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they were still performing a subaltern's duties[1] It is unnecessary to comment on the disastrous effect of such a state of things upon the spirit of the whole body; in fact, it gave the final blow to the efficiency of the Madras army. Officers so situated could not have any heart in their work; regiments thus officered with men grown grey in the performance of subordinate duties, and without prospects of advancement, formed a most unsatisfactory school for the young officers eventually posted to them.

The officers of the Madras army thus growing old all together reached the age for retirement together, seniors and juniors, making sudden gaps in the list, which, the establishment having now been brought down by efflux of time to the required strength, were filled up by the appointment of young officers in numbers far exceeding the proper average yearly supply. The first comers of this accession have had exceedingly rapid promotion, and the Madras regiments are now for the most part commanded by captains. But those who come below these lucky seniors will in their turn be very unlucky. The Madras officers are all very much of the same age again, all young men, just as the men they succeeded were all old men, and another block in promotion is impending. And some special measures will be needed to prevent a recurrence of the disastrous circumstances of the past. The needful degree of prevision to deal with this is perhaps hardly to be expected from the Government of India, the members of which hold office for only brief terms, and are very fully employed on the business to be dealt with from day to day. And a

And further evils to come.

[1] In a certain Madras regiment, not long ago, the eight British officers comprised seven colonels and lieutenant colonels and one lieutenant. From 1861 the two junior officers of a regiment were officially styled 'wing subalterns:' it occurred to the authorities, after some years, that this title was hardly appropriate for field officers, and it was altered to that of 'wing officer.'

Secretary of State, who comes to his office absolutely ignorant of India and its affairs, seldom holds it long enough to master administrative problems much more important than even the organisation of the army. But the Council of India, whose members have no executive business, whose functions are limited to offering advice, and who have abundant leisure, should be just the body from whom an exhibition might be looked for of the needful foresight to draw attention to evils to come Past experience however does not encourage the expectation that this form of statesmanship will be exhibited by that body.

Amalgamation of the three Staff Corps.

It remains to mention about the Staff Corps that it was originally constituted in three separate bodies: the Bengal, Madras, and Bombay Staff Corps respectively. Inasmuch as the officers comprising them are serving under identical conditions as to pay and promotion regulated by length of service, and that they are all equally eligible for employment extra-regimentally in any part of India, this separation into three corps was obviously unnecessary. Their amalgamation into one 'Indian Staff Corps,' repeatedly proposed by the Government of India, has at last been carried out. The title is obviously inappropriate for a body only a small fraction of which is employed on the staff. But a difficulty in the way of making the desired change in this respect has existed so far, that the title 'Indian Army' has been given to the minority of the officers of the old army who elected not to join the staff corps. These, however, are a rapidly decreasing body, consisting now of seniors only, and on their disappearance, when the Indian army and the Staff Corps will mean the same thing, it may be hoped that the latter unmeaning title will be discontinued.[1]

Title should be changed.

[1] There is also a body of officers, appointed in the years 1859 1861, termed the 'General List.' Their case is too technical to be dealt with here; it is sufficient to say that no difficulty would arise in dealing with them in the same way as with the staff corps.

CHAPTER XIV

ARMY ORGANISATION

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Causes which brought about the presidential system of organisation

THE circumstances under which the Indian army was originally created and has gradually attained its present form, have already been described briefly in earlier parts of this work. In the first instance the three armies which arose out of the requirements of the times were separate and independent organisations. The Government of Bengal had indeed from an early period a general authority over the Governments of the other Presidencies, but this was not exerted in matters of detail, and the three armies had only the degree of uniformity due to the respective Governments they served being under the orders of their common master, the Court of Directors of the East India Company. Each army recruited its native soldiers locally, and received its European reinforcements direct from England; it served only in its own Presidency, and was separated from the other armies by wide tracts of country under independent native rule. From an early date indeed the Commander-in-Chief in Bengal was recognised as being also Commander-in-Chief in India, but the authority thus conveyed applied only to control over the military operations in the field and to a certain limited extent over the discipline of the King's troops serving in that country. The native troops and the Company's European troops in Madras and Bombay continued to be

wholly under the local Commander-in-Chief and Government. Gradually the three armies came in contact as they spread over the whole country, and gradually also the Supreme Government came to exercise a more direct control over the administration of the Madras and Bombay armies. From the first, indeed, the financial responsibility for finding ways and means for defraying all military expenditure had rested with the Government of Bengal, as the supreme authority was then called. For long after it maintained an army, the Bombay Presidency had no revenues to speak of, and the Madras Government was never able to meet its military charges; but this responsibility was not clearly recognised until a system of annual estimates and appropriations was introduced, when by degrees a definite financial control was established and the authority of the two minor Governments to sanction military expenditure gradually came to an end The military system continued however to be organised on the presidential basis; three separate departments of account were maintained; three departments of commissariat, ordnance, and so forth, all engaged in disbursing money supplied directly by the Supreme Government, and all acting under regulations laid down by that authority. The two local governments came into the business only in personal matters. Appointments to and promotions in the departments at Madras and Bombay were still made by those Governments, a striking case of patronage divested of responsibility; but this patronage, and the assumed loss of dignity which would be suffered by change have been largely instrumental in creating the opposition long maintained to the introduction of a more rational system.

This gradually became unworkable.

In the progress of events the Madras and Bombay armies, as has already been explained, were gradually pushed forward beyond the limits of those Presidencies to occupy the different territories added from time to time to British India. From the beginning of the

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century the Madras army has occupied Mysore and Hyderabad, states with the affairs and administration of which the Madras Government has no concern; more recently it has been called on to furnish garrisons for the Central Provinces, the maritime districts of Burma, and even portions of Bengal and Bombay. Similarly, on the occupation of Central India and Rajputana after the last Maratha War, in 1817, a portion of the garrisons of these countries was allotted to the Bombay army, which latterly has also detached some of its regiments to remote Baluchistan The complications involved in carrying on the military business of the Indian Government in this disjointed fashion have long been extraordinarily troublesome and inconvenient; the state of things arising in war was in the last degree embarrassing. The Government of India which was alone responsible for the conduct of military operations, had not even the advantage of choosing the generals and staff to be employed, the nomination of which for the contingents supplied from the Madras and Bombay armies rested, according to the etiquette obtaining, with their respective Governments. If we suppose that in a case of an expeditionary force sent abroad from the United Kingdom, the selection of the troops to go from Ireland and the Channel Islands with their generals and staff, were to be vested in the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and the Governor of Guernsey respectively, we should have a reproduction of the practice which has hitherto obtained in India. The Indian Government in effect took the field with an army of allied troops, under all the disadvantages attending such a condition and with none of the countervailing benefits; the whole responsiblity for results and the burden of meeting the charges remained with that Government.

The serious evils and the flagrant absurdities involved in this state of things were first brought under public notice in the earlier editions of this work, more

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than a quarter of a century ago, in which also was proposed a definitive plan for carrying out a comprehensive reform, to bring the organisation of the Indian armies into accord with the requirements of the day, based on the principle that the entire control over them should pass to the authority on which already rested the whole responsibility, financial and administrative. Recognising the extreme importance of maintaining the segregation of the different armies and their difference of composition, and pressing indeed that this should be carried out more rigidly than had been customary of late, the author pointed out that the nominal interposition of the Madras and Bombay Governments in the administration of their now scattered armies, which were serving under regulations in the framing of which they had practically no part, and stationed for the most part in countries with which they had no concern, so far as it was not directly mischievous was simply productive of needless expense and delay in the disposal of business The remedy proposed was obvious and simple. Those armies should be maintained intact, but they should be removed from the control of the local governments, the various disbursing departments and the offices of account and audit being brought directly under the Government of India and the local Commanders-in-Chief placed directly under the Commander-in-Chief in India.

Evils of maintaining system brought to notice in previous editions.

And reforms proposed.

On the other hand the Bengal army called for disintegration. The old army had become dangerous because an overgrown homogeneous force, all recruited from one part of India and from one class. This error, which mainly was the cause of the transient success of the great Mutiny, had indeed been avoided in the reconstruction of that army, and it now consisted of two distinct and nearly equal elements, Hindustani and Punjabi. But the principle of segregation had been lost sight of; the two classes of regiments had been mixed up together, all over northern India, Hindustanis serving

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on the Peshawur frontier, and Punjabis at Calcutta. Moreover, the Bengal army was spread over a country far too extensive for a single command, and every consideration pointed to the need for dividing it into two separate armies, to be kept entirely apart from each other in peace time, for the eastern and western parts of the north of India, which from their position and composition would accurately be called the armies of Hindustan and Punjab, the name Bengal being dropped altogether. Always a misnomer, since there has never been a Bengali serving in it, it had become more than ever inappropriate, and indeed absurd, now that only a very small fraction of that army was serving in Bengal. The commanders of these two armies would be placed on the same footing as the Commanders-in-Chief at Madras and Bombay: the Commander-in-Chief in India, dissociated from his present immediate connection with the Bengal army, would occupy the same position towards each of the four armies, and would be responsible in the same degree for the discipline and general efficiency of all.

This proposal to substitute for a condition which had been suffered to grow up unchecked without any attempt at progressive reform, to adapt it to the altered circumstances of the times—for a system, if such it can be called, full of anomalies, violating all sound financial principles, which worked only with infinite friction in peace time, creaking at every joint, and must infallibly break down in war: the proposal to substitute for this ill-ordered state of things an organisation symmetrical, simple in form, and based on the principle universally recognised everywhere else, that administrative power must go with the authority that is responsible, met with general approval except at the India Office and Horse Guards. At the one it encountered opposition natural from men wedded to a system in which they had been brought up; at the other the nature of the proposal

was not understood. The years passed by, but the authorities at home showed no disposition to take any action in this direction, when the Afghan war of 1878–80 and the revelations of presidential mismanagement which followed made plain the impossibility of maintaining any longer the existing state of things. And the Government of Lord Lytton appointed a Commission to enquire into the organisation of the Indian army. The ostensible cause for action was the desire to reduce military expenditure at a time of financial embarrassment. But cost and organisation were bound up together; the war had been illustrated by instances of grievous mal-administration and improper appointments to responsible posts, and the instructions to the Commission—a very strong one with the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, the most important civil official in India after the Governor General, at the head, were wide and general. Their copious and exhaustive report, in addition to proposals for reduction of expenditure, recommended a complete re-organisation of army administration corresponding in all essential respects with that proposed in this work—the unification of army administration under the Supreme Government, the detachment of the Bengal army from the direct command of the Commander-in-Chief, and its division into two armies for Hindustan and Punjab respectively. Lord Lytton left India shortly after the presentation of the report, which fell to be taken up by the Government of Lord Ripon, and the adoption of the leading proposals contained in it was strongly pressed by them on the authorities in England. The latter, however, received it but coldly. To some members of the Indian Council any change upon the state of things obtaining in their day was repugnant, others were indifferent, those who approved of the reform were lukewarm in supporting it. At the Horse Guards the scope of the proposals seems to have been misapprehended; that office is not

which after protracted opposition and controversy

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familiar with the organisation of the Indian army, and its criticisms on the case, so far as they are known, were hardly relevant to it.[1] They were mainly directed to the danger of overcentralisation in military affairs which was assumed to be contemplated The fact that the Madras and Bombay armies had remained faithful when the Bengal army mutinied was ascribed to the fact that they were serving under separate governments, and it was argued that their loyalty would be strained by the transfer of their services to a distant authority. Further, that in the event of a recurrence of rebellion, a great advantage would be lost if the local governments were not in a position to command the services of the local armies at a time when perhaps communication with the Supreme Government might be cut off

To this the Government of India replied that while overcentralisation, in the sense of concentrating all power in a central authority, dealing with matters which might with propriety and advantage be disposed of by the local officials, was undoubtedly to be deprecated, their proposals did not involve anything of the kind. Segregation of the armies would be maintained as before, while the division of the Bengal army into two carried the principle of segregation much further. So far from the existing arrangements securing the desired result, as a matter of fact great practical difficulty had been found in restraining the authorities in Bombay from persistently recruiting in Northern India from among the classes which supplied the Bengal army, in violation of the regulations prohibiting the practice. As to the supposed attachmen

[1] The Commission, in their report, rather unfortunately used the term 'army corps' to denote what would, in fact, have been four separate armies, kept as distinct from each other as they were before the change possibly it may have been apprehended that there would be a loss of patronage because the local commanders-in chief were to be abolished They were, however, to be retained under another name, and the number of them was to be raised from two to four.

of the local armies to their government, inasmuch as they were serving for the most part in territories beyond the jurisdiction of that government, with which they seldom if ever came in contact, and as the military code under which the troops were serving was not that of the local government, which equally was not responsible for the pay or clothing or equipment of the troops, the connection between them must necessarily be of but a shadowy kind. As to the supposed safeguard, in the event of internal troubles hereafter, of maintaining the nominal connection of two out of the eight provincial governments of India with military affairs, the degree of energy and skill which might be displayed by the civil authorities of any province cut off from outer communication, and forced to act for itself, would depend on the character of the Government. The Governor who showed the highest example in this respect during the Mutiny was one who had nominally no control over the army serving in his province. On the other hand, if centralisation in the bad sense was to be condemned, unity of command and control was an essential condition of proper army administration. The existing system, with the nominal interposition of the authority of the two local governments in the concerns of armies dispersed for the most part in territories beyond the limits of their own administration, was productive of nothing but embarrassment and delay, and must sooner or later be recognised on all sides as a mischievous survival of a state of things which had long passed away. Meanwhile, the liability was always present that the outbreak of war might find the administration of the Indian Government still encumbered by this defective military organisation. The correspondence was pursued for some years on these lines, the Indian Government continuing to press its demands for the reform, the India Office repeating its objections in a half-hearted way as if growing ashamed of its obstruc-

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tion; but while refusing to accord definite sanction to the proposal, the Secretary of State gave the case away bit and bit. One by one, he sanctioned the transfer of the different army departments in Madras and Bombay from the nominal control of the local governments. In 1876, the three departments of military account and audit were consolidated into one with an Accountant General attached to the Government of India at the head of it, and on this change being made, what control over army administration had still nominally remained with those governments practically came to an end. The three presidential Stud Departments were amalgamated in 1881. The unification of the Ordnance Departments followed in 1884, and later on of the Army Transport and Commissariat and the Clothing Agencies. The Madras and Bombay Governments had never been concerned with the charge of the barracks and other military buildings occupied by their armies outside the limits of those presidencies, the provision and custody of these having been entrusted to the governments of the different provinces in which the troops were stationed, while the harbour defences and other fortifications throughout the country were carried out by the Government of India through the agency of the Military Works Department, which had also the charge of the military buildings occupied by the Bengal army. In 1888, this department, reorganised in four branches each under an Inspector General, with a Director General at the head, took over the charge of all military buildings throughout the country. Lastly, the three separate presidential staff corps were amalgamated into one Indian Staff Corps.

Meanwhile the military operations which followed upon the annexation of Upper Burma in 1886 brought into prominent relief again the evils of what still remained of the presidential system. The troops employed were furnished from the three presidencies, and nearly

one half of the Madras army was diverted to that country —although the Bengal and Bombay troops took the leading part in the operations, and the general commanding, acting of course in immediate communication with the newly appointed governor of the province, took his orders from the Commander-in-Chief in India, who was responsible to the Supreme Government for the conduct of the war, and indeed went himself to Burma for a time to superintend affairs from the spot. Nevertheless, Burma being a command nominally attached to the Madras army, the fiction was maintained that the Madras Government, in some sort of way which no one could pretend to define, was responsible for the business, and for a time the general commanding submitted formal reports to that government of operations about which they had otherwise no other information than was to be derived from the newspapers. This absurdity was eventually dropped, but the Commander-in-Chief at Madras continued to be the medium of communication between the general officer on the spot and army headquarters in India.

are at last in course of being carried out.

At last, in 1888, the authorities at home could no longer withstand the irresistible reasons for putting an end to a state of things repugnant to common sense and amounting to an administrative scandal, and the Indian Government were authorised to prepare the necessary orders for finally giving effect to this long withstood reform. These, which were to be framed in detail, were to provide for the assumption by the Supreme Government of the direct administration of all the Indian armies. So far the change would be little more than formal, the transfer of this administration having in fact been already gradually taken over, but the further important change was now to be carried out, an essential part of the reform originally proposed, of dividing the Bengal army into two armies, each under a general officer having the same status and authority

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as the commander-in chiefs of the Madras and Bombay armies. The immediate connection of the Commander-in-Chief in India and headquarters staff with the Bengal army would thus be severed, and the great patronage heretofore exercised by him of all the appointments and promotions connected with that army would be transferred, with the command, to the heads of those two armies to be created On the other hand the Commander-in-Chief in India was now to undertake fully the functions indicated by his title, occupying the same degree of supervision and control over all four armies, while as a necessary condition of the responsibility attaching to that position he would naturally have a potential voice in selection for the higher posts throughout all those armies The measure, while thus establishing unification of command and administration, was aimed at providing also in a large degree for decentralisation, by devolution of authority to the four army commanders and the local departmental heads. Everything was thus made ready for carrying out the change in 1890, but delay arose in obtaining the statutory authority considered necessary for severing the connection between the Commander-in Chiefs of the Madras and Bombay armies and the governments of those provinces This was obtained by a short Act of Parliament passed in 1893, and there only remains for the Secretary of State to signify approval to the proposals of the Government of India for giving effect to the measure in its various details in order that this most important and long delayed reform should at last be carried out.

Reforms proposed in 1870 no longer suitable to circumstances of case

But meanwhile the march of events has already outstepped the slow and reluctant movement of the Home Government, and the arrangements first proposed so many years ago and now approaching accomplishment, have already ceased to be appropriate to the state of things with which we have to deal. The original scheme of four armies, the Bengal army being formally

decomposed into its two distinct elements, the Hindustani and Punjabi, necessarily presented a considerable inequality; the Punjab army to be created would be much the strongest numerically of the four, besides being the superior in fighting quality; the Hindustan army also was considerably larger than the other two. This inequality was accepted as a necessary condition of taking things as they were, and altering as little as possible the existing organisation. But since 1881 the Madras army has been largely and the Bombay army considerably reduced, while additions have been made to the troops on the North West Frontier; and the inequality in strength of the four divisions has now become so great that the new system will be found impracticable to work as soon as it comes into operation. Recent changes made in the composition of the armies increase the inequality still more. Of the thirty-two infantry regiments of the Madras army remaining after the reductions of 1882, seven have been converted into local Burma regiments recruited from Northern India, a change made partly in order to relieve the Madras Sepoy from unpopular service in that country, and partly because of his insufficiency for the work there. These seven regiments, although they continue to bear their old numbers as well as their new ones, are practically severed from the Madras army. Moreover, sooner or later, it will be found necessary to constitute Burma a separate command, the general holding it to report direct to army headquarters. With this change, which should have been carried out from the first occupation of Upper Burma, the last shadow of reason will disappear for maintaining even a nominal connection between these Burma battalions and the Madras army. Besides these local battalions, seven battalions of the regular Madras infantry are stationed in Burma, so that the Madras command will be limited, as regards native

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troops, to eighteen regiments of infantry,[1] three of cavalry, and a battalion of sappers, and including British troops will comprise only about twenty-seven thousand men, or less than one-seventh of the Indian army. It will not be justifiable to keep up the apparatus of a commander-in-chief and staff sufficient for an army on account of this body The native portion is smaller than the Punjab Frontier Force, the command for thirty years of a brigadier-general with a single staff officer.

A similar disintegration has taken place in the Bombay army, which must inevitably be carried further. The portion of that army serving in Sind has always been a local force of two so-called Baluchi infantry regiments and three regiments of Sind Horse, consisting of men raised on the frontier and in Punjab. A portion of the garrison occupying the more advanced position lately taken up at Quetta and other points beyond Sind and Punjab has however been furnished from the regular regiments of the Bombay army, coming and going in the periodical reliefs, a service unpopular with men raised in the tropical districts of India, and for which they are physically unfitted. Of these battalions, five in number, three have lately been broken up, and the men in them replaced by a new enlistment from the border tribes for local service; so that, although the old numbers have been retained for the present, these regiments have practically severed their connection with the Bombay army. The Quetta district has always been directly under the Commander-in-Chief in India. The Bombay army, even before the conversion above mentioned, furnished only a smaller portion of the whole force there, and now is represented by only two battalions of infantry. In any redistribution of commands, the small force in Sind, which can be approached from

[1] These regiments have a considerably less strength in rank and file than the regiments in Northern India.

Bombay only by sea, would naturally be attached to the frontier command of which it forms a base. If this be done, as on military grounds is much to be desired, and would certainly be done if war were imminent, then the Bombay command would be reduced to about thirty thousand men, also little more than one-seventh of the whole Indian army.

On the other hand, the Western or Punjab army will have become very much more than an army of Punjabis only, and will be brought up to a strength of about seventy thousand men, a larger and incomparably stronger military force than the Madras and Bombay armies put together.[1] The fact is that during the last few years the military centre of gravity has moved further towards the west. The necessity has arisen of strengthening the frontier position, while in pursuance of the policy which has always been acted on of inviting into our ranks the best material available, there has been a large substitution for other classes of the hardy races on the frontier which have come under our rule and influence The result is a state of things obviously incompatible with the fulfilment of the original scheme of four commands with equal staffs and establishments for dealing with armies of nearly equal strength. The inequality resulting, if that scheme is persisted in, would be nearly as great as it is under the system to be replaced; an early modification of that scheme is inevitable.

It is certainly necessary that unity of military purpose should be secured on the frontier. But the extent

[1] The composition of the four armies would be as follows:—

	British Troops	Native Troops	Total
Madras army .	9,000	18,000	27,000
Bombay army .	12,000	18,000	30,000
Punjab army .	23,000	33,000	56,000
Hindustan army	23,000	47,000	70,000
	67,000	116,000	183,000

In addition there would be about 4,000 British and 10,000 native troops in Burma.

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of this is too great for the personal supervision of a single commander. To attach any part of this frontier, with its garrisons of local troops, different from the Bombay troops in race and language, to the Bombay command, would be highly impolitic. It would be equally so to attach these local troops—Baluchis and others—to the Punjab army. The principle of segregation should, above everything, be scrupulously maintained under the new organisation. These considerations all point to the necessity for dividing the frontier into two commands: that is, the present Quetta district, with Sind added for its base, should continue to be a separate command directly under the Commander-in-Chief in India. This would reduce the overgrown Punjab army by about fifteen thousand men.

Another equally appropriate reduction would be to maintain the separate autonomy of the Punjab Frontier Force. This distinguished force, with a splendid record dating from its first formation, nearly fifty years ago, which comprises twelve battalions of infantry and five of cavalry, with five native batteries, was transferred from under the orders of the Punjab Government to those of the Commander-in-Chief in 1888. It guarded the border from Kashmir to Sind, except the Peshawur district, which has always been garrisoned by the Bengal army, and interrupted its continuous line of border-posts held by the former. Towards the south this condition no longer holds, some of the posts lately established in the extensive territory of Baluchistan overlapping those of the Punjab Frontier Force behind them and below the mountain passes; but it should not be difficult to redistribute the different posts, and to concentrate the Punjab Frontier Force on one portion of the frontier. The original proposal of the Commission of 1880, adopted in this respect by the Government of India, contemplated the maintenance of this force as a separate body from the four regular

armies, and every consideration seems to press for adhering to this purpose. Unity of administration should be insisted on, no doubt; no conflict or co-ordination of authority is permissible in any reasonable military system; but this has now been secured, and it is equally important to secure decentralisation, and above all, to avoid a repetition of the blunder of building up one overgrown native army overshadowing the others.

Modifications desirable.

Under this view the Indian army would be organised in seven commands, the native portion of each being a separate and distinct army, the strength of which would be susceptible of modification from time to time, to accord with the changes in the military situation inevitable in the future. It may be pleaded as an objection to such an arrangement that all the army departments —ordnance, commissariat, transport, account, &c., have recently been organised in four branches, so that the commander of each of the four armies originally contemplated might have the aid of a local departmental head in each department. But it should not require a great exercise of administrative skill to adapt the original scheme in this respect to the more flexible system here advocated. Sooner or later, it must be recognised that the plan of four equal armies, or four armies of any sort, has ceased to be appropriate to the actual military position, and it appears highly desirable when carrying out the impending reform, to do so in a way calculated to be lasting and stable.

Patronage how to be regulated.

One matter, of detail comparatively, but of great importance, needs to be carefully provided for. The four-army scheme provided that the selection for all appointments—regimental as well as staff—in the Madras and Bombay armies would remain as at present with the generals respectively commanding them, and that similar powers would be vested in the commanders of the two bodies into which the Bengal army is to be

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divided. Thus the Commander-in-Chief and army headquarters in India were to part with the whole of the great patronage of the Bengal army now vested in them. If the larger subdivision of the Indian army here suggested is carried out, the temptation to retain this patronage may not unnaturally assert itself, on the plea that it cannot be transferred with propriety to officers, the generals commanding in Burma and Baluchistan and the Punjab Frontier Force, of less standing and authority than was contemplated when the original plan was proposed. The importance of decentralisation in these matters however can hardly be rated too highly, and it should not be difficult to deal with it in a satisfactory way, whatever be the units of organisation determined on, which should be flexible enough for adaptation to the variations in the composition and strength of the different armies which will certainly be found necessary as time goes on. Patronage in the Indian army is of two kinds. There is the first appointment of the young officer on his arrival to a particular army, and to the cavalry or infantry branch of it, and also his posting to a particular regiment in that branch. Heretofore candidates for the Indian army have been obtained from British regiments, mainly from the regiments serving in India, and the distribution of them was made by the Government of India, the young officer being usually appointed to the particular army with which his regiment happened to be serving.

Of first appointments.

This mode of supply has lately been abandoned, and candidates for the Indian army are now appointed direct from Sandhurst to the Indian Staff Corps into which the three separate staff corps have happily been amalgamated. The distribution of the candidates among the different Indian armies is made by the Indian government. And the question is, how this distribution should be regulated. Appointment to the army or armies on the frontier will naturally be most in request,

but as the candidates are unknown to those with whom rests the distribution, the latter have nothing to guide them but the solicitation of friends. Patronage exercised under such conditions is indefensible, and the only satisfactory way of regulating the business is to give the candidates their choice, in order of their standing on passing out of Sandhurst, of succession to the available vacancies in the different armies. This, however, does not dispose of the difficulty, because there is keen competition for appointment to the cavalry and to particular regiments—as of the Gurkhas—in the infantry. This part of the business has been dealt with by the respective commanders-in-chief, and the patronage has no doubt been valued as a means of obliging friends; but it is an unsatisfactory form of patronage, because from the nature of the case its disposition cannot be determined by the merits of candidates whose qualifications have still to be tested. And under patronage pure and simple, however conscientiously exercised, bad riders have found their way into the cavalry, while undersized officers are clearly as much out of place in Sikh regiments as in the Guards; equally are officers six feet high out of place in regiments of Gurkhas who run to about five feet in height. Subject to this last condition the most satisfactory way of settling the matter would be to give the young officers their choice of regiments, as of army, according to their standing on leaving Sandhurst, while first appointments to the cavalry should be provisional, to be confirmed only after the candidate has undergone a searching test of fitness for that branch; a bad rider with Indian cavalry (and there are many such now in the service) may do incalculable mischief.

Of regimental posts.

Patronage, however, only begins with first appointments. Every one of the eight posts which make up the complement of a native regiment (nine posts in the cavalry) is a staff appointment to which any officer may be appointed, either of that regiment or from

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another regiment.[1] It is this freedom of selection, and the right which the Commander-in-Chief possesses of transferring officers from one regiment to another which perhaps more than anything else has conduced to the efficient officering of the Indian army. The right is limited by the condition always acted upon, although not prescribed by any regulation, that the regimental standing of officers shall correspond with their length of service. Inter-regimental transfers seldom occur except to adjust special instances of inequality in the rate of regimental promotion, while if an officer is superseded in the command of his regiment, it is generally understood that he shall be removed also from active employment

To the staff.

There is, further, the selection for the staff proper. An officer appointed to the staff—except to some of the higher posts—continues to be borne as a supernumerary, on the strength of his regiment, to which he reverts on the completion of five years' service on the staff The practice in this respect is similar to that which obtains in the British service, at home and in India, although in both armies it occurs that the services of some officers are deemed to be so indispensable that their tours of staff service are almost constantly renewed either in the same or a fresh capacity Now in regard to both classes of appointment, the regimental and staff, the selection is made with a full knowledge of the qualifications of the men to be dealt with and under a due sense of the responsibility involved in making the selection. Patronage of this sort, which is the only kind that should be exercised by any authority, should be interfered with as little as possible. It only remains to determine with whom lies the best means of forming a right judgment, and the most complete responsibility. As regards regimental appoint-

[1] An adjutant or quartermaster cannot however be of field rank.

ments and the junior posts on the staff, it may be said that, be the army large or small, the army commander is clearly indicated as the proper authority in whom to vest the patronage. The Commander-in-Chief being responsible for the efficiency of the Indian army as a whole should certainly have a potential voice in the selection of commandants of regiments as well as for all the higher staff appointments, and this should be made by him, for all the armies, on the nomination of the local commander.

CHAPTER XV

INDIAN ARMY PROMOTION

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Promotion to colonel.

PROMOTION in the Indian staff corps, which will soon embrace the whole Indian army, as has been explained, is regulated by length of service; eleven years to captain, twenty to major, twenty-six years to lieutenant-colonel, and onwards according to the peculiar system now obtaining in the British service. Until lately promotion to the rank of brevet colonel, when not gained by distinguished service in the field, could be obtained by a specified term of service as lieutenant colonel in command of a regiment or other qualifying appointment, originally fixed at three, but subsequently extended to five years The list of qualifying appointments was enlarged from time to time till it embraced practically every situation, regimental and departmental, in the active list, so that promotion to colonel became in effect like that to the grades below it, a matter of simple seniority attained in thirty-one years, except when given earlier for war services. A few years ago this system was superseded by a new one according to which appointment to certain specified staff situations was to carry with it substantive promotion to colonel, the condition being added that only lieutenant colonels of three years' seniority and upwards should in future be eligible to hold these offices. The warrant embodying these changes for the British army having been promulgated, the Indian Government were instructed to apply its

provisions to their army. Two very notable conditions were involved in the change. In place of the long-established principle that promotion to colonel should be earned by approved service in an office, appointment to the office was to carry promotion with it; the selected officer was to get the appointment (and promotion) first, and to prove his fitness for it afterwards. And regimental command ceased to be a qualification for promotion. Now, whatever may be thought as to the importance of regimental command in the British army, in regard to the Indian army, at any rate, it has always been recognised that its efficiency must depend before everything on the discipline and good leading of the regiments; the command of a regiment has therefore always been held to be a higher and more important charge than any of the ordinary staff appointments, a distinction accentuated by the higher emoluments attaching to the former. Except in the case of a few men employed at head-quarters, the duties of a staff officer are of a routine kind, needing business habits and physical activity, but carrying with them no personal responsibility, and are best fulfilled by comparatively junior officers. To require that none but lieutenant colonels of three years' standing should be appointed to these situations would involve that the assistant adjutant general at the end of his tour of office should be a man of nearly thirty-five service, much too old for efficiency on the staff in India. Moreover, while in the British service the tenure of regimental command is limited to four years, and the lieutenant-colonel is therefore eager to pass on at the end of it to a staff appointment which carries promotion, instead of being placed on half-pay, the command of a native regiment is held for seven years; the commandant will naturally be unwilling to descend from this to the less responsible office of a district staff officer; yet as the warrant stands this is the only way of securing the coveted promotion. As a matter of

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fact the provisions of the warrant in this respect have not yet been applied to India, and the district and other staff appointments continue to be held in part by junior officers. The loss resulting to the Indian army of promotions to the rank of colonel is to be made up by the selection of a certain number of lieutenant-colonels for promotion without reference to the appointments held by them. The case of this warrant, thrust upon the Indian Government without previous consultation with them, is one of many indications how little knowledge appears to be possessed by the Horse Guards of the organisation and needs of the Indian army, about which nevertheless it has often a potential voice.

Promotion to general officers.

The mode of dealing with the promotion of general officers is in its way as curious as that of the colonels According to the wording of the present regulations promotion to major-general and upwards is to be determined by selection. For this in peace time no better way of ascertaining an officer's fitness for promotion could be found than that afforded by the discharge of the actual duties of command. The opportunity for making selections after these trials is constantly afforded. Second-class Districts as they are called—brigade commands—are held by selected colonels with the temporary rank of brigadier-general, and not unfrequently colonels are appointed to the command of first class districts with the acting rank of major-general So also promotion to the head of the great administrative departments of the army—ordnance, commissariat and transport, and military works, or to the army staff as adjutant or quartermaster-general or as inspector general of cavalry or artillery, carries with it acting promotion to major-general.[1] Here then the ample

[1] Some of these appointments are held by officers of the British service, with which we are here not concerned, but the principle involved is obviously applicable to all branches of the army.

opportunity is given for testing the officer's qualifications; and if appointment to a specified post is to carry with it promotion at once, still more the efficient discharge for five years of the duties of an office might surely be accepted as the most satisfactory possible test. But this obviously fitting test of selection is disregarded, and the officer after completing his term of duty in one or other of these high and responsible offices, involving perhaps the command of from ten to twenty thousand men, reverts to the rank of colonel, to take his turn of promotion to major-general with others who have in the meantime been holding subordinate posts or altogether unemployed

For this state of things the India Office is responsible, so far as the Indian army is concerned. When absolute seniority for promotion to general officer was given up in the British army, it should have been recognised that the public interests demanded its abolition in the Indian army also; that the appointments to be held by general officers being few, the list of generals, now reduced, should be maintained only for those who should establish a claim to it by actual service in that rank. Unfortunately a too scrupulous adherence to the supposed claims of officers to promotion by seniority prevailed, not only of those on the so-called active list, but the still larger class who have been virtually retired; and it was decided that these should be moved up through the different grades of general officer *pari passu* with their former contemporaries, the most copious of the many measures for degrading military rank taken of late years, the like of which has never been applied to the army of any other country.

A defect of present system.

It has been mentioned that admission to the Indian army is now obtained direct from Sandhurst. Heretofore, when the channel was through a short preliminary term of service with a British regiment, the possibility of obtaining a transfer practically depended on the

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young officer being posted to a regiment stationed in India, and if the applications for admission exceeded the vacancies there were no satisfactory means of deciding between the conflicting claims. It is perhaps to be regretted that the opening should be closed to candidates from Woolwich; but the choice of a career must be made sooner or later under any rules, and that the candidate should be allowed to make his choice between the two services if sufficiently high in the class list is as satisfactory a plan as could be devised. The material thus obtained is as good as could be wished for; the outcome of public school life and the pursuit of athletics tempered by competitive examinations gives to the army a body of young officers with which the country they represent may well be satisfied. The subsequent training has perhaps this defect that the numerous courses of instruction to be undergone,—in musketry, signalling, surveying, and what not, take the young officer away from his regiment just at the time when the mind is quickest to acquire a new language In former times the old Court of Directors used to give their cadets when they came up to present themselves before sailing for India a piece of advice—the only thing they gave them, for his passage money was defrayed by the friends of the cadet—to study the language, advice usually followed in the absence of other occupation In those days the course of military training was short and simple, life was monotonous and distractions few, and the officer at starting was thrown very much among his men, and soon became proficient in their language. Nowadays, the young officer spends a large part of his first years away from his regiment and sees little of his men except in the drill season, and so loses the first and best opportunity of becoming an expert linguist. The same difficulty occurs in the civil service, in the great increase of English correspondence thrown on civil officers of all ranks, and of special

and centralised departments at the headquarters of Government, attractive to the abler men of the service as are staff appointments at army headquarters to military officers. Both classes while so withdrawn from direct contact with the people of the country, except their domestic servants, make no progress in their knowledge of the vernacular languages even if they do not lose ground in them, and equally make no progress towards a real knowledge of the people of the country and the native soldiery. The evil is a very real one, although it is not easy to find a remedy.

Comparative emoluments in India and elsewhere.

To these remarks regarding the British officers of the Indian army, it may be not inappropriate to add that the notion popularly held as to the comparative superiority of Indian pay over English and colonial pay is no longer supported by the facts A comparison between the two rates would be fallacious; the English rate is supplemented by various allowances, and the officer is provided with free quarters, and one or more soldier servants. In India no perquisites of any sort are recognised; the officer receives a fixed rate of pay, and has to find his own house and servants, and on the march to supply his own tent and the means of carrying it. This system is invariable for all ranks from the general downwards; only when travelling on duty by railway is his fare paid. With the fall in silver the rupee pay has undergone a depreciation which puts the officers of British regiments in India very nearly on an equality with those serving at home; in this respect the officers of the Medical Staff in India are distinctly at a disadvantage. The officers of the Indian army are not much better off, if their comparatively slow promotion be taken into account, and that they have usually to find their own passage when going on and returning from leave to England. On the other hand the Indian army has the advantage of a much more liberal rate of retiring pensions.

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The same thing holds good of the prizes of the service, the district commands held by general officers. The real equality between home and Indian rates is disguised by the allowances and free quarters attaching to the commands at home and abroad, whereas the Indian general receives a consolidated salary in lieu of all demands. And there are only as many hundred men in the ordinary colonial command as there are thousands in the Indian one The pay of the Indian first class district is on a higher scale, but there are no posts of corresponding importance out of India, except Aldershot and Ireland

CHAPTER XVI

NATIVE OFFICERS

The old regimental system.

THE regimental organisation of the native army of India has already been briefly described. The unit of organisation is the battalion in the infantry and the regiment in the cavalry[1] The seniority system obtaining for the British officers was equally applied to the native soldiery, and in a still more rigid way, extending throughout the regiment. The sepoy, usually drawn from the agricultural class, enlisted as a private and rose to the non-commissioned grade by length of service in his regiment A knowledge of reading and writing in the vernacular was required for promotion, but subject to this small qualification the senior private, if of good character was entitled by custom to become a corporal (naik) and then sergeant (havildar) in order of seniority in succession to vacancies. Advancement to the commissioned ranks of native officer, and promotion from the lower to the higher grade in that rank was regulated in the same way, by pure seniority, the senior sergeant of the regiment having a recognised claim to succeed to a vacancy among the jemadars and the senior jemadar becoming in turn subahdar. The subahdar-major (the senior native officer) was consequently, as a rule, the oldest man in the regiment and always an old man The native officer held a very subordinate position; the troops and companies were

[1] The Gurkha regiments are organised in two battalions, which however are practically separate regiments, the officers attached to them rising in their respective lists.

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commanded by British officers, generally lieutenants and ensigns. The same system obtained in the regular cavalry; the various ranks differed from those of the infantry only in name. Pensions regulated by the rank of the soldier were claimable after twenty-one years' service, and higher rates for still longer service. It was thought that this system, with the certainty held out of pension for long service, was a guarantee for loyalty, especially among the seniors who had so much to lose by misconduct—an expectation entirely falsified by the event. In the Mutiny the regiment either revolted in a body, or stood firm together with a very few exceptions, and its old native officers continued to command it throughout the war. The Bengal army was recruited mainly from the high-caste Hindu peasantry in Oudh and the adjacent British districts: but a fourth of the men in each regiment might be Mahomedans. This mixed composition, which was no doubt adopted in the first instance as a protection against combination, proved quite ineffectual. Class feeling proved stronger than race and religious antipathy; the two classes might possibly have clashed afterwards, had the rising been successful, but while the struggle lasted they held together. Shortly before the Mutiny, admission to the army was accorded to Sikhs from the lately conquered Punjab to the extent of ten per cent. per regiment. But this further attempt at establishing diversity of interests proved equally inoperative. The people of the Punjab indeed, when the Mutiny broke out, showed themselves eager to pay off old scores against the Indians, their hereditary foes and recent conquerors when led by British officers. The regiments of the Punjab Frontier Force, raised in 1849, formed a very distinguished part of the army which put down the rebellion, and the new regiments hastily raised by Sir John Lawrence in that country were filled up at once, and many of them were organised in time

to take an active and most useful part in the war. But the Punjabi elements in the old army were altogether too small and too scattered to withstand the professional influences to which they were subjected. These young soldiers, for the most part, threw in their lot with their regiments.

The so-called irregular cavalry, which formed the larger part of this branch of the Bengal army,[1] was organised on a different footing. It was recruited from a higher class, mostly yeoman or landholder, each man bringing his horse with him and depositing a substantial sum in the regimental chest Against this he was debited with the cost of his uniform and equipment, and credited in turn with their value on leaving the regiment, when the balance of his deposit was repaid to him. The rate of pay included the cost of maintaining the soldier's horse which was provided by himself. Originally a native gentleman or a man of substance on enlisting might bring a certain number of relatives or retainers with him, and he drew pay for them, the portion distributed in turn to them being a matter of private arrangement Later on this individual footing was gradually altered to a regimental system, under which the horse as well as the forage was found by the regiment, which was self-contained and self-managed, both as to the supply and up-keep of horses and equipment, the Government merely issuing gross pay per head and leaving all arrangements for maintenance and equipment to be managed regimentally, exceptional charges on the regimental funds from loss and wear and tear of equipment on service being met by special grants in aid. Promotions in this branch of the service were made by selection on the nomination of the commanding officer; the commissioned ranks were filled partly by direct appointment of native gentlemen from the military class, and partly

[1] Ten regiments of Regular Cavalry; eighteen Irregular.

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by promotions from the non-commissioned grade, in which were generally serving many men of good family. The irregular cavalry (a perfectly inappropriate title, because its regulations, although special to the service, were as regular as simple) was in fact in the nature of a yeomanry force permanently embodied; and, although less well mounted than the regular cavalry, which as well as the British cavalry and artillery was horsed from the government studs, was composed of a class very superior socially to the ordinary Sepoy. There being only three native officers per regiment, the commandant, second in command, and adjutant, the squadrons were commanded by native officers. The cavalry in Madras and Bombay was organised on the regular footing, the three local regiments of the Bombay army serving in Sind being however on the irregular footing. Thus the irregular cavalry was the only service for a respectable career open to Indian gentlemen The rest of the army was composed of peasants, but peasants, like the Roman legionaries of the early republic, who were yet thoroughly aristocratic by caste, regarding all other people except Brahmins and Rajputs as their social inferiors, separated from them by an impassable gulf of caste distinction The irregular cavalry occupied a still higher social position, and it might have been expected that this branch of the service so differently constituted from the bulk of the army would withstand the influences which acted fatally on the other But the character of the whole army had been sapped by the laxity of discipline and incompetent administration so long prevailing, while the horror excited by the greased cartridges (the actual cause of the Mutiny) affected the Mahomedans who formed a large proportion of the cavalry equally with the Hindus; and the greater number of the irregular cavalry regiments joined in the general outbreak, some taking a specially conspicuous part in it.

In reconstructing the Bengal army the old irregular

The new system.

system was adopted for all the cavalry and extended to the whole of that branch of the Bombay army. As regards the infantry, a reaction had set in against the high caste sepoy, and several regiments of low caste troops were raised, but on trial some of these proved insufficient in fighting quality, and a better material was eventually substituted. The place of other disbanded regiments was taken by Punjabi troops of high quality, and the number of battalions of Gurkhas, the ruling race in the mountains of Nepal, men whose gallantry and soldier-like qualities are the admiration of all who have served with them, has been increased from two to thirteen.[1] The Gurkhas, to whom the summer heat of the Indian plains is little more bearable than it is to the British soldier, are distributed at various points in the Himalaya Mountains, and, with the British infantry stationed in the same region, form practically the only reserve available. The old Hindustani sepoy of Oudh and the North West Provinces, of whom there were formerly 120,000 in the service, and with them we conquered India, is now represented by only fifteen regiments, for the most part organised in separate castes or classes. The latest change of organisation, the substitution of local regiments on the North West frontier, recruited from the warlike and formerly hostile inhabitants of those regions, for regiments sent up for relief from tropical India, has already been referred to. One Bengal and three Bombay regiments have already been so converted, and the process must undoubtedly be carried still further in the future. The vicious seniority system of promotion has been put an end to. Selection by fitness is now the only recognised mode of promotion; commanding officers have been vested with large authority; discipline is strict, although with a soldiery sober and well

[1] Five regiments of two battalions, and three single-battalion regiments stationed in Assam.

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conducted in a remarkable degree, punishments are few; and as a fighting machine the Indian army now ranks very high. But in one important respect the organisation remains unchanged and defective. While the judicial service has long been mainly filled by natives, who are represented also on the bench of the highest courts, and while under the most recent changes every branch of the service, judicial and executive, has now been thrown open to them, the army, save with a few very exceptional cases, continues to be what it always has been—an army of peasants, or a class little removed above them; an army of native soldiers commanded by English officers. So far, indeed, it may be said to be organised like the British army, in which the men and the officers form two separate classes; but then that is a British army led by British officers, and this makes all the difference.

Its defect, in not offering a career for the Indian higher classes.

In the cavalry the position of the native officer has even gone back, for whereas formerly he could rise to the command of a squadron, the squadrons are now commanded by British officers, the most junior of whom takes precedence over the oldest native officer. So far then as the army is concerned, the Queen's proclamation on assuming the direct government of India is a dead letter. This proclamation declares that 'Our subjects, of whatever race or creed, shall be freely and impartially admitted to office in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge.' To a very large number of a most important class of Indian gentlemen, descended in many cases from ancestors who held high military office under former rulers, the only palatable, and indeed the only form of public service practicable and possible for them is the military, and that is closed to them. While this is the case it cannot be said that the promise held out in the proclamation is fully acted upon. It may be replied,

indeed, that the class in question is excluded from service by the condition of fitness laid down, by reason that is of their defective education. And certainly in regard to a service the routine business of which is conducted in the English language, this contention may be held to be good, if the proclamation is read in a literal sense, without regard to the spirit which animates it. Some very gallant and distinguished native officers, among them hereditary chiefs who have brought their clansmen by the hundred to join our standards—men who closely resemble in many respects the chiefs of the Highland clans a hundred and fifty years ago—have been unable to read or write in any language; yet men labouring under the same deficiency have carved out kingdoms for themselves A man of this sort, a thorough gentleman in manner and feeling, if illiterate, with all the pride and bearing of birth and high family tradition, leading his own kinsmen like the Highland chief of old, will by his chivalrous example show his men the way to victory, and that, after all, is what has to be aimed at in choosing officers Moreover this state of things is fast passing away, if it has not disappeared already. Education is making great strides among all classes in India, and if the desired goal can be reached by that course, the needful standard in this respect would soon be attained. To make education the only test, indeed, or to introduce competitive examinations for admission to the army would be an absurd misapplication of what is perfectly suitable for Englishmen. The military class in India, whether prince or peasant, is distinguished from all others in a degree which it is difficult for anyone unacquainted with that country to appreciate, there being nothing analogous to the difference in any section of European society Men and women are hardly marked off more distinctly from each other than the military and non-military class in India; to throw open the army to competition would

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produce a result absolutely grotesque, if it would not involve the destruction of the army as a fighting machine. The selection of officers must be determined by other qualifications than that of education, which is by no means a necessary one. The first thing needed for a good officer is that he shall be a man who can lead and whom his men will be ready to follow. The military instinct is something apart from and far more valuable in stress of battle than any product of education. It would however be quite practicable, in deference to common prejudice on this head, to require a certain educational standard in addition to other qualifications Such institutions as the Mayo College at Ajmir, established a few years ago for the princes and gentlemen of Rajputana, may easily be adapted to the purpose, and similar facilities if required, could and would be afforded elsewhere.

It may be, indeed has been, said that the change of policy here advocated would be dangerous; that men of rank and influence raised to high military position might take advantage of the position; that the Mutiny might have had a very different ending if there had been men of rank and ability in the army to take advantage of the opportunity. Plain speaking is here the best. Nothing will be concealed by silence, for this defect in our military system is so prominent as to be the subject of constant comment. The studious exclusion of Indians from all but the humblest places in our army is so conspicuous, that only one inference can be placed upon it—that we are afraid to trust them. And the danger from one point of view may be freely admitted. The Indian people are not held to us by any feelings of attachment. When in almost every country of Europe men are found plotting against their fellow-countrymen; with the experience of Ireland before us, it would be absurd to expect that loyalty in India should take a higher form than expediency—the recog-

nition that our rule is the best available at present, and that it is too firmly established to be attacked without risk. But apart from any question of justice or good faith, it is surely safer as a matter of policy to have men of talent and ambition with you, their interests enlisted in our system as offering possibilities of high advancement, than that their only chance of escape from a life of obscurity and inaction should be felt to lie in subversion of our rule and the anarchy attendant on such a revolution. There can be little room for doubt on which side the choice should be taken. Too much time has already been lost before entering on the course indicated by policy as well as good faith Meanwhile contrasts, not to our advantage, are publicly made between the Russian system, its ready assimilation of the races brought under its influence, the utilisation of ability which might otherwise be dangerous, and our hard and fast repressive system. And when the step forward is taken in the right direction, it will be satisfactory to consider that while the army necessarily contains the elements of danger inherent in every body formed under such conditions, it has been rendered of late years a much safer as well as a more efficient weapon. No one class has been disproportionately increased in strength, while for the indiscriminate fusion of class and caste, the separate class and caste regiment has been largely substituted For precaution, the army must be held to its duty by liberal terms and strict discipline; a still more effectual precaution would be that indicated by considerations of justice and policy —that the military classes equally with all other classes should feel that to them a career suitable to their tastes and aspirations is open, bounded only by their capacity to take advantage of it; that service under the Queen may offer more than can be hoped for by any other way.

The practical difficulties of carrying out such a reform, especially at the outset, may no doubt be recog-

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nised. The Indian Mahomedan from long contact with the Hindus, has imbibed caste ideas as to food and other matters unknown to those of his religion elsewhere, such as to make it no easy matter to bring him into the practical working of the military system in the upper grades. Between the English officer and the native officer who will not sit at table with him, and to whom it would be an offence even to refer to the existence of his wife or female relations, there cannot readily be that intimate fellowship which is found among the officers of the British army in all grades There may, however, be mutual respect A more difficult point would arise when the native officer became senior to the British officer entering the service after him This however might be avoided as regards the regiment at least, if the native officers, instead of being distributed among different regiments, were attached to certain regiments only, the first one appointed as junior of all, then as second junior on the occurrence of a vacancy, and so on until the regiment so selected for the purpose was officered wholly by native gentlemen. Later on would come the fresh difficulty of the two races coming together in mixed bodies, and of the native officers as senior taking the command of a force containing British troops. This difficulty however would not arise for some years to come; the change must be gradually and cautiously made if it is to have a fair chance—it has taken fifty years to build up an efficient judicial service; meanwhile, the British soldier would become familiar with the idea of the native as a commissioned officer, and if the latter showed himself to be thoroughly efficient this would cease to be unpalatable If, on the other hand, the prediction of those who contend that the native will never become an efficient officer should be verified: if he does not come up to the proper standard, then the experiment will have failed and be abandoned; but at any rate justice will not be satisfied till the experiment has been fairly made.

CHAPTER XVII

PUBLIC WORKS: ORGANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Technical meaning of term Public Works in India

In India the term 'public works' was in former years applied to every kind of building operations undertaken by the Government, and included therefore the construction and repairs of all State buildings, civil and military, as well as the prosecution of roads, irrigation works, and eventually railways. Until the middle of this century, indeed, the operations of the Indian Government were confined almost wholly to works of the former category, which were public works only in the sense of not being private ones; while the greater part of the State expenditure under this head was incurred in the maintenance of the barracks and subsidiary buildings required for the European garrison of the country. The native troops built their own dwelling huts from an allowance made for the purpose, and the only State buildings required for native regiments were the hospitals and magazines. The civil buildings of the country were mainly the various district court-houses, and the maintenance of these unpretending edifices formed but a trifling item in the whole expenditure. In the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, the tanks which from time immemorial have supplied irrigation to the cultivators of the soil, were repaired and superintended by the State; and the maintenance of the extensive system of dykes or embankments which protect the Gangetic delta from the sea and from the

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floods of the great rivers discharging into the head of the Bay of Bengal, was also undertaken by the Government, the landholders interested defraying a portion of the expense. But the bulk of the charges incurred under the head 'public works' was, as above stated, for repairs to military buildings, and the department charged with the duty was not unnaturally deemed to be a department of the army, and was placed under the superintendence of the Military Board at each of the three presidencies, a body composed of the heads of the different civil departments of that branch of the service.

Want of roads in India formerly. Traffic how far affected by it.

India was at this time destitute of roads, and journeys could be made only on horseback or in a palanquin. The facilities for travelling were not however altogether so small as might be inferred from the analogy of European countries. In a climate where the rainfall is limited almost entirely to one season of the year, and in a country the greater part of which is a level plain, the absence of well-made roads, or of roads of any kind, does not produce the extreme inconvenience that it would occasion in temperate regions. For three months of the year all travelling was suspended, but during the remainder it could go on uninterruptedly. The large rivers were crossed by ferries or boat bridges; the small ones could be easily forded. Any track served for a road, and the worst inconvenience occasioned was the tediousness of the journey to the traveller and the costliness of transporting merchandise on an unmetalled (unmacadamised) track.

Its effect on Indian military system.

From a military point of view this state of things had even its advantages. The want of roads taught Indian armies how to do without them. The whole system of military transport and supply being necessarily adapted to a roadless country, the ordinary requirements under this head during peace differed in no material degree from the requirements of a time of war.

All the subsidiary military establishments were framed on a scale and plan to admit of the troops moving readily across country in any direction; and when regiments were transferred from one station to another in ordinary course of relief, they took the field just as completely as if they were about to enter on a campaign. Thus to pass from a state of peace to that of war involved no change of system; the ordinary business of peace time constituted in fact a regular training for campaigning; on the breaking out of war nothing had to be improvised, and the troops took the field without difficulty or confusion. Succeeding, as did English rule, to the state of constant warfare which had obtained throughout the country, this preparedness for action was a necessary condition. It explains the extraordinary promptitude with which the wars of the Indian army have been so frequently entered on. The remarkable efficiency of the Indian commissariat and transport service is, no doubt, to be ascribed in great measure to the same cause.[1]

First progress in road-making.

These conditions serve in some measure to explain the complacency with which the older school of Indian statesmen—of whom Lord Metcalfe was a notable example—regarded the absence of any progress towards the material improvement of the country. The first beginning in this way may be referred to the administration of Mr. Thomason, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces from 1843 to 1853. That country is peculiarly adapted for the construction of roads, from the dryness of the climate, its flatness, and

[1] Not the least important part of the training which this rough-and-ready system afforded, was the practice in marching which the troops obtained in the course of the annual reliefs. A regiment often spent three or four months, moving at the rate of twelve or fifteen miles a day, in passing from one station to another, and at the end of the march the men were in the highest possible condition for entering on a campaign. With the introduction of railways, these long marches became of course unnecessary, but with their discontinuance a good deal of that familiarity with camp life must be lost, which Indian troops, native and European, have hitherto exhibited.

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the excellence and cheapness of the material for a road surface available throughout its extent, a nodular limestone (kunkur) found in thin horizontal layers at a short depth below the surface alluvial soil; and, through the influence and exertions of Mr. Thomason, practically the first governor appointed for the purely civil administration of a province, considerable progress was made towards the construction of metalled roads to connect the different large cities throughout his jurisdiction. About the same time a trunk road was undertaken to connect Calcutta with the Upper Provinces, and carried on with energy. The bridging somewhat lagged behind, and the road was not available for horsed carriages until 1850, when mail-carts began to run between Calcutta and Delhi. But the first great impetus was given to road-making in India, and public works generally, on the annexation of Punjab. The development of this province occupied the particular attention of Lord Dalhousie, who, both on military grounds, and in view to its general improvement, at once prescribed a course of vigorous action A special engineer department for undertaking road and irrigation works was established for this province, unconnected with the Bengal Military Board, and, a fortunate selection being made for the head of it,[1] the progress made soon placed Punjab in this respect on a level with all, and in advance of most other parts of the country.

Lord Dalhousie's reform in organisation of Public Works Department

Up to this time the presidential system had full sway in the arrangements of the Public Works Department which was divided into three branches, to correspond with the three Indian armies; and except in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, where the limits of the civil and military administration were coextensive, the various civil governments had no share in the control of the

[1] The first Chief Engineer of the Punjab, from 1848 to 1856, was Lieutenant Colonel Robert Napier, afterwards Field Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala.

departmental operations carried out in their respective provinces, which were conducted directly by the Government of India, through the agency of the Bengal Military Board.

In 1854 an important reform was effected, under Lord Dalhousie's administration, by the removal of the management of public works from the Military Board, and the formation of a separate department (or secretariat) of the Supreme Government for conducting the business. Simultaneously with this change, the immediate executive control of the public works was transferred from the supreme to the provincial administrations, and a Public Works Department was formed for each province. This example was shortly followed in Madras[1] and Bombay, where also public works affairs were removed from the control of the local Military Boards, and constituted a part of the business of the civil administration. From this time great and steady progress was made in the prosecution of works throughout the country, and largely increased grants of public money were provided on this account. In 1849–50 the State expenditure in India on public works of all kinds, including military buildings, was about 600,000 Rx., of which 122,000 Rx. was for roads; the grant provided for 1870–71 amounted to nearly seven and a half millions (Rx).

Executive agency.

Under the departmental organisation introduced by Lord Dalhousie a Chief Engineer was placed at the head of the Public Works Department in each province, who is now also secretary to the provincial government. Under him are the Superintending Engineers of Circles, while the actual execution of work is conducted by the next grade of officers, styled Executive Engineers, aided by Assistant Engineers, with a staff of subordi-

[1] The management of irrigation works in Madras had been for some years vested in the Board of Revenue. A separate department was now organised for all public works.

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nates. As a rule the same engineer carries out all the works, whether roads or civil buildings, within his district or division; the more important lines of road are made special charges, divided into sections of convenient length But in course of time, with the development of irrigation in various provinces, that branch of public works was separated from the rest and organised as an Irrigation Department, with its special staff of a chief engineer [and Joint Secretary to the Provincial government], superintending, executive, and assistant engineers[1] The Public Works Department continued for some time longer to carry out all other works, military (including the work of the barrack master's department and other services connected with the accommodation of the troops) as well as civil. But upon the transfer of the administration to the provincial governments, which had no concern with, or responsibility for, any other branch of army business, the arrangement was soon found to be very unsatisfactory. The care of military buildings received insufficient attention, with the result of some discreditable constructive failures, which led to the removal of this duty from the cognisance of the provincial governments, and the formation of a military works department under the administration of the Indian War Department, which provides for the expenditure in the military estimates. The operations of this Department, which is officered from the Royal Engineers, has more recently been extended to the whole of India Railways have from the first been dealt with as a separate branch of the service

Department divided into four branches.

The staff of the Public Works Department, while organised in one body as regards rules of service, pay, pension, and so forth, is thus divided into four branches: roads and buildings, and irrigation, both organised provincially; railways; and military works

[1] In the North West Provinces the administration of the great canal works was from the first kept separate from that of other public works.

The members of it are interchangeable between the different branches (the members of the military work department being, however, all military officers and held to be on military duty), but practically such transfers are rare, and with few exceptions an officer serves in the branch, and (except in the military branch) in the province to which he is first appointed, the position of the engineer being in this respect similar to that of the civilian. In the two provincial branches promotion runs in separate lists for each province, and each branch within the province, and is made by selection of the provincial government: but in regard to the higher appointments, the Government of India intervenes to a certain extent to secure that the claims of the seniors in the different provinces shall be fairly considered.

Composition of staff.

The staff of the Public Works Department consisted in the first instance of the officers of the Indian Engineers Corps, only a small part of whom were employed in peace time with the sapper battalions, supplemented by officers drawn from other branches of the service. Cautley, the designer and constructor of the Ganges Canal, the greatest work of the kind, was an officer of the Bengal Artillery; to which regiment also belonged Captain (now General) C. H. Dickens, the engineer of the Sone Canal. With the development of public works the staff of engineers available from these sources soon became insufficient, and large additions were made of civil engineers, some of those appointed in the first instance being men of professional standing and experience, but generally young officers selected in England and sent out by the Secretary of State to join the service in the junior grades. In 1871 the Royal Indian College at Coopers Hill was established, from which, since 1874, all first appointments in the country have been made. The service is also recruited to a certain extent in India, where various institutions have been

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established for the education of engineers. The Thomason College of Engineering was established at Roorkee in the North-West Provinces near the head of the Ganges Canal about fifty years ago, primarily to supply a native subordinate staff for the canal department. The instruction of the classes formed for this purpose is conveyed in the vernacular, but a class of European soldiers was soon added, for training as overseers in the Public Works Department, and also a small class for the education of civil engineers. This last has supplied some engineers who, under the practical experience gained in the service, have proved very valuable officers, but the educational staff and appliances have never advanced beyond the very rudimentary stage on which they were first instituted, and are utterly insufficient for the purpose in view. There are also engineering schools or departments of schools at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, which give an elementary education in engineering, and which furnish the subordinate departmental staff for these and the adjacent provinces. The education at these institutions is practically gratuitous, and although they are starved in teaching staff and appliances, the cost of each pupil turned out from them is out of all proportion to the result. Indigenous engineering schools are very necessary, but those now in existence need to be thoroughly reformed and placed on a more efficient and business-like footing.

Expenditure how provided.

Up to the year 1867–8, the public works expenditure, which, as has been explained, comprised all outlay for public buildings, civil and military, as well as that incurred for the material improvement of the country, was provided for out of revenue; the amount allotted to this purpose necessarily varied from year to year according to the state of the budget. In the years of deficit, the loans raised to cover it were dealt with as supplementing the finances generally, and no part was allocated specifically as debt incurred for public works.

although the deficit would in many cases not have occurred if this public works expenditure had not been undertaken. But in the year 1868–69 it was determined to provide specifically by loans for the capital expenditure on remunerative works, leaving the charge for other works only to be met from the ordinary revenues of the year. Under this arrangement the construction and repair of roads, the maintenance of existing irrigation works and the construction of such new ones as although necessary were not likely to be directly remunerative, together with the State outlay on guaranteed railways, arising chiefly for the land taken up by them and for the government controlling establishments, were to be provided for out of revenue. The construction of such new irrigation works as were expected to prove directly remunerative to the extent of defraying the interest on the public debt incurred on their behalf, and the capital expenditure on railways undertaken directly by Government agency, were defrayed from loans. This arrangement was so far modified about ten years later, that one and a half millions was set apart annually as a provision against famine, on the understanding that so much of this sum as was not required for the actual relief of famine should be applied to the construction of railways and irrigation works, the increase of capital debt for these works being to that extent prevented. This is the so-called Famine Fund, to which further reference will be made in a later chapter. CHAP. XVII.

The cost of maintenance necessarily goes on increasing with the extension of roads, and forms a heavy charge on the revenues. The amount devoted to new roads for some time past has been about one million (Rx) a year, sufficient for the construction of about 1,000 miles. With the extension of railways, the importance of road-making has fallen into the background in popular estimation, but it continues to be

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as necessary as ever; in fact every new railway creates a fresh requirement for road feeders, and the day is far distant when India will be adequately equipped in this respect. The cost of bridging the great rivers as part of the road system is prohibitive; these works are practicable only in connection with railways; the main lines of road are for the most part supplied with excellent boat bridges which can be maintained for the greater part of the year, while during the rainy season there is little traffic

India generally is well provided with material for road making, but ordinarily and in most parts of the country, and where trunk lines have already been made, an extension of first-class roads is not what is most wanted. The goods traffic of the country, which consists mainly of agricultural produce, takes place after the harvest, at a season when the smaller rivers are almost dried up, while for the great majority of the travellers, extended facilities for slow travelling in every direction are more needed in the present state of things than a few perfect lines. to meet these requirements most beneficially, the outlay will be directed in the first instance to making fair-weather roads Bridges will be regarded as supplementary works to be provided subsequently and by degrees, the smaller streams being bridged first, and the larger rivers left to be crossed by fords or ferries, till the expansion of traffic and the progress of the country justify a large outlay on specific localities.

Comparative advantages of roads and rail roads.

In some parts of the country the great cost of road-making indicates the propriety of constructing railways in the first instance on all lines of importance, instead of beginning with roads and following up with railways. This is especially the case in Bengal, from the magnitude of its rivers, the need for high embankments, and the want of proper materials for a road surface. Persons whose experience is confined to

Europe may find it difficult to realise the idea of a perfectly flat country, extending for several hundred miles in every direction, and where there is not so much as a pebble to be found throughout its whole extent. Such is Bengal. Stone if used must be brought from enormous distances, and the only possible substitute for it as a road surface is the expensive and imperfect one of broken bricks.[1] The difference in cost between a railroad and what at best will be a very imperfect road would therefore merely arise from the addition of sleepers and rails. There is no question of tunnels, cuttings, or gradients in this country, and the embankment which serves for the road would do equally for the railway. It is indeed often forgotten, when comparing the cost of the two things, how much of the expenditure for a railway is due to provision for carrying the travellers, whereas the travellers on a road find their own conveyances, and that while the maintenance of a road is a permanent charge, a railway will at least pay its working expenses. Bengal, however, if a difficult country to make roads in, has been bountifully furnished with natural means of communication in its numerous perennial rivers and tidal channels, through which the great trade of that country has been called into existence; and money would probably be much more effectively spent in improving these natural highways than in attempting to surmount the difficulties which they present to the construction of roads. On the line from Calcutta to Madras, no amount of expenditure in reason would suffice to make a first-class road accessible in all weathers, for the line crosses the whole drainage of the country and several great rivers, and the large sums involved in such a project would produce little or no useful effect. A line of communication in

[1] Until railways brought stone from the interior within reach, the roads at Calcutta were macadamised with stones brought as ballast by ships visiting the port.