

CHAPTER VIII.

LAND ADMINISTRATION.

ONE distinction between the administration of India and the administration of a modern European State is, that in India the British Power not only governs the country but owns the land. It is, theoretically, the universal landlord as well as the administrative authority, and its servants in the executive department are not only rulers but estate agents. This conception, that the *dominium* of the soil vests in the ruling power, formed the basis of the mediaeval theory of sovereignty in the West, but has now little more than an historical interest in Europe. It is still, as it has always been, practically recognised in the East.

As the East India Company conquered and annexed province after province in India, it placed itself in the position of the former rulers, and assumed their rights and duties. It also continued their administrative and financial policy, modified by the introduction of modern ideas. This was a main cause of its success. It attempted no violent revolution or subversive change, but was content to adopt the attitude of its predecessors to the people and to the land.

The East India Company found that all former

governments, whether of Hindu rájás, or Muhammadan kings and emperors, or Maráthá conquerors, had derived nearly the whole of their revenue from their position as the supreme landlords. Their subjects paid them a large aggregate rental, besides less productive although sometimes vexatious and numerous taxes. This rental was collected by different methods and under various systems, but it formed and still forms the most important portion of the revenue of India. Sometimes the sovereign took one-half, sometimes two-thirds of the produce of the soil. Sometimes an estimated money equivalent was received in place of a share of the produce; sometimes the rent was remitted as an allowance for certain services. Sometimes it was exacted by officers of the government, sometimes let out to farmers, who paid a lump sum for the privilege and made what profits they could.

Local circumstances had much to do with these differences. It might be more convenient to take the State rental in money, where there was a recognised revenue unit, such as an organised village system; but in backward districts and among primitive communities, it was only possible to take it in kind. It might be more economical to collect the State rental directly from the cultivator; but in distant provinces with imperfect means of communication, or in times when the government was weak and unable to enforce its demands, it was necessary to have recourse to revenue farmers, with all their attendant evils. When the government was at once strong and enlightened, as under the Emperor Akbar, it recognised

its duties as chief landlord. It understood that if the cultivators were to pay a high rent, and the State to collect a large land-revenue, something must be done to encourage agriculture, by irrigation and other public works. The British Government, on becoming the supreme landlord, acknowledged these obligations to the land, and has spent large sums on irrigation, on means of communication, and on measures to improve the knowledge of agriculture among the people.

The wide differences in the systems of collecting the land-revenue adopted by the East India Company for its various territories were mainly due to historical reasons and local conditions. The point common to them all was the recognition of the Company as the supreme landlord. In Bengal the employment of farmers of the revenues was found at work. The first English administrators, therefore, adopted this agency; and eventually in 1793 the amount of rent was fixed in perpetuity.

This converted the mixed body of Bengal Zamindárs and revenue-farmers into proprietors, subject to their regular payment of the stipulated rent. The Company believed that it thus secured the advantages of a body of responsible landlords, of rendering the revenue-collection more secure, and of encouraging agriculture by granting fixity of tenure. In the North-Western Provinces it found, *inter alia*, a system of co-parcenary village communities, and arranged to levy the rent from them as units, but on a settlement for a term of years, and not fixed for ever as in Bengal. In Madras an attempt to create a homogeneous body of proprietary,

Zamindárs failed ; the village communities were also found to have there lost much of their cohesion (if they had ever possessed it in a high degree), and it was arranged to collect the rent directly from the cultivators or ráyats.

There is no need to censure any of these systems. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. The Bombay system, which I am about to describe, differs from all three, and if its advocates claim for it the maximum of the advantages of the other methods with the minimum of their disadvantages, it must be remembered that it was initiated at a later date and after much experience gained in older Provinces. There were, moreover, historical causes which led the Bombay land-settlement to assume its present form, and it is by an examination of these causes that it can best be explained and understood.

It may be premised that the same ideas lay at the root of the Bombay, as of the Bengal, North-Western Provinces and Madras systems. The importance of fixity of tenure for a long term of years, in order that the cultivator might not be disheartened by fears of a sudden and arbitrary re-assessment of his rent ; the duty of equitably demanding only such a share of the produce in the shape of rent, as would allow the tenant a fair margin of profit ; and the necessity for providing a machinery which could collect the revenue economically and without its being fraudulently diverted ; all these points were in the minds of the Bombay administrators, as well as in those of their colleagues in Bengal and Madras. The large propor-

tion which the revenue derived from the land bore to the total revenue made its fair incidence and collection a task of vital importance. More than one-third of the gross revenue of the Bombay Presidency is still derived from the land-revenue or rent, and the proportion was much greater in the early days of the British power in India.

For practical purposes the land-settlements of the Bombay Presidency proper (for in the following sketch I omit at present the consideration of Sind) start from that of Málik Ambar, the Abyssinian finance minister of the Nizám Sháhi dynasty of Ahmadnagar, at the end of the sixteenth century. This great administrator, who resembles in his bold policy Rájá Todar Mall and Abul Fazl, the famous ministers of Akbar in the north, took the villages as his revenue units, and exacted from each of them a lump sum or quit-rent. His assessment, known as the 'Tankha' land-settlement, was not very heavy, and the inefficient administration of the Muhammadan kings of Ahmadnagar, and afterwards of their distant Mughal conquerors, caused it to be collected intermittently during frequent periods of war, and with laxity at all times.

On the decline of the Mughal power in the Deccan, the Maráthás, who took the administration into their hands, made a fresh and more severe assessment, popularly known as the 'Kamal' land-settlement. The Bráhmaṇ ministers of the central Maráthá authority at Poona were keener men of business than their Muhammadan predecessors, and their tax-gatherers were more skilled in extracting the largest possible

amount of money. Theoretically, each individual cultivator in the home districts of the Maráthás was rigidly assessed; in more distant provinces 'chauth' or tribute was exacted wholesale. But in spite of their heavy individual assessment, the Maráthá cultivators of the Deccan managed to pay and to thrive. For these peasants were also the soldiers of the Maráthá armies, and not only cultivated their fields, but also plundered the rest of India from Tanjore to Delhi. They could afford to pay a heavy rent, as they supplemented the income derived from their own land by the booty which they brought home from their forays in distant provinces.

The gradual establishment of the British dominion in India put an end to this state of things. A limit was placed on freebooting expeditions and exactions of 'chauth,' and the Maráthás were forced to rely on their own districts. This acted in a double way to the detriment of the Maráthá peasant. On the one hand, as I have mentioned in a previous chapter, the Maráthá Court, deprived of its income from foreign tribute, became more severe in exacting the assessments in the Maráthá districts; on the other hand, the Maráthá cultivator, deprived of his former plunder, was less able to pay. Under the strain the financial system of the Maráthá Government broke down; land went out of cultivation; the people took to the hills and became robbers.

This was the state of things when the domains of the Peshwá were annexed to the British Presidency of Bombay, at the close of the third Maráthá war in

1818. Mountstuart Elphinstone, who became Governor of Bombay in the following year, made it his first aim to restore prosperity by giving a sense of security and fixity of tenure to the cultivators. This could only be done by limiting the demand of the State for rent for a period of years, in other words, by a new land-settlement. Elphinstone had before him the systems adopted in other parts of British India. The Maráthá administrators had been too keen to allow any powerful body of intermediaries to grow up between them and the cultivators, like the revenue-farmers and Zamindárs of Bengal. The Madras 'ráyatwári' settlement, by which the Government dealt directly with each cultivator, seemed to involve an amount of detail too great to be thoroughly superintended by the English civil servants, while it could not be safely entrusted to natives. There remained the system of treating the villages as revenue units, which had been adopted *inter alia* in the North-Western Provinces, and leaving the villagers to apportion the general village assessment among themselves.

This was the system of land-settlement which Elphinstone would have liked to adopt. But he found that co-parcenary village communities were the exception, not the rule, in the Bombay Presidency. They had either not been so generally developed and so completely organised as in North-Western India, or they had been broken up by the Maráthá system of exacting the uttermost from each individual cultivator. Elphinstone therefore resolved to take the

hereditary village head-man as the representative of the village community and to arrange with him for the village land-tax. He felt that this would not be quite the same as the North-Western system, for the husbandmen would not be co-parceners, accustomed to joint responsibility and to the joint management of the village affairs. He therefore determined to protect the actual cultivators by recording their individual tenures and holdings. 'The settlement,' he said, 'would still be with the head-man, but the right of every cultivator would be known and fixed.'

A first settlement was accordingly made on these principles under the direction of Mr. Pringle, and by Native agency. The assessment was based on a measurement of fields, and on estimates of the yield of various soils, as well as of the cost of cultivation, and the revenue or rent was fixed at 55 per cent of the estimated nett produce¹. In theory this sounded well; but, as a matter of fact, Mr. Pringle's settlement effected little improvement. The Native agents (the relics of the late anarchy) proved incapable or dishonest. The measurements were faulty, and the estimates on which the assessment was fixed often proved erroneous. The former assessments of the Muhammadan and Maráthá rulers were somewhat reduced, but the rate was still too high, and the cultivators, in spite of Elphinstone's precautions, often remained at the mercy of the village head-men. The native officials levied contributions for themselves and intercepted remissions allowed by the Government to

¹ *Bombay Administration Report*, 1882-83; Bombay, 1884, p. 28.

the husbandmen. For a time, however, it was believed that the peasants would not, rather than that they could not, pay. Every effort, including torture and other cruel measures of the old Maráthá revenue gatherers, was resorted to by the native officers in spite of the benevolent intentions of the Government. Numbers of the cultivators deserted their homes for the hills, or fled into the neighbouring Native States. Large tracts of land were thrown out of cultivation, and in some districts no more than one-third of the cultivable land remained in occupation¹.

Such severities were felt to be disgraceful to a British administration. The necessity for a better system brought forth the right man, and in 1832 Mr. Thomas Williamson, of the Bombay Civil Service, was appointed Revenue Commissioner for the Presidency. He brought two fixed convictions to his new duties. First, that if the land-settlement was to be effected without oppression to the people, it must be conducted by a better-paid and honester class of native officers. Second, if it was to be effected without frauds on the Government, it must be carried out by a more minute and searching process. Local inquiry and European supervision—these were the two ideas which dominated Mr. Williamson's policy. He pressed their adoption upon the Bombay Government; his views were accepted; and in 1835 Mr. H. E. Goldsmid and Mr. Bartle Frere, two young Assistant Collectors, were despatched at his request to 'settle' the sub-division or 'táluká' of Indápur in the Poona

¹ *Bombay Administration Report*, Bombay, 1884, p. 23.

District, 84 miles from the old Maráthá capital of the Deccan.

The revenue history of the Indápur sub-division, which was the first tract completely settled under the improved method during the years 1835-37, illustrates the revenue history of the Bombay Presidency at large. It was one of the home-districts of the Maráthás, and there is no reason to believe that it was more harshly treated than others. Under the 'Tankha' assessment of Málik Ambar, Indápur had been directed to pay Rs. 1,02,000 to the treasury of the Muhammadan kings of Ahmadnagar; a sum roughly estimated to be a third share of the produce. Under the later 'Kamal' assessment of the Maráthás, the revenue or rent was raised to Rs. 2,22,800 by 1785, levied from the individual cultivators. When it was no longer possible for them to add the old profits of pillage to those of tillage, the peasants fled to the hills, and in 1807 special measures had to be taken to repeople the depopulated districts.

The first assessment after the British occupation in 1818 was far more moderate, and under Mr. Pringle's settlement the revenue to be paid by Indápur was fixed at Rs. 64,000. But even this reduction, sweeping though it may appear, was insufficient, and in 1830 only Rs. 12,880 were collected. To try to make up the deficiency, unauthorised pressure amounting to torture was resorted to, with the result of still further ruining the people. 'It was at this crisis, with the district half-depopulated,' wrote the Commissioner thirty-three years afterwards, 'that the late Mr.

Goldsmid proceeded to inaugurate that system of survey-settlement, which has since formed the groundwork of the revenue administration of the entire Presidency.'

Mr. H. E. Goldsmid, assisted during 1835 by Mr. [Sir] Bartle Frere, and afterwards by Lieutenant [Sir] George Wingate and Lieutenant Nash, carried out the settlement on a new basis. He measured out the country into fields, classified the soils, and fixed the revenue to be paid according to the ascertained quality of the soil, allowing for contingent circumstances, such as facilities of communication. He adopted the field as the revenue-unit and not the cultivator. But an equitable settlement would have afforded little encouragement to the peasant, if his rent could be raised as his land improved. Mr. Goldsmid clearly realised this, and persuaded the Government to sanction the rent for ten years, a period eventually extended to thirty. Boundary marks were authoritatively set up and permanently protected by law.

Moderate assessments and fixity of tenure for a term of years began to work wonders in Indápur. In the second year of its settlement, the Revenue Commissioner reported 'that the sum actually collected has never been so great except during the first four years of our occupation, when it is generally acknowledged our demands were much too high'; and 'the outstanding balances have never yet been so low at the end of the official year as they were last year.' Cultivation rapidly extended, and by the end of the second year nearly 68,000 acres of waste land had

been brought under the plough. The average annual collections during the thirty years' settlement, at reduced but fixed rates, exceeded by 86 per cent the average annual collections under excessive assessments and yearly rents during the ten years before Goldsmid and Bartle Frere were sent to the district.

These excellent results opened the eyes of the Government. It resolved to extend the system to other parts of the Presidency, and within ten years of the completion of the Indápur Settlement, the important districts of Násik, Ahmadnagar, the rest of Poona, Sholápur, Dhárwár, and Kaládgi (now Bijápur) were settled in a similar manner. As experience was gained, various modifications were introduced and improvements made, but much was still left to the discretion of the officers employed. It was therefore decided to lay down uniform rules for the future, and the three Superintendents of Survey in the Bombay Presidency were summoned to Poona in 1847 for that purpose. The three Superintendents were Mr. Goldsmid, Captain Wingate, and Captain Davison.

They embodied their conclusions in the famous Joint Report of August 2, 1847, which forms the charter or title-deed of the Bombay Land Revenue system, and a manual for all who desire to study it or who have to put it in force. The three Superintendents, after explaining the objects of a revenue survey and the general principles on which the assessment of land should be conducted, laid down rules for the definition and demarcation of fields, the

settlement of boundary disputes, the classification of soils, the interior regulation of surveys, and the administration of settlements. The Bombay Survey and Settlement Department has followed the recommendations made by them with certain improvements and modifications until the present time¹.

For purposes of survey and settlement Bombay is divided into territorial areas each under a separate Superintendent of Survey. Four Revenue Surveys were at work from 1885 to 1887, the Gujarát, the Poona and Násik, the Southern Maráthá, and the Ratnágiri; and three, the Gujarát, the Deccan, and the Konkan from 1887 to 1890—on the revision of expiring settlements. Each Survey consists of a number of Survey Parties, under the management of Assistant Superintendents. There were thirty-one such parties employed in 1886-87 and thirty-four in 1889-90. Some of these parties are employed in measuring, or actual surveying, others in classing the soil. Their maps and reports are forwarded to the Superintendent, who examines and controls the whole and fixes the assessment. The Superintendent submits his proposed assessment of a *táluká*, or group of villages in a *táluká* or sub-division, to the Collector of the district, who in turn forwards it with any remarks he may desire to make through the Survey and Settlement Commissioner to the Commissioner of the division. The scheme is then laid before the Government,

¹ This account is mainly based on *A Manual of the Land Revenue Systems and Land Tenures of British India*, by B. H. Baden-Powell: Calcutta, 1882, pp. 551-572, and on the *Bombay Administration Report for 1882-83*: Bombay, 1884, pp. 29-31.

which reserves to itself the power of sanctioning it or sending it back for further revision. When sanctioned, the assessment is introduced into the *táluká* or group of villages by the Superintendent of Survey, and fixed from that date for a term of thirty years.

The process consists of three distinct series of operations, the survey of the land, the classification of the soil, and the assessment of the revenue, each of which requires separate notice.

The first stage is to obtain an accurate survey of of each village about to be assessed. This work was originally done very roughly. The early settlement officers, such as Goldsmid and Bartle Frere, were not trained surveyors. They desired to do their work quickly, and remembered that they were making a revenue settlement, not a geographical survey. At the present time conditions have altered. Expert native surveyors are employed, and the village maps which they draw up now exhibit not only boundaries, but roads, village sites, tanks, and local or physical features with considerable fidelity. So accurate indeed is their work that the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India finds the revenue village maps an aid in its more scientific field of labour. But, as in former days, absolute precision calculated on large geographical areas is of comparatively little practical importance to the revenue survey.

The crucial work of a measuring party in a Bombay Revenue Survey is the delimitation of 'fields.' The revenue unit of the Bombay Settlement System is, as has been said, the field, and the determination of

the areas and boundaries of fields is the first requisite for adjusting the assessment. These fields are technically termed 'numbers,' and one of the most important conclusions of the Joint Report of 1847 was its definition of a field or 'number.' It took as the standard, the area which a rāyat could cultivate with a pair of bullocks. This naturally varied according as the soil was light or heavy, or as the cultivation practised was wet or dry, and generally with the climate and circumstances of the locality.

It was assumed in the Joint Report that twenty acres would be the extent of such an area for light, dry soil; fifteen acres for a medium soil; twelve acres for heavy soil; and four acres for irrigated rice land. It was then laid down that those areas should be the minimum, and double them the maximum of a field or 'number¹.' But of course these were arbitrary standards, and existing plots of cultivated land would not always fit them. It was therefore determined that where a man's holding approached the standard it was reckoned as a separate number; where it much exceeded the standard, it was divided into two or more numbers; and where it greatly fell short, different holdings were counted together as forming one number. This last class gave rise to little difficulty, for in the case of several holdings being included in one 'number,' each share was separately recorded and distinguished into 'pot numbers,' if the sharers so desired. The measuring party sets up

¹ Mr. Baden-Powell's *Land Revenue and Land Tenures of India*, p. 553, ed. 1882.

permanent boundary marks for the 'numbers,' a precaution necessary in tracts devoid of hedges; commonly by placing stones or making earthen ridges at each corner.

Usually in the next season after the measuring party has done its work, the 'classing' party enters the field. Its duty is to classify the soil in each 'number' and to record the 'accidents' affecting its value. This double work was reduced to a definite system by Lieutenant Wingate, afterwards Major Sir George Wingate, a successor of Bartle Frere as assistant to Mr. Goldsmid in settling the Indápur *táluká*. The 'classer' first takes into consideration the nature of the different species of holdings, which are, whenever practicable, kept in separate numbers. The main divisions under this head are unirrigated land, rice land, and garden land watered by wells or small watercourses¹. Then he classifies the soils. The varieties in the unirrigated land, taking the Deccan as an example, are found to be uniform black soil, which is very productive; coarser red soil; and light soil.

But, further, the actual fertility of these soils depends upon their depth. Three feet is considered the maximum depth of practical importance to the agriculturist. The classer divides the 'number' into ten classes, according not only to the nature, but the positive or relative depth of the soil.

He next considers the 'accidents' which affect the

¹ Artificial irrigation from canals or reservoirs formed by the Public Works Department is, I believe, dealt with separately.

soil of the 'number' and depreciate its productiveness. These 'accidents' are seven in number, and they may be worth enumerating to show the thoroughness with which the classification is carried out. They are (1) admixture of nodules of limestone, (2) admixture of sand, (3) sloping surface, (4) want of cohesion, (5) impermeability to water, (6) exposure to scouring from flow of water in the rains, and (7) excessive moisture from surface springs. Each of these 'accidents' is held to lower any soil by one class, and if it occurs in excess by two or more classes.

Having done this work, the classer makes a sketch of the number and divides it into compartments, each of which he marks separately on a regular system according to the nature and depth of the soil and its 'accidents.' He then takes the average of the value of the compartments, and shows the proportion of the rate of assessment it should pay.

Finally, the classer has to note the value of irrigation on the 'number.' He has hitherto considered all land, whether irrigable or not, and classified it. He now calculates the advantage of irrigation, where it exists, according to the supply, depth and quality of the water, and even the distance of a garden-ground from the village as affecting the cost of manuring. He next fixes an extra irrigation value to be applied either to the whole or part of the acreage of the field¹. This work is (together with a percentage of the measurements) tested by the Assistant-Superintendent, as is

¹ Baden-Powell's *Land Revenue and Land Tenures of India*, pp. 557-562, ed. 1882.

also that of the measuring parties, and the maps and sketches are sent in to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent of Survey has now to fix the assessment. He considers the circumstances of each village and examines various points with which the measuring and classing-parties had nothing to do, such as climate, facilities for market, communications, average prices, and the effect of previous settlements, British or Native. He then fixes the maximum dry-crop rate for the village, or group of villages, the conditions of which are homogeneous. His proposals are forwarded through the Collector of the District, the Survey and Settlement Commissioner, and the Commissioner of the Division, to the Secretary to Government. The maximum dry-crop rate and the accompanying rates for irrigated land and rice land are carefully considered by Government, and if accepted the Superintendent proceeds to work out the revenue demand for each Survey 'number.' The classer has, as already mentioned, fixed the proportion of the standard rate which each 'number' ought to be able to pay; and, the maximum rate once declared, it is a mere mechanical and arithmetical process to assign the equitable amount of rent to each number for the ensuing thirty years.

I have described in some detail the history and procedure of the Bombay Land Revenue System. For while the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, the coparcenary village system in the North-Western Provinces, and the Madras *rāyatwārī* system, are all more or less understood in England, the Bombay system has

seldom been presented in a popular form. It may be asserted with truth that in no country in the world has greater care been taken than in Bombay that the cultivator of the soil should pay no more rent than he is fairly able to pay. In its simplicity of principle and in its minute conscientiousness of detail, the Bombay Settlement system ranks among the triumphs of British administration in India.

It not only secured to the rāyat a full measure of justice from his landlord, the Government; it also gave him a property. As long as the occupant paid his rent or revenue, he owned his holding. He could sell it, bequeath it, or mortgage it, and the limits of his land were clearly laid down in the village revenue map, and preserved by boundary marks. A 'survey' tenure was in fact created, a firm right of occupancy subject only to the payment of the fixed assessment and to the liability of its being revised after thirty years.

This right was definitively established by the Bombay Survey and Settlement Act of 1865, a measure now absorbed into the Land Revenue Code Act of 1879. By these Acts the occupant was still further secured, for it was enacted that all revised settlements 'shall be fixed, not with reference to any special improvements made by owners or occupants from private capital or resources, but with reference to general considerations of the value of land, whether as to soil or situation, prices of produce or facilities of communication¹.' The right of occupancy was declared to be conditional solely on the payment of the Government

¹ *Bombay Administration Report for 1882-83*, p. 31.

demand, and to be 'a transferable and heritable property, continuable without question at the expiration of a settlement lease, on the occupant's consenting to the revised rate¹.'

Unfortunately the Deccan cultivator did not make the wisest use of his newly acquired property. He freely mortgaged it to astute money lenders, who held him in thrall and who made use of the British laws to reduce him to the condition of a tenant at will, or at a rack-rent. This led to agrarian disturbances. In 1879¹ the Government found it necessary to step in, and to protect the cultivators against the results of their own unwisdom by the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act, which was a sort of Encumbered Estates Act and Peasants' Insolvency Act at the same time. The Act has now (1891) been referred afresh for inquiry by the Government of India to a Commission.

Notwithstanding this need for relief the legal status of the peasant has greatly improved under British rule. The old Muhammadan kings had levied a lump sum from every village, and left the villagers to distribute its burden among themselves. The Maráthás had come to closer quarters, and levied a heavy assessment from each cultivator, sometimes with very little regard to the actual yield of his holding. The English Government in Bombay took the final step, and based its more moderate demands upon the carefully ascertained capacity of each field.

In Bengal, the British authorities had, in 1793, rid themselves of the toil and perplexities of a detailed

¹ *Bombay Administration Report for 1882-83*, p. 31.

land-settlement by leasing out the country in wide tracts to so-called landholders, thus practically leaving the cultivators at their mercy until the tardy legislation of 1859 came to the relief of the tillers of the soil.' In Madras, the British Government had not shrunk from the difficulty of dealing with the individual husbandmen. But its arrangements involved what amounted to almost a yearly resettlement with each cultivator, according to the land which he took up for the individual season, and the amount of crop which he secured for the year. The Madras system of annual revision, with its former 'opportunities of extortion, speculation, chicanery, and intrigue of all kinds¹,' has been slowly organised into an orderly procedure by seventy years of hard English work. All this is now clear enough to Indian administrators. The merit of Williamson, Frere, Goldsmid, Wingate, and their brother-officers in Bombay, is that they, in their various separate departments, clearly perceived it fifty years ago, and devised a new and better alternative for the Western Presidency.

By taking the field as their unit of revenue, and laying on it an assessment so moderate as to leave a liberal profit to the cultivator, they secured a regular revenue from the lands then under tillage, and they supplied inducements for bringing large areas of waste under cultivation. The margin between their assessment and the actual produce of the soil gave a saleable value to each field. But, unhappily, the rights which

¹ These are the perhaps too unfavourable terms in which Sir George Campbell speaks of the Madras system. (*Modern India*, p. 362, ed. 1853.)

they conferred on the cultivators to sell, or sublet, or mortgage, enabled improvident husbandmen to turn their little holdings into cash or to raise loans upon them. It is now clear that the peasantry of the Deccan, with their extravagant marriage expenditure and other occasions for throwing away money upon domestic display, had not at that time been sufficiently prepared for the wise use of those rights. The evils of agrarian indebtedness, with forced sales of their holdings, resulted. These evils were intensified by the usurers' frauds on the ignorant rāyats, and to some extent by the rigid regularity with which the English Government enforced its assessments in a country peculiarly at the mercy of the rainfall.

But, while acknowledging that the Bombay system has indirectly led to evils, it has been productive of far outweighing benefits. It is now recognised, even by Bengal officers like myself, as the best solution of the complicated land problem of India, in a province where the co-parcenary system of joint village responsibility did not exist or had become inoperative.

I have mentioned that while the Bombay system still rests on the basis of the Joint Report of 1847, modifications have been introduced. The surveys and classifications made before that year were necessarily imperfect. A staff of surveyors and classers cannot be trained in a day, and even after that date the importance of getting the work done quickly somewhat impaired its thoroughness. As the thirty-years' leases fell in, it was found necessary, therefore, to re-survey and re-class as well as to re-settle. But the work of revision,

whether total or partial, is now being done once for all as far as the Survey Department is concerned, and the survey and classification record can in future be kept in order by the local officers of each district.

Before noticing the points which were brought before the Bombay Government between 1885 and 1890, in connection with the revised settlements, it is necessary to draw attention to a change in the law, emphasising the doctrine that the Government, as chief landlord, should not make any increase in the revised settlement for improvements effected by a tenant. This had been affirmed in the Bombay Survey and Settlement Act of 1865, as has been already said, when the 'survey tenure' was legally defined. It was re-affirmed in the Bombay Land Revenue Code of 1879, but a clause was added reserving to Government the power to consider, in fixing a revised assessment, the increased value arising from certain classes of improvement. This clause had never been put into effect, but complaints were made that its mere existence affected the tenant's property in his holding. Act IV of 1886 was therefore passed, which amended the clause objected to, and enacted that 'when a general classification of the soil of any area has been made a second time, or when any original classification of any area has been approved by the Governor in Council as final, no such classification shall be again made with a view to the revision of the assessment of such area.' Further, 'if any improvement has been effected in any land during the currency of any previous settlement made under Act V of 1879, or under Act I of 1865, by or at the cost of the holder

thereof, the increase in the value of such land or in the profit of cultivating the same, due to the said improvement, shall not be taken into account in fixing the revised assessment thereof.'

Nothing can be more clear or precise than this declaration of the principle, all important for the encouragement of good tenants, that the value of the tenant's improvement shall not accrue to the landlord. The discussion which took place in the Bombay Legislative Council on the second reading of the Bill which became Act IV of 1886 was of a very important character, not only as containing a complete vindication of the practice of the Survey and Settlement Department in the matter of re-classification, but as establishing the moderation of its assessments. In Lord Reay's speech on this occasion proofs are adduced that the doubts stated by certain non-official members to be entertained by the general public regarding the action of the Department, were opposed to facts and figures derived from the records.

The discussion led to an important result bearing on the practice of settlements. It had been the custom for the Superintendent, after the proposed maximum rates were sanctioned by the Government, to work out the individual assessments which resulted, and then to assemble the cultivators and announce the revenue demand on each field. It was objected that by this course no opportunity was given to the rāyat to be heard as to enhancements before the enhancement became an accomplished fact.

After minute inquiry into the numerous administra-

tive objections to any alteration of practice, it was decided by a Government Resolution dated October 16, 1886, that not only should increased facilities be given to cultivators to make known their objections to the Survey officers while the survey was in progress, but that the Superintendent of Survey should announce to the villagers by public notification the maximum rates he proposed to use, as soon as such rates were determined on, and that the cultivators should be allowed a period of two months within which to forward their objections to the Collector. It was decided, moreover, that the Collector should submit all such petitions, with his criticism, to Government, through the ordinary channels, and that in this way Government should have the objections of the rāyats before them when the proposals came under their consideration. This decision, the fairness and justice of which cannot be doubted, is in full force, and although many difficulties tend to impair its usefulness, the large number of petitions and objections advanced show that the cultivators appreciate the opportunity, and are not slow to avail themselves of it.

Turning to administrative questions which arose in the work of re-settlement during the five years now under review, the most important was as to the rate to be imposed on dry-crop land which had been converted into rice land during the past thirty years. It will be remembered that rice lands and dry-crop lands are differently assessed, and it was pointed out that it would be a hardship if a cultivator spent much labour in turning his dry-crop land into rice land, and was

then assessed at the higher rate. It would be, in fact, a tax on improvements, and a violation of the great principle just affirmed. The question came before the Bombay Government in May, 1885, soon after Lord Reay's assumption of office, with respect to the Igatpuri taluká in the Deccan. After careful consideration it was decided that such converted rice land should be assessed not as rice land, but at the maximum rate for dry-crop land. The question was again raised in 1889 with regard to the re-settlement of the Khalapur Peta taluká in the Konkan, and after a long discussion was settled on the same basis.

This controversy led to an innovation in the rules for classification. It was argued that some 'warkas' or dry-crop lands in the Konkan could be very easily converted into rice land owing to their natural position, and that the Government should take this circumstance into consideration. It was therefore resolved that the classer should include in his classification a new gradation or 'position class.' This was not to affect the immediate assessment, but was to be entered on the record, so that at the next settlement it might be known what tracts had been converted into rice lands, not so much by the labour of the tenant as because of their natural advantages.

A change was also made in the instructions to survey parties, arising out of the excessive subdivision which had been taking place in the unit of survey. It will be remembered that subdivisions of numbers, called 'pot numbers,' might be marked off in the numbers. Since the settlement, many numbers had been divided by par-

tition among relatives or otherwise. The practice developed until it had been laid down by the Land Revenue Code that 'every separate occupancy recognised in the village accounts is required to be made into a Survey number, or subordinate Survey number, and to be measured, demarcated, classified, and assessed on its own individual merits.' This record of minute subdivisions was laborious and expensive. It was therefore ordered in 1889 that, in future, subdivisions of numbers should only be made at the request and at the cost of the occupant.

Among other reforms during the five years under review the following may be particularised. When any large addition was made to the original assessment at the revised settlement, it was only to be introduced gradually. A system of sub-soil classification of water advantages was substituted for the former well assessment in Gujarát, and various other new regulations were made, which need not be detailed here.

Of all common agricultural improvements in the Bombay Presidency the most important is the sinking of wells not only for securing the ordinary crops in seasons of drought, but also for the raising of the finer descriptions of produce. The treatment of wells with reference to assessment gave rise to frequent discussion, and the question attracted much attention during the five years (1885-1890). After the passing of Act I of 1865, by sec. 30 whereof improvements made by the occupant with his labour and capital were exempted from consideration in fixing the assessment, the principle acted upon by the settlement officers was to treat

all lands irrigated from wells sunk after the preceding settlement as purely dry-crop only, while lands watered from wells existing at the time of the former settlement were not to be rated in excess of the highest dry-crop rate prevailing in the village. A slight difference therefore existed in the treatment of wells recorded at the former settlement and wells found to have been newly built, but even lands watered by the older class of wells were considerably dealt with according to a fixed scale, and such lands were not placed uniformly on the highest existing dry-crop rate.

The difference, however, attracted notice in the press and elsewhere, and it was pointed out that the pioneers of the well-sinking industry, who had taken early steps to irrigate their fields, were burdened by heavier taxation than those who had delayed. About 1885-86 the question was much discussed, with special regard to the circumstances of the province of Gujarát, which was just coming under revision, and where well assessment formed a considerable portion of the land revenue and the opportunities for digging wells were abundant. In this province, the soil is chiefly alluvial, and the water-bearing strata are generally found at an easily ascertainable level, and can be utilised under circumstances calculable with accuracy. For many years previously, suggestions had been made by experienced officers that the true solution of the question of assessment of wells lay in doing away entirely with taxation of water when brought to the surface and utilised, and in imposing a slight additional rate

on lands which were known or believed to possess the advantage of sub-soil water within easy reach and free from difficulty of utilisation. Government now affirmed this principle, and decided that it should be the basis of settlement 'whenever the Superintendent can safely and conveniently apply it.'

The system was introduced into the first *táluká* of Gujarát, which fell in for revision in 1886¹, under rules carefully framed by the Survey Commissioner, by which the advantages of sub-soil water were graduated according to depth and character of soil to be pierced, distant or questionable advantages being left out of consideration altogether. The result is that in Gujarát there is no well assessment in revision, the facility for obtaining sub-soil water and not the use of it being the point to be decided.

In 1889 the attention of the Government was drawn to the method by which this small additional revenue on account of sub-soil water was worked out and imposed. Under the rules applied to the Ahmadábád Collectorate in the first instance, the addition was made to the soil classification and the result ascertained in the ordinary way, but Lord Reay, who gave this subject very close attention, disapproved of the maximum addition for sub-soil water being fixed with a view to recouping the amount of well assessment which had been hitherto collected in the *táluká*—a limit which had been observed from the first. Differences were created in the several *tálukás* for which no real reason could be adduced, except that they had by their former well

¹ The Dholka *Táluká* in Ahmadábád.

assessments subscribed more or less to the revenue. Lord Reay considered that the method should be changed and a moderate cash addition should be made to the rate per acre which resulted from the soil classification, in this way avoiding unnecessary and unreasonable anomalies. The alteration was duly made in calculating the assessments for the Daskroi and succeeding talukás of Ahmadábád, and its working is being carefully watched.

The following paragraph shows the actual work done by the Survey and Settlement Department during the period from 1885-6 to 1889-90 inclusive; the addition which it yielded to the revenue; and its cost.

During the five years in question from 31 to 34 surveying parties were employed, who measured 8,460,669 acres, or nearly 13,220 square miles, and classed 8,079,956 acres, or nearly 12,625 square miles. Revised, and in a few parts of the Konkan original, settlements were introduced into $3,891\frac{1}{4}$ villages, or excluding Native States and *inám* villages belonging to individuals, into $3,621\frac{1}{4}$ villages. The revenue from these villages was assessed at Rs. 42,99,320 instead of Rs. 34,40,703 as it had formerly been, a gain of Rs. 8,58,617 to the revenue; or, excluding again Native States and *inám* villages, at Rs. 39,58,604 instead of Rs. 31,40,177, a gain of Rs. 8,18,427 a year. To obtain this increase of yearly revenue there was expended on the Survey and Settlement during the five years Rs. 28,04,526, being an average of Rs. 5,60,905; or excluding payments by Native States Rs. 27,26,150, being an average of Rs. 5,45,226 a year.

The expense is undoubtedly great but the gain is great also.

The foregoing description of the Bombay Land-Revenue System, and the statistics of work done, deal only with the Bombay Presidency proper. The land-revenue system of Sind stands apart, with a separate Survey Department of its own. Sind cultivators depend entirely for their harvest upon irrigation; without it the province would be a desert. Attempts from time to time made to introduce the elaborate Bombay land-settlement have proved futile. The Sind peasant does not stick to one place; he moves about and is difficult to assess. When measurers and classers were imported, the former did useful work; the latter were quite out of their element. It is almost useless to classify soil, or to estimate 'accidents' in a country which depends entirely upon one resource, irrigation, and where 90 per cent of the assessment is derived from it.

Temporary settlements and other expedients had been tried in Sind, but without success. In 1887 it was decided to introduce irrigation settlements—a laborious and delicate task which was carried out with great ability by the Commissioner in Sind, and his officers. By this plan, the one distinctive feature of Sind is fully recognised, and tracts and groups of villages are assessed solely by their irrigation facilities. There are no village communities in Sind to arrange with; the cultivators move so rapidly that in extensive tracts there are not even 'fields,' i. e. continuously inhabited and cultivated 'numbers,' to assess. The

estimate of irrigation-facilities takes the place of the classification of soils in the Presidency, and on this basis irrigation settlements for a period of ten years have been rapidly introduced into Sind, with the best results both to the Government and the cultivator. A difficulty constantly arose in the Sind assessment from the fluctuations in occupation and the frequency of fallows. The irrigational settlements, based on the irrigational facilities of the land, form a most important series of measures in the land-administration of the Province.

To return to the Presidency proper, it is interesting to notice some of the land-tenures which survive in spite of the advantages offered by the simple survey tenure. Only two have any political importance, the *tálukdári* tenure in Gujarát and the *khoti* tenure in the southern Konkan, but one or two of the others, such as the *bhágdári* and *narvádári* tenures in Gujarát, and the *shilotri* tenure in the Konkan, have an historical interest of their own. There are many curious local varieties¹, such as the *máleki* and *sarákati*, but they only exist in a few villages, and all tend to be absorbed in the universal survey tenure.

The *tálukdári* tenure in the Bombay Presidency is only to be found in Gujarát, principally in the western part of Ahmadábád District, bordering on Káthiáwár, where it used to cover, until recently, 1931 square miles; and in Broach District and the Panch Mahals, where it is the prevailing system over 266 square miles. The *tálukdárs* are usually of pure Rájput descent: gentlemen who consider manual labour de-

¹ *Bombay Administration Report for 1882-83*: Bombay, 1884, pp. 32-40.

grading and who live on the hereditary share of the produce of their lands, which are cultivated by tenants at will. The *tálukdári* estates are of all sizes, but seldom exceed one, two, or three villages, owing to the custom of subdivision among the kinsmen. With regard to the Government the *tálukdárs* are absolute owners of their estates, but are bound to pay a certain *jama*, which is a tribute rather than a rent. On the other hand the *tálukdárs* are answerable for the pay of the village police and for the village expenses sanctioned by custom.

The relations between the *tálukdár* and his tenants are regulated in the following manner. The village crops are stored in the village grain-yard. A fixed proportion is deducted for seed and certain perquisites, and the remainder is divided between the *tálukdár* and the *ráyats* according to the village custom. The average demand has been assumed to be 50 per cent of the common grains, 40 per cent of wheat, and 48 per cent of cotton. The *tálukdárs* are interesting as a survival, but as a rule they are heavily in debt. A special Act was passed for their relief in 1862, and a special officer has been appointed to look after them.

During the period under review the decline in the status of the *tálukdárs* and their privileges formed the subject of a further Bill¹, which was discussed in the Legislative Council in 1886. The Bill provided for the better revenue administration of the estates of the *tálukdárs*, and more clearly fixed their position with regard to the British Government. As one of the

¹ 'Act No. VI of 1886.'

results of this Act, a survey is now in progress, with a view to revise the data upon which the *jama* of the several *tálukdárs* is fixed. Special attention is paid to the cultivation of waste lands which has taken place, and the former classification is tested and, where necessary, corrected.

The *khoti* tenure differs in its nature in the northern and southern Konkan. In the north the *khots* are practically leaseholders of a certain number of villages and exercise no proprietary rights. In most of these villages the survey tenure has been introduced, and the cultivator is little affected by the fact that his village is held from a leaseholder, instead of directly from the Government. But in the southern Konkan, in the whole of the district of *Rātnágiri* and in the greater part of *Kolába*, the *khots* are recognised as proprietors of their villages. It is believed that they were originally farmers holding on leases for the improvement of the country, and they have been compared to the Bengal *zamindárs*. The chief features of the *khoti* tenure in the southern Konkan country are that they hold their villages on payment of a lump sum to Government; that they may rack-rent all lands in which there are not rights of permanent occupancy; that they may resume all lands which may lapse by the absence or failure of the permanent occupant; and that they have to collect the assessment from permanent occupants without remuneration. The rights of the permanent occupants as against the holders of *khoti* tenures are very various, and the tendency of the Government is to maintain these rights.

Shilotri lands, which are also found in the Konkan, are lands which have been reclaimed from the sea and embanked. These reclamations are known as khárs. The tenure is of two sorts. Shilotri proper, under which the khár belongs to the reclainer or his representatives. These shilotridárs have a proprietary right; they let their khárs, and they are entitled by old custom to levy a maund of rice per bigha in addition to the assessment for the repair of the embankments. Where however the Government has made the reclamation or become possessed of the khár, the cultivators hold the shilotri lands like any other survey tenants, but they pay an additional assessment, which represents the shilotri maund of rice for the repair of the embankment.

Finally, mention must be made of the bhágdári and narvádári tenures. It was said in the historical sketch of the Bombay Revenue system that Mountstuart Elphinstone found hardly any traces of the coparcenary village in the Bombay Presidency. These two tenures represent the few that did and do still exist. The bhágdári tenure is only found in the Broach District, while the narvádári chiefly centres in the District of Kaira, but is also represented in a few villages in Ahmadábád. The main point of interest in them is that they are genuine survivals of an old system, for the whole village inhabited under their arrangements is jointly responsible for the Government revenue. The distinction between the two tenures is that under bhágdári there was a fixed assessment on each field, while under narvádári the

revenue was paid in a lump. While interesting as remains of the ancient village community, these tenures are not found by their holders to work satisfactorily at the present day, and the survey tenure is felt by them to be superior. In 1887 the *narvádárs* or sharcholders of the village of Kanjári in Nadiád *táluká* applied to have their special tenure abolished and replaced by the ordinary system¹.

The superiority of the survey-tenure is a noteworthy fact. It might naturally have been expected that the Survey and Settlement Department, which was engaged in enhancing assessments, would have been hated, and in recent times it was unpopular. But in the early years of the Department the Survey was designed to remedy the effects of long periods of faulty revenue administration, and was applied to districts which were reduced to poverty and wretchedness. The system, therefore, was liberal from the outset, large reductions being made in the Government demand to encourage fixed cultivation and the re-occupation and fresh cultivation of waste lands. The introduction of the Survey came to be regarded as the signal for moderation and reduction of rents. In the opinion of some the sacrifices made were almost too great. Sir George Campbell relates that when the Madras officials were twitted with the success of the Bombay system, they used to say that it would be very easy to give as much satisfaction if the revenue were as completely sacrificed as in Bombay².

¹ *Bombay Administration Report for 1887-88*, p. 53.

² *Systems of Land Tenure in various Countries*: Cobden Club, p. 172.

The renewal of revision operations, 1860-1866, marked a new era in settlement procedure. When the Department came to deal with the subdivisions settled at an early date, it found that the exceedingly moderate assessment of the first leaders of the Survey had borne their full fruit, and that owing to the development of the country by roads and railways, and the establishment of convenient markets, the cultivators were enjoying large increments of profit which ought justly to be considered in fixing the Government demand. Consequently a considerable enhancement of assessments resulted from the first batch of revisions. The cultivators were unprepared for this new phase of the Survey operations, and in parts of the Poona District there was much dissatisfaction. The revised rates were freely attacked in the public press, and, notwithstanding that considerable reductions were made in the case of some revised settlements, agitation continued with more or less force until the year of the famine (1876-77).

In 1881, in consideration of the great losses the cultivators had sustained from famine and destruction of crops, temporary remissions of revenue were granted in all cases which had come under revision, and it was ordered that before the full revised rates were again levied there should be a further enquiry, and the sanction of Government should be obtained. Notwithstanding these precautions, doubt and suspicion continued to be entertained against the Survey up to 1886; and in the discussion which preceded Act IV of that year to amend certain sections of the Land

Revenue Code, the Survey Department was attacked by several non-official members of the Council speaking on behalf of the cultivators. Since 1886, however, there has been a marked difference of attitude towards the Survey on the part of the leaders of the people and the press.

This is due, in part, to the explanation of the system and refutation of the complaints against the Survey during the debate on the Bill, and to Lord Reay's resolve that the cultivators should be allowed as many opportunities as were possible to bring forward objections to the treatment of their holdings at the Survey and the resulting assessments. Those who were agitating against the Survey found themselves compelled to acknowledge the tenacity with which the Bombay Government kept to its pledges of moderation of rates, notwithstanding conflicting opinions, and could not fail to see that adequate precautions were being taken to prevent the operations of the Survey Department from becoming arbitrary or oppressive. While the number of revenue-paying occupancies only varied from 1,300,643 in 1885-86 for the Presidency, excluding Sind, to 1,292,927 in 1889-90, the number of distraints for rent fell from 3186 in 1885-86 to 1111 in 1889-90.

The vigorous and sagacious administration of the Survey and Settlement Department has made it possible to bring it to an end ere long, and its successor has already been appointed. When the thorough survey and classification, now in progress, are completed, this branch of the work will, it is

hoped, be finished once for all, subject to such rectifications as are inevitable; and it will then only be necessary to preserve the records and keep them up to date. The work of future settlement officers, when the settlements again come up for revision, will be comparatively simple. In the words of the Government of Bombay: 'When these operations are finished, the record will remain as an authoritative and sufficient standard of relative values by which assessment may be adjusted to each field through calculations made in the Collector's office¹.' The work has been expensive while it lasted, because it has been thorough; and because it had to be done by a special agency instead of by the ordinary executive officers as in most other provinces of India.

The succession to the Survey and Settlement Department is destined to be inherited by the officers of the Land Revenue Department with the aid and advice of the Director of Land Records and Agriculture. The latter Department was founded in accordance with the recommendations of the Famine Commission, and it was at one time under consideration to make it sole heir of the Survey and Settlement Department and the custodian of the traditions thereof. Subsequently, however, it was decided that the Circle Inspectors, who were to keep the Survey maps and records up to date, and the officers appointed to superintend their work, should form part of the district revenue establishment of the Collector, acting with the advice and assistance of the Director of Agriculture. It was not

¹ *Bombay Government Letter*, No. 6340, dated Aug. 27, 1883.

thought expedient that, in direct control, the Director should be substituted for the Collector, although in passing rules and selecting subordinates the utmost advantage should be taken of the Director's knowledge and experience.

The Circle Inspectors will be chosen principally from the Survey Department when its operations are ended, and the supervising officers will be Survey men. It is hoped that in this way the traditions and practice of the Survey Department will be efficiently maintained. The additional words 'and land records' were added to the title of Director of Agriculture, when the records of the Dhárwár and Bijápur revised settlements were completed and made over to the charge of the Collectors. The regular treatment of the land records at the various Head-quarter Stations, and the compiling of comprehensive land revenue statements for the Presidency, will form important duties of the Director.

It is appropriate that the Department of Agriculture should thus be interested in maintaining the records of the Revenue Survey. For there can be no question that the Survey has done much for agriculture by securing fixity of tenure and a fair rent. During the five years under review, the cultivated land in the Presidency proper, exclusive of Sind, rose from 24,035,256 acres in 1884-85 to 24,481,639 acres in 1889 90, an increase of 446,383 acres. What is now urgently needed, is to improve the quality as well as to extend the area of Indian agriculture, and one of the most hopeful methods of effecting this

is a system of agricultural education. The subject received the earnest attention of Mr. O'anne, the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, during the five years under review. Besides promoting a graduated scheme of agricultural education, and an 'agricultural diploma' in the University of Bombay, he rendered important services to the actual administration. His valuable ráb experiments largely influenced the report of the Bombay Forest Commission. He also carried on a series of investigations for the improvement of Bombay agriculture at the Government experimental farms and in other likely localities. Lord Reay took a special interest in these efforts.

Alienation Settlements are somewhat similar in character to the regular settlements made by the Survey and Settlement Department, in that they regulate and define the rights of certain holders of land. But they differ in that they are, as a rule, permanent, and not for a term of years only. They fix, as their designation signifies, the grants of land alienated from the Government, and the tenures on which they were granted and by which they are held.

The tenures of alienated holdings may be divided for general purposes into four classes, political, service, religious, and personal¹. Lands held under the first of these heads include political pensions and the grants known as 'jághírs' and 'saranjáms,' the former being of Muhammadan, the latter of Maráthá origin. These grants were made by the State for the perform-

¹ *Bombay Administration Report for 1882-83* Bombay, 1884, p. 41.

ance of civil or military duties, or for the maintenance of the personal dignity of nobles and high officials. Under the British Government the duties attached have either been abolished or commuted for a money payment, but many grants are continued on political considerations. Far more numerous are the assignments held on 'service tenure.' Such grants were originally made to ensure the performance of certain specified services in each village or district. But owing to the introduction of the revenue survey and the organisation of a regular police, the duties attached to many service assignments have come to an end, and the holders of them now pay a portion of their estimated value and are freed from liability to serve. Holdings granted by native governments for the support of religious or charitable institutions, and continued by the British Government, are classified as held on 'religious' tenure. Lastly are included under the head of 'personal' tenure a vast number of estates and holdings, alienated by former rulers under various denominations and for different services, and continued to the present day as personal inams.

A more systematic enquiry into the titles to alienated holdings in the Bombay Presidency was suggested in 1851 by the large number of unauthorized and fraudulent alienations, gradually brought to light by the Revenue Survey in the Southern Maráthá country and elsewhere. The enquiry then commenced in that portion of the Presidency developed into an organised investigation, which, under the title of the Inám Commission or the Alienation Department, was extended to the whole

of the Presidency. The work was, however, done with inconvenient slowness, owing to the minute detail with which the scrutiny was conducted. It was accordingly resolved in 1863 to give such persons as claimed an exemption from the payment of Government land-revenue the option of avoiding a scrutiny of their title by the payment of a quit-rent, and in that year Acts II and VII of 1863, known as the Summary Settlement Acts, were passed.

The results of the operations of the Alienation Department and of the summary settlements which followed were most advantageous to the revenue¹. The annual revenue alienated at the commencement of the enquiry was Rs. 132,51,008. The amount was reduced to Rs. 80,38,361 by 1876-77, causing an addition to the revenue of Rs. 51,86,398. This great additional revenue was secured at a comparatively small expense, the cost of the Alienation Department up to 1876-77 having only amounted to Rs. 26,10,179. It is curious to observe how these alienations are distributed under the four classes already mentioned. Rs. 33,67,892 are included under 'personal' tenure and Rs. 33,65,482 under 'service' tenure, while only Rs. 6,72,604 appear under 'political' tenure, and Rs. 6,32,383 under 'religious' tenure. The enquiries respecting alienated lands have now been completed in the majority of the districts of the Bombay Presidency, and in 1889-90 the only districts in which any considerable amount of work

¹ I derive these figures from the Standing Information prefixed to the *Bombay Administration Report for 1882-83*

remained to be done were Sâtára, Ratnágiri, and Kolába¹. The settlement of alienations formed an essential complement to the labour of the regular Survey and Settlement Department, and it has this advantage, that it will not have to be revised, as the titles are granted in perpetuity and not for a term of years only.

The collection of the land-revenue is one of the main duties of the district officer, and the nature of the Bombay system demands a most exact supervision. The Assistant or Deputy Collector in the Bombay Presidency travels about the *tálukás* or subdivisions placed under his charge for about seven months in the year, and the Collector of a district for four months². Under them are the *Mámlatdárs*, each of whom is responsible for the general business of one *táluká*. It is the *Mámlatdár's* business to get in the revenue for the villages from the Revenue *Pátel* or head-man, and to see that the village accounts are properly kept by the village accountant, who is called a *Talát* in Gujarát and a *Kulkarni* in the Deccan. The Survey register is the record of title. Every occupant is given a separate receipt-book, in which the head-men and accountants of the village are obliged, under heavy penalties, to record each instalment of rent as soon as it is paid. A general scrutiny and record, termed the *jamábandi*, of the village is annually made, at which time the amount of revenue due from the village is worked out, the village

¹ *Bombay Administration Report for 1889-90*, p. 37.

² *Ibid.*, 1882-83, p. 25

accounts are examined, and transfers of numbers are verified and recorded. During this scrutiny the Assistant or Deputy Collector is brought into direct contact with the villages under his charge, and is enabled to judge of their wants and requirements.

For the district officers are not merely rent-collectors. The British Government endeavours according to its lights to play the part of a wise and tolerant landlord, and is ready not only to remit rent or revenue when such remissions are rendered necessary, but to advance sums of money to its tenants for agricultural improvements. This work is conducted by the district officers on their tours. Floods, droughts, and plagues of locusts are taken into consideration, and remissions of revenue made on account of them. Equally important are the advances made by Government to the cultivators. By Act XIX of 1883 such advances were allowed to be granted for permanent improvements, and by Act XII of 1884 for the purchase of cattle and seed. An aggregate sum of Rs. 4,36,619 was advanced for these purposes during the years 1885-86 to 1889-90. Such loans bear interest of one ana in the rupee, or $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent per annum. But this is not always exacted, and during the five years under review Rs. 37,039 were advanced to the Bhils in Khándesh free of interest. Government advances are largely taken advantage of by the cultivators in Sind and in the district of Belgáum. The latter district, indeed, received the large proportion of Rs. 1,80,000 out of the total Rs. 4,36,619. Among the purposes for which such advances were

granted may be noted the construction and repair of wells, the clearing of waste land, the conversion of dry-crop land into wet-crop land, and the removal of prickly pear and rank grass. A sum of Rs. 5,250 was granted in the Panch Maháls in 1888-89 for the rebuilding of houses destroyed by fire.

Another duty of the revenue administration is to take care of the estates of holders who are unable to take care of themselves. These may be ranked in two classes: (1) wards or minors, (2) improvident landholders. The absence of large estates in the Bombay Presidency, arising from the nature of the settlement field by field, renders the management of wards' estates a smaller and less interesting branch of the work of the local officers in Bombay than in Bengal. In the districts of Ahmadábád, Broach, and Kaira, wards' estates are placed under the care of the Tálukdári officer; in the other districts they are directly managed by the ordinary district officials for the advantage of the wards. The number and extent of these estates vary from year to year. In 1885-86, at the commencement of the five years under review, they were 91 in number, amounting to 110,051 acres, including one in the Haidarábád district of Sind of 64,765 acres. In 1889-90 they were 79 in number, extending over 111,523 acres, including three in the Panch Maháls, aggregating over 60,000 acres.

In addition to the care of wards' estates, the Government had in 1884-85 two officers specially engaged in administering the estates of improvident landlords. These were the Manager of Encumbered Estates in

Sind, and the Tálukdári Settlement Officer in Gujarát. The former official had 143 estates under his superintendence in 1885-86, but the number steadily diminished. In 1887 the special establishment in Sind was abolished, and the encumbered estates were placed under the charge of the district officers. It was not found possible, however, to dispense with the services of the Tálukdári officer in Gujarát. I have already described the Tálukdári tenure on pp. 256-258.

The Tálukdárs personally are distinguished for loyalty. They celebrated the Jubilee of the Queen-Empress with the utmost enthusiasm at Ahmadábád in 1887. Her portrait was hung with garlands of flowers, a congratulatory address in a silver casket was forwarded to Her Majesty, and Rs. 20,000 were subscribed by them for a memorial of her jubilee year. Yet with all their good qualities, it is difficult to save them from the consequences of their hereditary habits of improvidence, and it is stated that many of them are hopelessly involved. In spite of the efforts made for their rescue, they are reported to have 'succumbed anew to the wiles of the money-lenders, with a readiness and ignorance which showed that they had not benefited by past experience¹.'

In the year after this statement was made, an interesting account was given of the causes of their embarrassments. 'The result of legislation in regard to the Tálukdárs of Gujarát has not been altogether successful. It is a matter of notoriety that already very many of the estates freed from debt in the manner

¹ *Bombay Administration Report for 1886-87*, p. xv.

provided by the legislature are again seriously encumbered. In some cases, the second state of the Tálukdárs is even worse than the first. The causes ordinarily assigned for this state of things are the reckless improvidence of the Tálukdárs, the exaggerated view they entertain of their own position, their wasteful expenditure on marriages and other domestic ceremonies, their open-handed extravagance at all times, and the enlargement of credit which followed the recognition of absolute proprietorship in the soil accorded by section 20 of Act VI of 1862. But experience has shown that there are other causes, perhaps not so well known.

‘Amongst those causes may be mentioned the following: (1) Litigation—most of which is wholly unnecessary—with co-sharers. (2) Intrigues of kárbháris (managers). (3) Malpractices of creditors of the sáukár (money-lending) class. And (4) Extravagance of sons. In most cases the kárbhári is a creditor of the Tálukdár: he encourages quarrels and litigation among the bháyáts (co-sharers), lends pecuniary assistance, and thus obtains a control over his master. Still more helpless are the Tálukdárs in their relations with their Wánia creditors. Debts equivalent to from four to twelve years’ revenue have already been contracted by Tálukdárs, whose estates have been recently released¹.’

The disturbances caused by the indebtedness of the Deccan peasantry, who had used the credit given them and created for them by their possession of the ‘survey tenure’ to borrow freely, and thus to make themselves practically the tenants of money-lenders instead

¹ *Bombay Administration Report for 1887-88*, pp. 59, 60.

of the Government, occurred before the period under review. The passing of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act in 1879 therefore lies beyond the scope of this work. The indebtedness of the peasantry still continues a source of anxiety in the Deccan; and the working of the Deccan Relief Act is, as already stated, again under enquiry (1891).

It remains to see the effect upon the land, as apart from the cultivators, of the establishment of the 'survey tenure' and of the land-rights which it has conferred on the peasantry of Bombay. In 1885-86 it was estimated that in the Bombay Presidency excluding Sind there were 27,111,272 acres of cultivable land; of which 24,035,256 acres were cultivated, and 3,076,016 were cultivable waste. During the five years from 1885-86 to 1889-90, no less than 1,004,104 acres of the waste were reported to have been taken into cultivation. The nett actual increase of cultivated land after all deductions was, as already stated, 446,383 acres.

The proportion of the cultivated to the cultivable area is very large in all the inland districts except the Panch Maháls and Khándesh, and it is a noteworthy feature that immigrants are beginning to move freely into the latter districts. Of the coast districts, only Ratnágiri, perhaps the most closely cultivated district in the Presidency, is as yet completely occupied. There is much cultivable waste both in Thána and Kolába; and in each of these districts it is found more profitable to reclaim the salt marshes than to break up new land towards the interior. North Kánara is

still capable of a considerable extension of cultivation, and there is a large demand for labour in the spice gardens of this wealthy district. It is difficult, owing to the want of data, to speak with precision regarding Sind, but it may be asserted that the improvement, which is there due to increased facilities for irrigation and to the Irrigation Settlements, is as great as, if not greater than, in the rest of the Presidency.

CHAPTER IX.

PUBLIC WORKS.

THE Department of Public Works in India conducts many undertakings which in England are left to private enterprise. The position of the British Government as chief landlord, and the absence of an adequate organisation of capital in India, render this inevitable. If the Government did not construct large and necessary works of public utility, they would not be undertaken at all. The English administrators have tried to efficiently discharge the duties thus laid upon them, and have organised a special department in each Province to deal with the multifarious subjects which come under the head of Public Works. The labours of the Public Works Departments, central and provincial, have transformed the face of the country, and have done much to consolidate India from a collection of territories into an empire.

The Public Works administration of any province, like Bombay, is complicated by the circumstance that the Supreme Government keeps the financial direction, though not the executive management, of certain important divisions of the Public Works Department, such as the main lines of railway and irrigation, in its

own hands. In regard to many important questions a provincial Governor may suggest improvements or reforms, yet he cannot carry them into execution without the previous assent of the Government of India. This dual control is inevitable ; but it makes the connected study of the progress of public works in a particular province a task of no small difficulty.

The work performed by the Public Works Department in the Bombay Presidency arranges itself into five main branches. (1) The development of means of communication, such as railways, roads, bridges and ferries. (2) The superintendence of irrigation, one of the most important duties of the Indian Government, as the great State-owner of the land. (3) The facilitation of commercial enterprise by the construction of harbours, docks, &c. (4) The maintenance of the material fabric of government, such as court houses, police lines, schools, and public or quasi-public buildings of many sorts. (5) The construction of sanitary works and appliances, such as schemes for drainage and water-supply. The really important functions of the Public Works Department, from the civil point of view, may be brought under one or other of these heads. The branch of military works, including the construction or maintenance of barracks, fortifications and schemes for general defence, stands on a different footing, and is therefore treated in another chapter.

Dealing first with Means of Communication, a brief notice must suffice for the railways and the growth of the different railway systems in Bombay. For there are, strictly speaking, no provincial railways in the

Presidency, that is to say, no lines constructed out of provincial revenues. The great arterial systems are all under the Government of India, and the Provincial Governments have no pecuniary interest in them. But they are decentralised to a certain extent for the sake of convenience in administration, and the Bombay Government exercises immediate control over the three great lines running out of Bombay City, with a total mileage of 5001 miles, of which, however, only 1988 miles are within the actual limits of the Presidency. It also supervises the railways in the Native States of Káthiáwár and those constructed by the Gáekwár of Baroda.

The three trunk lines referred to are the 'G. I. P.' or Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company, the 'B. B. and C. I.' or Bombay, Baroda and Central India Company, and the Southern Maráthá Railway Company. The two first are guaranteed lines, which the Imperial Government has, at certain dates and under certain conditions, the option of purchasing. The North-Western State Railway, originally constructed mainly for military purposes, runs along the right bank of the Indus from Sukkur to Karáchi, and is throughout that section in the province of Sind, but it is not managed by the Bombay Government.

The most conspicuous engineering work accomplished by the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, during the five years under review, was the doubling of the line from Bhusáwal in the Bombay Presidency to Khandwá in the Central Provinces, where it joins the Málwá line. This was completed in January, 1889.

Perhaps even more important for the future prosperity of Bombay City was the development of the Indian Midland Railway Company's system by the opening of the lines to Jhānsi, and from Jhānsi to Gwalior, on February 1, 1888, and March 1, 1889, respectively. A shorter route has thus been provided from Bombay to Cawnpur, *viâ* Bhusáwal, Khandwá and Itársi on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, and thence *viâ* Bhopal and Jhānsi on the Indian Midland Railway; and also from Bombay to Agra *viâ* Jhānsi and Gwalior, where a junction is formed with the old Sindhia Railway. These lines have not been in use long enough to determine how far the trade from Cawnpur and the North-Western Provinces will be diverted from Calcutta, and adopt Bombay for purposes of export. The recent completion of the Nágpur-Bengal Railway will also exercise an important influence on the fortunes of the Great Indian Peninsula line, as a continuation of its Nágpur branch, and the most direct route from Bombay to Calcutta.

In regard to the working of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, an improvement was effected by permitting mail and passenger trains to traverse the Bhór Ghát at night all through the year. This had been forbidden during the monsoon months, but time has shown that the Bhór Ghát is now safe from serious slips, and the prohibition was provisionally removed by the Agent during the five years under review. His action was confirmed by the Board of Directors on June 5, 1891, to the great convenience of the public and the Post Office. In the construction of permanent buildings,

considerable energy was shown by the Great Indian Peninsula Railway during the period from 1885 to 1890. A new and handsome station was completed at the terminus in Bombay; large additions were made at Nágpur to meet the requirements of the increased traffic expected on the opening of the Nágpur-Bengal line; and extensive alterations were taken in hand at Poona, where the Southern Maráthá line forms its junction with the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.

In the Southern Maráthá Railway system, important extensions were completed during Lord Reay's administration. Originally projected and undertaken as a famine relief work, it has developed into one of the most useful railways in India. The section from Dhárwár to Bellary in the Madras Presidency was opened in September, 1885; the extension from Hubli to Harihar in October, 1886; the section of the West Deccan line from Poona to Koregaon in November, 1886; the whole of the West Deccan line in December, 1887; and the connection with the West of India Portuguese Railway in February, 1888. Further works are in progress to connect the system with the Madras Presidency. The Mysore Railways were transferred to the Southern Maráthá Railway Company in July, 1886.

The Southern Maráthá Railway thus developed during Lord Reay's tenure of office from a local line of 457 miles into a railway system of 1339 miles. It is premature to forecast the prospects of the Southern Maráthá system. Originally started as a famine line and extended for the same reason, it traverses a some-