the survey party.

23. After sketching the kweng boundaries on the circle-map, as required in para. 22, the Thoogyee should make on the sketch the following marks :—

- (a) serial number of the kweng ;
- (b) name of the kweng ;
- (c) the village sites, if any, in red, giving their names ;
- (d) the creeks in the kweng, if any, in blue, giving their names ;
- (e) the roads in the kweng, if any, in yellow giving their names ;
- (f) a black ink line along any boundary through cultivated or open land, which has been demarcated by posts, as described in para. 10, with a statement, written along the black ink line of the number of posts erected.
- (g) a dotted line in black ink along any boundary through tree jungle or long grass, and which has been cleared and marked by posts, as in para. 11, with a statement along the dotted line of the number of posts erected.

(h) a blue line along the following natural boundaries :—

a creek,
a river,
a canal,
the sea,

(i) a yellow line along a road.

24. If any boundary of the circle be incorrectly shewn on the circle-map supplied to the Thoogyee under para. 21, the Thoogyee should report the fact to the Myooke who, after enquiry from the Thoogyee of the adjacent circle, should rectify the map, making a special note upon the map to the effect that he has made a rectification.

25. When the boundaries of all the kwengs, with the particulars specified in para. 23, have been shewn on the circle-map, the Thoogyee should sign the map and make it over to the Myooke.

26. The Myooke, after ascertaining by personal inspection that the demarcations have been made in the way prescribed by these rules, and that the circle-map contains all the particulars required by para. 23, should also sign the map, and send it to the Deputy Commissioner.

27. As the survey field season commences on 15th November the entire demarcation of every circle to be surveyed in the field season for each year must, without fail, be complete, and the circle-maps in the hands of the Deputy Commissioner, on or before the 15th November of that year.

28. The Deputy Commissioner is responsible for the strict and punctual carrying out of these rules by Thoogyees and Myookes.

29. The circle-maps, after examination and signature by the Deputy Commissioner, should be sent, till further orders, to the address of the Deputy Superintendent of Cadastral Survey, Rangoon.

30. Along with the circle-maps, the Deputy Commissioner should send to the Deputy Superintendent of Cadastral Survey, all maps of waste land grants within the circles in which demarcation has taken place, together with the area and other statements appertaining to such maps.

31. The Deputy Commissioner shall send a monthly report direct to the address of the Settlement Secretary, with copy to the Commissioner of the division, of the amount of demarcation-work done, including (a) number of kwengs completely demarcated, with specification of the number of waste land grants demarcated under para. 4, (b) number of grazing-blocks demarcated, (c) number of village sites demarcated, (d) number of circle-maps ready and lodged by the Myooke, and (e) number of circle-maps sent in to the Deputy Superintendent of Cadastral Survey.