

*Number Two of the "Deshbandhu" Series
on Current Indian Problems*

BENGAL IRRIGATION

BY

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CALCUTTA

BENGAL IRRIGATION

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ERRORS

Certain typographical and other errors have, for various reasons, crept into this publication. These are regrettable. The nature of these errors, however, is obvious and readers should not experience any difficulty. One error in figures must be specially mentioned :

On page 4 in the table of capital expenditure on works there is an item "Purchase of Dredgers," under "B. Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works," the amount for which is Rs. 62, 47, 243. The percentage figure, 24,858, is incorrect. It should be 14,585.

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PREFACE TO THE SERIES

The object of the series of contemplated pamphlets of which this is the Second is, as its name indicates, to direct attention to the current problems of national reconstruction. It was the late Deshbandhu C. R. Das who gave the first real impetus to this movement, and who animated the minds of the people to co-operate in trying to bring about its fulfilment. It is to the memory of the Deshbandhu, therefore, that this series is dedicated as a humble tribute to one who died that India may live—and live happily.

It was after the Budget Session of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1929 that I intended to publish a study of the condition of the Irrigation Department of the Government of Bengal and that of irrigation generally in the Province. Extreme pressure of work retarded my progress in this direction and it was not till the cold weather of 1929 that I was able to devote myself seriously to it.

In the meantime, at a meeting of the Standing Waterways Advisory Committee held on the 24th August, 1929, presided over by the Hon. Sir Abdelkerim Ghuznavi, the present Member in charge of the Irrigation portfolio, an important pronouncement (quoted in full in appendix IV) was made by him regarding the appointment of a Committee of enquiry for making suggestions for the formation of a permanent Waterways Board. A newspaper *communiqué* was issued and I requested the

PREFACE TO THE SERIES

Hon. Member to favour me with a copy of the proceedings of the meeting, to which he was good enough to reply on the 29th August, 1929, as follows :

“I am pleased to receive your letter of to-day's date. There has been really one meeting of the enlarged Waterways Standing Committee on the 25th last. There was more or less an informal meeting of only a few members in my rooms a few days previous to it. The proceedings are being printed, and I have asked the office to send you a copy as soon as available. The old Committee seems scarcely to have held any meeting in recent years. I am glad to find you taking an interest in this matter, and I wish others would equally do so as the subject is of great importance to Bengal.”

On the 21st October, 1929, his office sent me the printed copy of the proceedings. The pronouncement of Sir Abdelkerim altered my scheme of treatment of the subject to some extent, and it was still further modified by the appointment of the Committee of Enquiry and its terms of reference.

It is pleasing to learn that Sir Abdel Kerim wants the public to take an interest in the matter “as the subject is of great importance to Bengal.” It is with a view to such interest being intelligently and critically taken that I am publishing this study.

HINDUSTHAN BUILDINGS

*Calcutta,
March 20, 1930.*

NALINI RANJAN SARKER