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### THE INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA

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# THE INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA IN RECENT TIMES

#### BY

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#### NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION

A NUMBER of statistical tables have been enlarged and some new matter has been added in the last chapter to bring the book up to date. Otherwise no important changes have been introduced, in this edition.

June 1933

D. R. GADGIL

#### PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

ONLY a few changes, mostly of an unimportant character, have been made in the reprinting of the first edition. I have omitted the Bibliography as it was already disproportionately long and would have become much longer if I had tried to bring it to date.

It was necessary in bringing out a second edition to continue this sketch of Indian Industrial Evolution to the present; and I have done this by adding a new chapter dealing with all aspects of the period after 1914. I have chosen this course, as to incorporate the new material at various places in the old chapter would have entailed too great an overhauling of the original text. The extent, then, of the modification of conclusions, etc., necessitated by the events of the War and post-War periods, is indicated in the new additional chapter, the main body of the work being still a sketch of evolution up to 1914.

I have to thank many friends for help in the preparation and printing of this edition; amongst these, I must make particular mention of Mr. S. R. Deshpande, B. Litt. (Oxon), of the Bombay Labour Office. He has rendered me invaluable service by bringing to my notice various publications and by making many valuable suggestions and criticisms.

#### PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The work now published was first written as a thesis for the degree of Master of Letters of Cambridge University. It is printed here—except for a few verbal alterations—almost in the same form as the thesis. What has been attempted in the

following pages is a sketch of the economic history of India from the fifties of the last century to the beginning of the War in 1914. I have not brought this sketch up to date, mainly because of the fact that the shock imparted by the War to the economic equilibrium of the world has been very great; and the conditions obtaining even to-day are not normal enough to enable us to measure accurately the effects of the events of the last decade.

The subject is a wide one; and yet the only dramatic event in this economic transition is, perhaps, the decline of the old. handicrafts. The collapse of these was indeed sudden and. complete. In other respects the events move on with a slow pace and a dull monotony. The most considerable change has been in the scope and methods of commerce—a change brought about by the great development of the methods of transport, especially since the fifties of the last century. This great development of transport facilities during the latter half of the nineteenth century has, indeed, been put forward as a reason for the slow and one-sided progress of the industrial evolution in India. It might well be argued that a less rapid spread of the means of communication might have given a breathing-space to the old handicrafts in which to readjust their organization and their methods to the new conditions. On the other hand, it might be said that this would have meant only stagnation. In the domain of agriculture the most considerable change has been the commercialization of agriculture. But the really serious aspect of the ✓question is the problem of population. The burden on land seems, if anything, to be increasing, as is evidenced by the steady proportion of the food-grain area in the total area cultivated, in spite of the rapid increase, during the last few decades, in the area of land under the plough. This fact also saliently brings out the close connexion between agricultural and industrial prosperity, and the necessity of a greater impetus to the growth of industries for relieving the pressure on land. The chief progress in the industries was made by two factory industries and one plantation industry. Otherwise the progress is small, disconnected and decidedly one-sided. It must be here pointed out that we have no reason to believe that the economic conditions obtaining in India are very different from those which

PREFACE VII

obtained in the west in former times. I have tried to show, especially in the remarks about the scarcity of factory labour and in the chapter on the organization of urban industries, that the lines of evolution have been the same as have been noticed in most countries of the west. The future is not so rosy as one would like to believe. A sudden growth of industries, such as took place in many European countries during the nineteenth century, seems improbable. The progress will be slow. No big industries requiring complicated machinery or a thorough use of by-products are likely to spring up. The chief direction of the progress will be that of the accessory industries and industries chiefly connected with agricultural operations or with the further working up of raw agricultural produce grown in the country.

The subject I have chosen is a very wide and a difficult one and I found it impossible to treat it with any fullness within the space usually permitted for a thesis. Consequently, I have had to omit many important aspects, e.g., the growth of banking, from consideration, and also to be satisfied with a mere mention of many other questions. I have attempted to sketch briefly the course of recent economic history, and to estimate the nature and extent of the changes in organization of Indian agriculture and industry. I can lay no claim to any novel views or even originality of treatment. My only excuse for embarking upon such a difficult task is the almost entire absence of any works on the recent economic history of India; and I shall feel amply repaid if this work induces some abler student to take up this neglected but all-important question.

I cannot fully express in words what I owe to Mr. H. D. Henderson of Clare College, Cambridge. It was entirely owing to his kind encouragement that I undertook the work, and his criticism and suggestions have always been of the greatest value. I have likewise to thank Mr. W. S. Thatcher of Fitzwilliam Hall for some valuable suggestions. My thanks are also due to my friend, Mr. J. V. Joshi, for his help with regard to the publication of this work,

## CONTENTS

obta <sup>:</sup> APT	ER		İ	AGE
I.	Introductory	•••		1
.لل	THE AGRICULTURIST 1860-80	•••		13
III.	THE DECLINE OF HANDICRAFTS	•••		32
IV.	THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN INDUSTRY	•••		46
. • *	1. The Plantations	•••	•••	46
	2. The Factory			53
V.	THE AGRICULTURIST 1880-95	•••		61
УI.	GROWTH OF INDUSTRY 1880-95	.,.		74
٧II.	THE AGRICULTURIST 1895-1914			88
III.	INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS 1895-1914		•••	102
, 1X.	RAILWAYS AND IRRIGATION	•••	•••	126
	1. Railways	•••	•••	126.
	2. Irrigation			132
X.	GROWTH OF TOWNS	•••	•••	138
XI.	THE TRANSITION IN AGRICULTURE			152
XII.	THE COUNTRY ARTISAN	•••	•••	163
Ш.	THE ORGANIZATION OF URBAN INDUST	RY		178
XIV.	THE PRE-WAR PERIOD CONCLUSION	•••	•••	188
XV.	THE WAR AND AFTER	•••	•••	200
	1. The Agriculturist	•••		200
	2. Industrial Development			<b>2</b> 29
	. 3. Labour	•••	•••	284
	4. The Town and Country Art	isan		297
	5. Railways	•••		304
Her	6. Conclusion	•••	•••	309
lo	Appendix			319
	Typey			201

#### APPENDIX

#### A Note on a Weekly Market1

The importance of a fair was considerable, even in the old Indian economy, and it grew with the construction of good roads. The following account of a weekly market in a district of the Central Provinces, just after road-building had vigorously begun, will illustrate some points discussed in chapter AII.

'An important article in the trade in Chinmoor which finds its way to the weekly fair . . . is the manufacture of coarse cloth, which is entirely in the hands of "Dhers". The cloth is coarse and strong and is in great favour among the Koonbee cultivators of Berar . . . whom the comparatively filmsy but smart-looking English-made cloth does not suit. . . That the trade has not been much affected by the high prices of raw cotton is probably accounted for by the fact that the price of cloth, if it has not risen quite in proportion to the increase in the price of the raw material, has yet risen considerably. It is bought in larger quantities than ever by the prosperous Koonbees.'

Notes were taken by Mr. Rivett-Carnac of the stalls held by different traders. Of a total of 1,404 stalls the most important were:—

521 Cloth sellers (110 'Koshtees', weavers of fine native cloth; 350 'Dhers', selling coarse cloth of their own manufacture).

139 Provision sellers (75 molasses, 'gur', 30 salt, 34 fish).

160 Vegetable sellers.

96 Grass sellers.

75 Sellers of iron (tyres for cart wheels, plough-shares, axes, etc., in large quantities).

70 Oil and oil-cake sellers.

65 'Pansarees' or grocers.

There were only thirty grain stalls, but there were also twenty-five cart-loads of raw cotton 'from which Dhers who may have been successful in selling their cloth supply themselves with next week's work of spinning and weaving'. It should be noted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Extracts and figures taken from the description of this fair by Mr. Rivett-Carnac, Report of the Cotton Department for the Year 1867-68, pp. 28-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Not a proper weaver caste but a low caste of village menials, corresponding to the 'Mahar' of the Bombay Deccan.

that of the 350 coarse weavers only forty-four were regular traders. 'The remainder were of a poorer class, who brought small bundles of cloth on their back and whose sales were small.' The influence of the constitution of the village community is apparent. There are seventy-five sellers of iron in large quantities; these were the traders who distributed the supply of iron for cart-wheels and plough-shares throughout the country; there were similarly fifteen stalls of carpenters with stores of unworked wood for carts; there were only fourteen stalls of shoe or leather sellers and only three sellers of earthern pots.

Mr. Rivett-Carnac observes with regard to the popularity of country cloth, 'This, it must be remembered, is but one of the many places to which the peasantry flock for the cloth made

by the Dhers'.

#### INDEX

Acids, production of, 277-8 Administration, centralization 147 Agra, 5, 6, 20, 24, 36, 121, 142 Agricultural Department, 69, 97-8, 100, 210, 211, 212 Agricultural implements, 99, 162, 211 Agricultural produce, demand for, 64, 210, 229; export of, 63, 229 griculture, commercialization of, 153-5, 214; improvement of, 66 seqq., 97 seqq., 210-3. See also Agriculture, commercialization Crops, Cultivation. Famines. Land. Agriculturist, see Peasantry.
Agriculturists' Improvement Act, 71, 220 Agriculturists' Loans Act, 71, 221 Agri-Horticultural Societies, 68 Ahmedabad, 33, 36, 76, 81, 86, 117, 128, 148, 150, 169, 243, 286, 293, 309 Aligarh lock industry, 298 Allahabad, 6, 128, 149, 298, 309 Alkalis, production of, 278 American Civil War, 14, 15, 17 Amritsar, 33, 144, 185, 233 Aniline dyes, 34, 170 Artisans, co-operation amongst, 224. See Industry, Handicrafts Arts, attempts at revival of, 43 Assam, 9, 49, 51, 79, 147, 270, 302 Bajra, 87, 96, 201, 215 Bank failures, 233 Banking, 193, 315. See Co-operative Banks. Barakar Works, 112, 259 Bareilly, 298, 299 Beet-sugar, imports of, 116 Benares, 6, 18, 33, 35, 149, 309, Bengal, 3, 7, 9, 24, 33, 43, 47, 48, 51, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 65, 77, 78, 82, 83, 84, 86, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 96, 107, 116, 117, 120, 122, 126, 138, 139, 145, 172, 173, 192, 203, 209, 213, 223, 291, 301, 302. See also East Bengal. Bengal Chamber of Commerce, 86 Bengal Iron Co., 259, 263-4, 272

Bengal Nagpur Railway, 256 Berar, 62, 63, 64, 66, 88, 91, 128, 147, 154, 214, 216, 217 Bihar and Orissa, 24, 48, 89, 93, 145, 150, 200, 266, 272, 276 145, 147, 169, 184, 198, 232, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 259, 281, 286, 292, 293, 309, 310, 317 Bombay Deccan, 2, 3, 87, 133, 134, 135, 137, 225, 227. See also Deccan. Bombay Presidency, 16, 18, 25, 26, 28, 29, 35, 54, 58, 76, 81, 83, 85, 90, 91, 93, 100, 117, 139, 149, 156, 173, 175, 200, 203, 211, 217, 222, 228, 233, 258, 280, 287, 288, 299, 317 Bombay Small Holdings' Bill, The, Bourgeoisie, rise of, 40 Brass and copperware industry,183-4 Brick and tile industry, 80, 119. 283, 284 British rule, establishment of, 1, 2, 14; effects on handicrafts of, 38 seqq. Bundelkhand, 134, 135, 158, 220, 225 Burma, 12, 78, 88, 91, 95, 110, 117, 131, 145, 147, 154, 202, 217, 222, 252, 253, 270, 271, 277, 301. See also Upper Burma. CALCUTTA, 51, 56, 57, 68, 69, 81, 86, 106, 122, 123, 124, 128, 145, 147, 148, 150, 156, 280, 281, 286, 298, 309, 312, 316 Canals, 126, 132, 133, 134, 136, 226, 227, 228 Canal colonies, 134, 217 Capital, accumulation of, 192; competition for, 193; external, 314; of Joint-Stock companies, 233, 234 Carnatic, 26, 128, 223 Carpenter, 163, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 300 Carpet industry, 185 Cattle, census of, 213; deterioration in quality of, 213-4; famine

mortality of, 24, 25, 91-2; improvements of breeds of, 70, 213; position in various provinces of, 213, 214 Cauvery, 227 Cawnpore, 121, 123, 128, 138, 144, 148, 149, 169, 243, 280, 296, 312 Cement industry, 280-1 Census results, accuracy of, 140 Central India, 7, 91, 143 Central Provinces, 4, 16, 17, 45, 55, 57, 58, 63, 87, 90, 91, 92, 93, 99, 111, 131, 145, 146, 149, 158, 169, 172, 173-4, 200, 203, 211, 222, 223, 225, 260, 303, 319 Central Provinces Land Alienation Act, 220 Ceylon, 79, 115, 161, 202, 245, 254, Chemical industries, 112, 113, 277, Chemicals, demand for, 277-8 Chenab, 227 Chhattisgarh, 63, 128, 220 Chile Nitrates, 45, 273 China, 15, 115, 208, 231, 244, 273; yarn market, 75, 103, 104, 105, 231, 236, 238, 244 Chota Nagpur, 45, 135, 139 Chromite, 252 Cloth, high prices of, 203, 237; home demand for, 237, 239, 240 Coal, coking, 266; consumption on bargo on, 254, 255, exports of, 58, 78, 108, 254, 255, 256; imports of, 58, 78, 108, 109; use of substitutes for, 259, 271. See also Power, Railways. Coal Grading Board, 257 Coal Mining Industry, 57, 58, 77, 78, 107, 108, 109, 254, 255, 256, 258; average size, 255, 256; increasing costs, 258; labour, 83, 87, 123, 255, 295, 296, 297; loss of export markets, 256; position in the home markets, 254, 258; use of machinery, 110, 255, 258 Coal tar, 266, 267 Cochin, 277 Coffee plantations, 52, 78, 114, 119, 283; labour on, 52 Coffee, exports, 52, 79, 114 Co-operative Banks, 221, 222 Co-operative Credit Societies, 100-101, 158, 223-4, 225 Co-operative movement, 217, 221, 222, 223, 224; organisation, 221-2;

position of Registrar, 222; progress, 222-4, 225; spirit in forming the, 224-5 Co-operative production, 223, 224 Co-operative Sale Societies, 223 Co-operative Societies' Act, 101, 221, 222 Co-operative Unions, 221-2 Coorg, 52, 79 Copper, 253 Cottage industries, 299-304 Cotton and Grain Markets Law, 216-17 Cotton, handloom industry, extent and production, 32-3, 171-4, 299-302; organization, 179-83, 297-8, 302. See also Handicrafts, Weavers. Cotton, factory industry, 53-55, 74-6, 103-6, 235-49, 283, 284; 6, 103-6, 235-49, 283, 284; effect of exchange fluctuations, 238-240; localization, 54, 76; position of the Bombay industry, 242-7; protection, 247-8; spinning and weaving sides compared, 104-5; tendency towards production of finer counts, 75, 104-5, 237; tendency towards greater piece-goods production, 75, 104-5, 237. See also Factory, Industry, Labour, Wages. Cotton Gins and Presses. 55, 80, 85, 117, 118, 120, 283, 284 Cotton piece-goods, exports, 105, 106, 236, 244, 245; home demand, 240, 242; imports, 232, 233, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241; production, 236, 237, 241, 247, 248, 251, 252. See Cotton, Factory industry. Cotton, Raw, 210, 248; area under, 15, 17, 87, 96, 201, 207, 208, 213; cultivation of, 14, 15, 17, 62, 63; improvements of, 69, 72, 98, 211; internal trade, 62, 63; marketing, 154, 155, 215-7 Cotton Sale Societies, 217, 223 Cotton Transport Act, 211 Cotton, Yarn, exports, 75, 76, 103-5, 236, 237, 244-5; imports, 242, 244, 246, 247. See Cotton, Factory industry. Courts, connection with urban handicrafts, 7-9, 37-8 Crimean War, 56 Crops, improvement and standardization of varieties of, 210-11; localization of, 65, 66; marketing of, 154, 155, 214, 215; variations due to famines, 92-93; variations

in area of, 65, 94-7, 205-9, 212. See also Agriculture. Cultivation, area under, 65, 94, 201, 205; extension of, 213-14, standard of, 66, 67 Currency, deflation, 235; inflation, 230, 235 Cutch, 85, 41

DACCA, 6, 7, 30, 66, 81, 87, 145, 156, 157, 203, 214, 216 Damascening industry, 35, 41 Deccan, 6, 7, 30, 66, 81, 145, 156, 203, 214, 215. See siso Bombay Deccan. Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act, 81, 156, 157, 219 Delbi, 19, 24, 121, 128, 142, 146, 149, 233, 298, 309 Dhers, 175, 819 Dundee, 56, 82 Dver, 166, 170-171, 300

East Bengal, 144, 147, 149, 154, 178 East India Company, 4, 14, 19, 32, 46, 47, 49, 56, 68, 132 East India Railway, 57, 256, 286, 305, 306 Electric power. 283. See Hydro-electricity. Engineering industry, 263, 269, 283. 284; workshops, 80, 117-19 Epidemics, 27, 145 European officials' demand for artistic wares, 41 European manufactures, competition with handicrafts, 13, 42 Exchange fluctuations, aggravate depression, 231-2, 235; encourage imports, 231; intensify boom, 230, 231

ed, 84-7, 120-2, 284-5, 286, 290; one-sided development, 119, 282, 285; sanitation and ventilation, 85-6, 194. See also Industry. Factory legislation, 82-4, 120, 121, 285, 288-9. See also Labour. Factory system, in urban handi-crafts, 182, 185-7

FACTORY industry, beginnings, 53; extent, 118-19, 283-4; hours work-

Fairs, 319

Famines, 24-7, 64, 88, 89, 90-92, 93, 200-3; change in the nature

of, 22-3; effect on agricultural improvement, 27, 92-3; effect on industries, 102-3; effect on population, 26-7; effect on urban pulation, 26-7; effect on urban growth, 142; effect on village ar-tisans, 176; lack of fodder during, 24, 25, 92; lessening intensity, 152-3, 203; relief administration, 25, 88, 91, 92, 93, 201-3 Farms, experimental, 70, 71 Ferro-manganese, 260, 263, 272 Fertilizers, 212, 273 Feudatory States, 37, 38, 40, 127 Field embankments, 136 Fiscal Commission, 311-12 Floods, 203 Fodder crops, 87, 96, 201, 209. Food-grains, area under, 65, 87, 94-6, 201, 205; exports, 95, 201, 205; imports, 201, 203; prices, 6, 22, 64, 94 Foreign exchange movements, 230-2, 235 Foundries, 80, 118, 119, 263, 264 Fragmentation of land, 159-61, 225-6 Franco-German War, 28, 34, 54, 59, Fuel-oil, 259, 271

GANGES, 3, 132, 133, 143 Glass Industry, 45 Godavari, 133, 227 Gold-mining, 111, 119, 274, 283 Gold and Silver Thread Industry, see Wire and Tinsel. Government of India, 14, 16, 28, 83, 96, 194, 196-7; agricultural policy, 67, 73, 97-100, 210-12, 220-21; control over economic activity during the war, 201, 203, 229, 249, 250, 254, 255, 263, 266, 268, 269, 273, 274, 281, 304; control over the Co-operative movement, 221, 222, 224, 225; currency and exchange policy, 230, 231, 235; fiscal policy, 311, 312, 313; industrial policy, 196-7, 310-13; protection to industries, 246-7, 263, 265, 268, 281-2 Government's Provincial assistance to industries, 303, 312-13 Grain loans, 215, 216, 217 Grazing lands, encroachment by cultivation, 213-14 Great Indian Peninsula Railway, 58, 306

Ground-nut, 96, 99, 207, 208, 210, 211, 214
Guilds, 36, 41
Gujarat, 6, 66, 92, 121, 128, 181, 139, 184, 192, 203, 211, 214, 223
Gur, 62, 116, 209

Handicrafts, 32 seqq., 178-87, 297-9; attempts at revival, 43; causes decline, 37-43: division of labour in, 35-6; effect of decay on towns, 144-5; localization, 36; organization, 36-7, 178-87, 297-8. See also Courts, Guilds, Industry, Towns. Hides and Skins, 59, 60, 80, 169, 170 Holdings, economic, 159, 225; consolidation of, 223, 225 Hooghly, 133, 150 Housing conditions, 122, 123, 125, 145, 295-6 Hubli, 129, 149 Hyderabad, 35, 309. See also Nizam's Dominions. Hydro-electric power, 195, 259, 316-17

INDEBTEDNESS, see Peasantry, Indebtedness of Indian Iron and Steel Co., 264 Indigo, cultivation, 46-9, 96, 113, 209; industry, 46-7, 80, 113 Indus, 3, 135 Industrial boom, post-war, 230, 231-2, 233-4 Industrial census, 119, 282, 284 Industrial Commission, 311 Industrial cycles, 233 Industrial depression, post-war, 229, 230, 232-5 Industrial progress, future out-look, 198-9, 316-17; indexes to, 179; necessity of all-sided, 198; obstacles to, 191 seqq., 315; present position, 189-90, 316-17; State policy and, 196-7, 313 Industry, absence of localisation, 11; artisan system in, 179 seqq.; connection with urban growth, 142, 150; Domestic or Commission system in, 181; European enterprise in, 53; stages in progress, 188; two-folded division, 44; rural, 165-7, 175-7, 299-304; urban, organization, 178-9, 297-9.

See also Courts, Government, Handicrafts, Factory industry, Labour, Towns, Village, War. Influenza, 314 Inheritance laws and subdivision of land, 160, 161, 225, 226 Irawaddy, 143 Iron and Steel Industry, 112, 195-6, 260-9, 283, 284, 313; establishment of allied industries, 267-9; finished steel products, production, 261, 265, 266, 267; pig iron, production and export, 261, 264, 265, 266, 267; raw steel, production, 261, 264-7; State help, 263, 264-5, 266, 270 Iron-smelting, old industry, 45 Irrigation, 65, 126, 132-7, 226-9; economic effects, 137; limits to extension, 135-6, 228; major and minor works, 134, 226, 228; private works, 135, 226; protective works, 133, 134, 135, 226, 227; works constructed by Government, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 227-8

Jamshedpur, 141, 150, 253, 265, 267, 268, 278, 286, 309, 316 Japan, 75, 76, 104, 231, 238, 243, 243, 264 Japanese cotton industry, 76, 238, 239, 241, 242, 243, 245 Jawar, 86, 96, 201. See also Millets Jhelum, 227 Joint Stock Companies, 233, 234 Jubbulpore, 84, 128 Jumna, 90, 132, 133 Jute. factory industry, 56-7, 76-7, 106-7, 197, 249-51, 283, exports, 107, 251; short 284: exports, 107, 251; agreements, 76, 250 short time Jute, handloom industry, 56 Jute pressing, 57, 80, 283, 284 Jute, raw, 211; area, 87, 96, 201, 209; exports, 249; Indian mills consumption, 249, 251; marketing, 217; prices, 249, 250. See also Labour, Wages.

Karachi, 109, 128, 131, 148, 198, 259, 296, 309 Karnatic, see Carnatic Kashmir, 35, 38, 302 Kashmir shawl industry, 34, 39 Kathiawar, 38 Kaveri, 133 Kerosene, 110, 170, 270-1 Khandesh, 128, 154, 211, 214, 216, 217 Khandesh gins, 85, 86, 120 Kolar mines, 78, 111, 274 Koleroon, 133 Konkan, 70, 81, 125, 225

LABOUR, agricultural, material condition, 64, 189-91; scarcity, 261; wages, 20, 152, 292-4 Labour, casual, 19 Labour, industrial, condition of, 81 seqq., 120 seqq., 284 seqq.; efficiency, 194, 315-16; recruitment, 81-2; scarcity, 122 seqq., 294-7; stages in severance from land, 123-5; standard of life, 293-4 Labour, landless, 142, 159, 167, 176-7, 225, 226. See also Coal mines, Coffee plantations, Factory, Housing, Industry, Mines, Tes plantations, Wages Labour movement, 285-8 Labour Unions, see Trade unions Lac manufactories, 80 Lahore, 35, 149, 309 Lancashire Cotton Industry, 15, 75, 104, 105, 143, 232, 235, 238, 239 Land, pressure on, 44, 162, 191, 222, 226, 374 Land-transfer, economic effects, 158-9; extent of movement, 158, 219-20; legal restriction and its results, 30-31, 156-8, 219-20, 225; results of non-restriction, 29-30, 156-7, 218 Land holders, material condition, 89, 90 Landlord village, 61, 62 Land Revenue Assessments, 3, 21, 155 Land tenures, 61, 62 Lead, 277, 299 Leather work, 40, 41 Leather works, 280. See Tanning industry. Leather worker, 164, 266. See also Tanner. Limestone, supplies of, 266, 281 Linseed, 96, 207, 208, 210 Livestock statistics, 213 Locomotives, production in India, Lucknow, 9, 83, 138, 144, 149, 309

MACHINERY, extended use in indus-try, 118, 119, 303 Machinery, demand in war and post-war period, 229, 231, 232 Madras City, 59, 68, 120, 121, 128, Madras Presidency, 3, 17, 18, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 59, 63, 79, 80, 91, 93, 98, 99, 111, 117, 120, 126, 135, 161, 169, 172, 186, 195, 203, 222, 225, 259, 277, 295, 311 Madura, 33, 148, 171 Mahar, 164, 169 Malabar, 79, 81, 99, 203, 302, 303 Manchester Chamber of Commerce, spinning inquiry, 75 Manganese industry, 111, 112, 271 Manganese Ore, 252, 271, 272 Markets, for agricultural produce, 154, 215, 217; problem of finding, 197-8 Match industry, 281, 284 Meerut, 149, 298, 303 Metal handicrafts, 35 Metallurgical industries, 253; lack of, 112, 195, 196, 315 Mica industry, 112, 252-3, 272-3 Millets, 93, 200. See also Bajra, Jawar. one-sided development. Minerals. 112, 252, 316; production, 107, 252-8 Mines Act, 290, 291 Mines, labour in, 290-91; underground working of women in, 86-87, 290-91 Mirzapur, 7, 62, 143, 185 Money-lenders, 100, 215-16, 219; power over peasants, 29-30, 156-9. See also Land, Peasantry Munitions Board, 310 Munitions, demand for, 229, 252, 272, 273, 277, 310 Murshidabad, 33, 138, 145 Muslin, 13, 33 Mustard seed, 96, 207, 208 Mutha canal, 66, 137 Mysore, 25, 26, 45, 79, 111, 135, 200, 302

NAGPUR, 62, 128, 149, 243
Narbada Valley, 143
Native States. See Fendatory States
Nilgiris, 52, 79
Nira, 66, 137, 227
Nitrogen problem, 212
Nizam's Dominions, 25, 38, 91, 200, 203

North-West Provinces, 6, 23, 24, 25, 59, 61, 79, 82, 87, 90, 91, 101, 152

OILMAN, 163, 170
Oilseeds, area under, 90, 96, 201, 207, 214; export position, 207-8; marketing, 215
Opium, 96, 97
Orissa, 63, 82, 135, 200. See also Bihar and Orissa.
Oudh, 8, 25, 91, 144, 227

PAPER INDUSTRY, 85, 313 Paper making, 45 Patna, 149, 309 Peasantry, economic condition, 3, 16, 17, 31, 64, 89-90, 200-3, 205; indebtedness, 29-31, 100-101, 156-58, 218-20. See also Agriculture, Land, Subdivision and fragmentation of land Petroleum industry, 110-11, 270-71, 283, 284 Plague, 103, 145, 149 Plantations, 46, 115 Poona, 18, 20, 29, 33, 35 Population, check to, on account of famines, 26; growth of, 190-91, 314. See also Land. Population, urban, proportion to the total, 6, 138-41, 309. See also Towns. Potter, 163, 164, 166, 168 Pottery, artistic, 40

Power, problem of, 195, 316

Protection to Industry, 313. Government, Tariff Board.

Prices, movements of, 5-6, 21-2, 64,

Public Works Department, 19, 20,

growth in

See

Pravara canal, 227

202-4, 229-32

Public Works, struction, 19-20

81, 126

Punjab, 35, 41, 52, 57, 61, 65, 79, 90, 93, 94, 101, 120, 128, 133, 134, 136, 137, 154, 156, 157, 158, 173, 200, 203, 215, 217, 218, 222, 223, 225, 227, 233, 273, 291, 302, 303, 316, 317

Punjab Land Alienation Act, 156, 220

RAILWAY BOARD, 268, 305, 307
Railways, Acworth Committee on, 305; beginnings, 19; dependence

of coal industry on, 57-8, 77, 131; effect on urban growth, 141-2; extent and lines of development, 128-9, 307-8; management, 130, 305-7; policy, 126-7, 130; rates policy, 130, 145, 306-7; results, 19, 131-2; separation of budget, 306, 307. See also Roads, Wagons. Railway workshops, 119, 283, 284 Rajputana, 6, 23, 24, 25, 35, 38, 142, 150, 152, 156, 303 Rangoon, 82, 147, 148, 155, 297n, 309 Raniganj, 57, 112, 128, 259 Rape and Mustard seed, 96, 207n, 208 Reh, 136, 278 Rice, area, 87, 95, 201, 209; exports, 95, 202, 206; India's dependence on Burma, 95, 202, 205; Mills, 80, 117, 119, 283, 284; Markets, 154, 217, 218 Riots, of Peasants in the Deccan, 29-30 Road Transport, 308-9 Roads, 3-5, 18, 132 Rohilkhand, 227 Rubber, 277 Russo-Japanese War, 111 Ryotwari, village, 61, 62

SALT INDUSTRY, 112, 291 Saltpetre industry, 45, 112, 252, 273 Sarda, **227** Sericulture, 302 Sesamum, 96, 207, 208 Sholapur, 123, 128, 243, 293, Silk industry, 13, 33, 40, 302 Sind, 35, 41, 132, 134, 135, 203, 259 Silver, 252, 253, 274; prices and exchange, 230, 231, 232 Soda and soda compounds, 278 South African Coal, 253, 254, 256, 257 Straits Settlements, 105, 202, 245, 254 Strikes, 285, 286 Sub-division and fragmentation of land, 159, 162, 191, 192, 225, 226 Suez Canal, 58, 63 Sugar imports, 116; industry, 115-16, 209, 279-80, 283, 284 Sugarcane, 62, 66, 211; area, 87, 96, 97, 116, 201, 209 Sukkur Barrage, 227, 314 Sulphate of Ammonia, 212n, 266, 267

Sulphuric scid, 266, 267, 278 Surat, 299 Sutlej, 133, 237

TARAVI ALLOWANCES, 71, 136 Tanjore, 9, 35, 138 Tanks, 135, 228 Tanner, 169-70. See. Leather Worker Tanning industry, 56-60, 80, 117, 280 Tariff Board, 235, 238, 242, 243, 312, 313

findings Tariff Board, regarding 281: cement industry, cotton engineering industry, 216-7; industries, 295; iron and steel industry, 262, 263, 265-6; match industry, 281; petroleum industry, 270, 271; tin-plate industry, 269; wagon industry, 268; wire and wire nail industry, 269
Tata Hydro-electric Company, 816

Tata Iron and Steel Co., 112, 142, 260, 263, 264, 267, 268, 269, 270 Tea, area under, 87, 201; exports, 115, 275

Tea plantations, 49-52, 78-89, 115, 274-5, 283, 284; labour on, 51, 79, 274-7

Technical education, 196, 812 Timber mills, 80, 117

Tin, 253 Tin-plate industry, 253, 269 Towns, causes of decline, 142-7;

causes of growth, 140-3; decaying class, 149, 310; industrial, 148, 149; in the first half of the 19th century, 6-9, 138, 139; relative increases in large and small, 141-7, 309-10; trading, 149. See also Population, urban

Town aggregates, 150 Trade, changes in methods, 191; concentration and diffusion, 146;

internal trade, 5, 214; foreign trade, 230, 231, 232, 233. Sec also Markets, Railways.

Trade routes, changes in, 141, 143 Trade Unions, 285-7 Trade Unions Act, 287

Transport facilities during the war, 207, 229, 253, 272 Travancore, 277

United Provinces, 92, 93, 116, 120, 123, 124, 133, 136, 149, 173, 184, 200, 222, 227, 273, 276, 278, 295,

297, 303. See also North-West Provinces. Upper Burms, 1, 93-4, 99, 110, 143, 147, 274. See also Burma Urbanization, see Towns, Population, urban. Usurious Loans Act, 219

VILLAGE, constitution and size, 2, 61, Village artisans, dues and services, 10-2, 61-2, 163-6; two-fold division

of, 10-12, 163-4. See also Industry, rural, Weaver. Village community, 10-12, 165-7, 174-6

AGES, 292-4; of agricultural labour, 152; of unskilled labour, WAGES. 20; on tea plantations, 276, 294; payments to factory workers, 86, 294. See also Factory, Labour. Wagon Industry, 268-9

Wagon shortage, 131, 254, 256 War (1914-1918), effect on agri-cultural producer, 229; chemical

industries, 277-8; coal industry, 253-4; cotton industry, 335-7; Government's industrial policy, 310-11; industries in general, 229-30; iron and steel industry, 260; mineral production, 252-3; oil-seeds trade, 207-8; prices, 203; railways, 304-5

Weaver, Handloom, economic condition, 174-5; effects of famines on, 176; tendency towards concentration, 166, 174-5. See also Cotton Handloom Industry, Indus-

try, Village artisans. Wells, 136, 221, 228

Wheat, area under, 87, 95, 201, 214; consumption, 206; exports, 25, 95, 201, 206-7; imports, 202, 203; improved varieties, 98, 210, 211, 212; production, 203

Wire and tinsel industry, 184, 298 Wire and wire nail industry, 269 Wolfram, 252

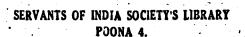
Woollen industry, 50-1 Woollen mills, 78 Workmen's Compensation

Act. 291-2

Workshops, in urban industry, 179, 183, 184, 186, 298

Zinc, 252, 267, 274, 278

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