

# CONGRESS AGRARIAN ENQUIRY COMMITTEE REPORT.

*Being the Report of the Committee appointed by  
the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee  
to enquire into the Agrarian  
Situation in the Province.*

मुद्रक और प्रकाशक—

पं० केशवदेव मालवीय, मन्त्री प्रान्तीय काँग्रेस कमेटी, लखनऊ  
ज्ञानमण्डल यन्त्रालय, काशीमें मुद्रित । १९३०-१३

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To

The President,  
U. P. PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE,  
Lucknow.

Sir,

The U. P. Provincial Congress Committee by a resolution passed on 3rd May 1936 appointed a sub-committee consisting of Pandit Govindballabh Pant and ourselves to conduct an enquiry in terms of the resolution on the agrarian question passed by the 49th session of the Indian National Congress held at Lucknow. Pandit Govindballabh Pant has not been able to take any active part in our deliberations. We have, therefore, had to work without the benefit of his advice and mature judgment on these matters. We have tried to do such work as was possible within the time at our disposal and we submit the result of our work herewith.

Yours sincerely,

PURUSHOTTAM DAS TANDON.  
SAMPURNANAND.\*  
VENKATESH NARAIN TIWARI.  
LAL BAHADUR.

*Bareilly,*  
*Nov. 23, 1936.*

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\* Subject to Additional Note attached.

## INTRODUCTION.

The 49th Session of the Indian National Congress held at Lucknow passed the following resolution on the agrarian question:—

“The Congress is of opinion that the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and in-debtedness of the peasantry fundamentally due to the antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue system and intensified in recent years by the great slump in the prices of agricultural produce. The final solution of this problem inevitably involves the removal of the British imperialistic exploitation, a thorough change of land tenure and revenue systems and recognition by the State of its duty to provide work for rural and unemployed masses. In view, however, of the fact that the agrarian conditions and land tenure and revenue systems differ in various provinces, it is desirable to consult the Provincial Congress Committees and such peasants’ organisations as the Working Committee considers fit, in the drawing-up of a full All-India agrarian programme as well as the programme for each province. This Conference, therefore, calls upon each Provincial Congress Committee to make recommendations in detail to the Working Committee by August 1, 1936 for being considered and placed before the All-India Congress Committee, having particular regard to the following matters:—

1. Freedom of organisation of agricultural labourers and peasants;
2. Safeguarding the interest of peasants where there are intermediaries between the State and themselves;
3. A just and fair relief of agriculture indebtedness including arrears of rent and revenue;
4. Emancipation of peasants from feudal and semi-feudal levies;
5. Substantial reduction in respect of rent and revenue demands;
6. A just allotment of State revenues for social, economic and cultural amenities of villages;
7. Protection against harassing restrictions on utilisation of local natural facilities for their domestic and agricultural needs;
8. Freedom from oppression and harassment at the hands of Government officials and landlords; and
9. Fostering industries for relieving rural unemployment.

In accordance with this resolution, the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee passed the following resolution on 3rd May

1936. for the appointment of a sub-committee to conduct an enquiry into the condition of the peasantry of the United Provinces:—

“Being fully conscious of the vital importance of the agrarian problem in these provinces, which has resulted in the recent past in great up-heavals among the peasantry which is faced by continuing and worsening crisis, this Committee respectfully welcomes the Lucknow Congress resolution on the immediate necessity of drawing up an agrarian programme. This Committee feels that any such programme, if it is intended to meet the present crisis, and to relieve the burden on the peasantry, must consider those basic causes which have resulted in this crisis and should seek to remove them.

The P. C. C. invites the co-operation of all districts and other local committees as well as the organised Kisan Sabhas in the Province in the task of drawing up this programme for submission to the A. I. C. C.

In order to collect and co-ordinate reports received from the local committees on this subject as well as to issue such questionnaires and instructions as may be necessary, a sub-committee consisting of Syt. Purushottamdas Tandon, Syt. Govindballabh Pant, Syt. Sampurnanand, Syt. Venkatesh Narain Tivary, and Syt. Lal Bahadur is hereby appointed. This sub-committee will receive the local reports upto the 30th June, 1936 and submit its report to the Council by the 1st August 1936.”

Taking this resolution as its terms of reference, the Committee, to begin with, sent a questionnaire attached hereto as an appendix to all the District, Tehsil and Mandal Congress Committees and to the Provincial and District Kisan Sanghs and to several other organisations interested in the peasant question. It was also sent to the Secretary, U. P. Board of Revenue and several other Government officers. We regret to note that no co-operation was forthcoming from any of the officials approached by us. District Congress Committees attempted to send replies to the questionnaire. Some of them gave useful and detailed information regarding the family budgets, income, expenditure and indebtedness of the peasantry. This report has been prepared on the basis of the information thus collected and relevant material gathered from Government reports and other publications. These authorities have been acknowledged in the text. It is obvious that a detailed enquiry of this nature demands a considerable amount of time and labour. The work is particularly difficult for a non-official agency which lacks the necessary resources

to obtain full and precise data in a short time. Again such a body is denied access to a great deal of information easily available to Official and Semi-official commissions of enquiry. If we had had more time at our disposal, we could however have conducted detailed surveys of villages in different parts of the Province and, thereby, made the report more comprehensive. A detailed report based on first-hand information collected through exhaustive surveys should, we suggest, be attempted in the near future.

There are six chapters in this report. The first chapter deals briefly with the history of the Zamindari and Taluqdari systems of land tenure and the Tenancy laws in the United Provinces. The second chapter analyses the problem of the pressure of population on land, the fragmentation and sub-division of holdings, and the question of un-economic holdings. The third chapter is devoted to the problem of rent and its incidence, arrears, ejections, remissions, canal dues etc., the fourth deals with the indebtedness and income and expenditure of the peasantry, and the fifth with illegal exactions. These five chapters together present an adequate picture of the economic condition of the peasantry today. The sixth chapter embodies our recommendations.

Naturally, we have confined ourselves to these problems only in so far as they affect the United Provinces directly, but our investigations may be found to be of interest to people living in other parts of the country as well.

We are grateful to Dr. Z. A. Ahmad of the Political and Economic Information Department of the All-India Congress Committee for the industry and care with which he has assisted us in our work. The first draft of a part of the report is the result of his labour. To Sy. Tribhuan Narayan Singh go our heartfelt thanks for the assistance he has rendered us in the collection and sifting of the material for a portion of the report. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia also deserves our thanks for the help he gave us in the preparation of a chapter of the report.

## CHAPTER I

### SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE AND TENANCY LEGISLATION.

The United Provinces shares with the rest of India the present economic ruin. In fact it would be no exaggeration to say that conditions in the U. P. are in many respects far worse than those prevailing in other parts of the country. One of the root causes of this is the system of land tenure in the United Provinces which maintains a class of middlemen called Zamindars or Taluqdars between the Government and the actual tillers of the soil. On the Ryotwari area, the peasant proprietors deal directly with the Government. In any study of agrarian conditions, it is necessary to trace the rise and growth of the Zamindari and Taluqedari systems of land tenure. We have briefly discussed below the historical developments of these systems of tenure and the present legal status of Zamindars and tenants.

In 1775 Benares and some neighbouring districts were annexed to British territory by Lord Wellesly. Allahabad and some of the adjoining districts were ceded by the Nawab of Oudh in 1801 and were called the Ceded Province.

In 1803 Delhi, Agra and the basin of the *Ganga* throughout were conquered from the Mahrattas and were called the Conquered districts.

The Problem of land revenue settlement had to be tackled by the Company's Government immediately after these annexations. The proprietary rights in land were however far from simple. A great deal of confusion had arisen during the period of administrative decay which followed the weakening of the Central Government at Delhi. A large number of persons had come in possession of big tracts of land to the ownership of which they had no real claim. Equally great confusion prevailed in the sub-proprietary rights. The propriety tenure was however divided between the Zamindars and village Communities, though the former were far more important. The Zamindars were landlords who were personally responsible to the Government for the land revenue of the territory in their possession, there being no restrictions on the amount that they could collect from their tenants.

Origin of the  
Zamindari  
System

It is not easy to trace the origin of Zamindars as a class. Several circumstances seem to have contributed to their rise. Baden-Powell believes that the Zamindari villages arose out of the following conditions.

(1) Dismemberment of the old Rajas' or chiefs' estates and the division or partition of larger estates.

(2) Grants made by Rajas to Courtiers, favourites, minor members of the Royal family, etc.

(3) The later growth and usurpation of Government revenue officials.

(4) In quite recent times, the growth of Revenue-farmers and purchasers when the village has been sold under the first laws for the recovery of arrears of revenue.

(5) The original establishment of special clans or families by conquest or occupation and the settlement of associated bands of families and colonists in comparatively later times.

Whatever may be the contribution of the other conditions mentioned by Baden-Powell, there is no doubt that the system of Revenue-farming played a very important part in the growth of a Zamindar class. Revenue farmers were found almost all over the Moghal Empire during the 17th and 18th Centuries. In order to avoid the inconvenience and expenditure of collecting land revenue through inefficient and corrupt officials, the kings allotted large tracts of land to influential persons giving them the right of collecting the land revenue of the tracts and fixing the amount of revenue which they had to give to the Government, anything collected in excess of the amount being their remuneration. Custom gave these revenue farmers the right of hereditary occupation but the Sovereign could at any time deprive them of their land and the rights attaching to it. In due course of time, however, the revenue farmers grew in number and strength and, with the decline in the authority of the Central Government, made themselves the virtual owners of the lands in their possession.

After the assumption of political power, the Company's Government was eager to end the revenue farming system and to enter into direct agreements with the village proprietors. It soon became a matter of controversy as to with which of the two, the village Zamindar or the village Community should the settlement be made. The constitution of the village communities was however so complicated that it was difficult to ascertain who the real proprietors were. It was much simpler to enter into agreements with the Zamindars. Moreover it was considered politically expedient to



foster a class of big landed proprietors on whose support and loyalty the Government could always count. Hence the controversy ended in favour of a settlement with the Zamindars.

The officials who made the settlement paid little attention to determining who the real proprietors were. Corruption and inefficiency of the officials deprived many rightful owners of their titles to land. Wrong entries were made and, in a very large number of cases, Mukaddams were entered as proprietors. The revenue farmers were all given full proprietary rights while most of the smaller proprietors were ignored. Through bribery, many big landholders were able to get their names entered as owners of the lands which belonged to their weaker neighbours. These mal-practices were connived at by the higher officials and, later on, when an enquiry into the whole affair was instituted, no action was taken by the Government. The result was that the Zamindars came out of the settlement much more powerful than before and legally more strongly entrenched in regard to proprietary rights. A very large section of the smaller landholders lost their rights of ownership and were reduced to a position subordinate to the Zamindars.

The length of time for which the settlement was to be made also became a subject of acute controversy in official quarters. The Benares Province was ceded by the Oudh Government after the battle of Buxar and the local Rajah continued to pay fixed tribute to the Company till 1875. But as this involved a considerable loss of revenue to the Company, the Benares province was permanently settled and the same system of land tenure introduced there as in Bengal. As for the rest of the North-Western Province, in 1803 the Government of India made a Regulation providing for a land settlement covering a period of ten years, after the expiry of which a permanent settlement was to be made. The Directors of the East India Company were however in favour of a temporary settlement and, in 1811, sent out an intimation to the Indian Government that leases in the Upper Provinces should not be given for more than 5 years. The Government of India was in the beginning more sympathetically inclined towards a permanent settlement and did make certain abortive attempts at introducing such a settlement in some of the areas but the Marquis of Hastings threw his weight in favour of a temporary arrangement. After considerable delay and controversy between the provincial and Central Governments in India and the Secretary of State, a temporary settlement was introduced in the North-Western Province.

Permanent vs. temporary settlement in the N. W. Province.

The system of land tenure in Oudh has special features of its own which makes it necessary to treat it separately from Agra.

Land Tenure in Oudh: Origin of the Taluqedari System.

In 1856 when Oudh was annexed to the dominions of the Company, the land of the province was divided into two classes, viz. Khalsa (crown land) and Huzeer Tehsil land. The latter for which land revenue was paid by the holder direct into the Huzeer Tehsil or Nawab's Treasury was held by:—

- (a) Big landholders under grant from Delhi.
- (b) Supporters and friends of the Subah-dars of Oudh.
- (c) Village proprietary Communities.
- (d) Individuals and families not included in the above three classes.

The proprietary tenure was divided into the following was four categories:—

- (1) Taluqdari.
- (2) Zamindari
- (3) Bhaiyachara.
- (4) Free grants.

The Taluqdars were big hereditary landlords who were personally responsible to the Government for the land revenue of the territory in their possession.

In the Zamindari tenure an estate was held in common by several partners or by members of the same family, the partners being in every case jointly responsible for Government revenue and other liabilities. However in almost all Zamindari villages, a man called the Zamindar was, by common consent, placed at the head of the village and he alone dealt directly with government officials.

In the Bhaiyachara system, an estate was held severally by co-sharers and the revenue demand of each co-sharer was assessed on his share of the holding.

The free grant tenure consisted of Jagirs and Muafi land.

Of all these, the Taluqdari tenure was the most important. In their origin, the Taluqdars were a heterogeneous element. A very small number of them belonged to the old aristocracy. The rest were originally ordinary land-holders who in the course of time had acquired big landed properties by different means. The extravagance and inefficient revenue administration of the Nawabs of Oudh had added to their position and power. In order to avoid the wastefulness of collecting land revenue through corrupt officials, the Nawabs early introduced the system of revenue-farming. Large

tracts of land were farmed out to big land-holders in return for the annual payment of a definite sum as land revenue. Many land-holders took advantage of the system and, as the Central Government weakened, entrenched themselves firmly in the lands allotted to them and made their rights of revenue-farming hereditary. Thus a large number of Taluqdars were mere revenue farmers of long standing. Another factor which increased the power of the Taluqdars was also the outcome of the mismanagement of the land revenue system under the Nawabs. To save themselves from the oppression of Government revenue officials, many village Communities made over their estates to big landholders in return for protection. Many even gave up their estates to the big landholders and cultivated their lands as tenants in order to escape the cruelties of the officials. In addition to all this, many objectionable ways were adopted by the Taluqdars which enhanced their wealth and power. Sykes quotes the following methods by which the Taluqdars increased their estates:—

1. The Taluqdars' forcible encroachments on the estate of their weaker neighbours.
2. Fraudulent means as diverse in their character as fraud itself in its nature.
3. Forced private sale deeds.
4. Forced sales by auction for the realisation of arrears of land revenue.
5. Bona-fide sales by the holders to realise the revenue demanded by the contractor (Mustajir) or the Government representative under the Amani (trust) system or for other purposes.
6. By the falling-in of mortgages executed for the like causes and the sale clauses of mortgages by way of conditional sale taking effect.
7. By other causes of a like nature.

We have already pointed out that very few of the Taluqdars were hereditary chiefs descended from the ancient aristocracy of the land. Lord Canning wrote in 1858, "When we assumed the Government of Oudh in 1856, the greater part of the province was held by Taluqdars who represented it. They have been called the 'Barons of Oude,' but this term applied to them as a class is mis-leading. Some had received titles from the kingdom of Oude, for services rendered or by Court favour; some few are the representatives of ancient families; but the majority are men distinguished neither by birth, good service, nor connection with soil, who having held office under the native Government as Nazims (i. e. Governors) or Chukladars (i. e. Collector of Government

Rents) or having farmed the revenue of extensive tracts had taken advantage of the weakness of the Native Government and its indifference to all considerations of justice, so long as it received revenue, had abused the authority confided to them by that Government and by means of deeds of sale, sometimes extorted by violence, sometimes obtained by fraud, had become the nominal proprietors and the actual possessors of the villages or the majority of the villages which formed what they called their talookas or estates."

Sykes in his book on the Taluqdari System of Oudh remarks "How far the Talukdars are a natural aristocracy in this sense may be seen by the statistics scattered through the Government Gazeteer of the Province. So, in the Lucknow district, of 25 of the principal Taluqdars two only are true and good Specimens of the old hereditary Chiefs; in the Unao district, of twenty-one, five only are hereditary Chiefs, in the Hardoi district, of seventeen two only are hereditary Chiefs, and one or two very old or real allodial proprietors.....I think, however that the proportion of old nobility amongst the Taluqdars of many other districts will not prove higher on enquiry."

Immediately after the annexation of Oudh, the Government had to set itself to the task of reorganising the land revenue system of the province. A Summary Settlement was started in anticipation of a detailed enquiry for ascertaining the manifold rights in land. But soon the Mutiny broke out and the settlement arrangements had to be abandoned. The land settlement which followed the Mutiny was very largely influenced by political considerations. Most of the small proprietors had sided with the anti-Government forces during the Mutiny and it was on them that the official vengeance fell most heavily. The Government realised that the Taluqdars had a bigger stake in land and, being stronger and more influential, could be converted into powerful allies of the Government. Moreover the rebellious element among the smaller proprietors could be more easily wiped out with the help of the bigger landlords. Lord Canning therefore declared all the land of Oudh as confiscated only five states viz. Balrampur, Padnaha, Katyari, Sisindi and Maurawan being exempted for their loyalty during the Mutiny. Having done this, Lord Commig started on a policy of re-distribution of proprietary rights. The Taluqdars were informed through local officials that their lands would be restored to them, if they pledged complete loyalty to the Government. The response from the Taluqdars was immediate and they were granted sanads which conferred on them complete proprietary rights over the lands

which were in their possession and which included a pledge of loyalty to the Government. Thus many small landed proprietors and village communities owning land were deprived of their proprietary rights and placed in subordination to the Taluqdars. All this was done by Lord Canning in full knowledge of the fact that most of the Taluqdars were originally either mere revenue farmers or had acquired their estates by dishonest means. In a letter to Outram written immediately after the confiscation of the estates in Oudh, Lord Canning observed, "As a question of policy, indeed, the Governor-General considers that it may well be doubted whether the attempt to introduce into Oudh a system of village settlement in place of the old settlement under the Taluqdars was a wise one; but this is a point which need not be discussed here. As a question of justice, it is certain that the lands and villages taken from the Taluqdars had for the most part been usurped by them by force or violence."

However, the settlement was made directly with the Taluqdars. The controversy regarding the respective merits of the Permanent and Temporary Settlements had by that time ended in favour of the latter; hence a temporary settlement was introduced into Oudh.

Thus came into existence the present Taluqdari system of land tenure of Oudh. The system has not only perpetuated the old feudal forms of relationships on land but has strengthened the position of the Taluqdars both legally and materially. Today the proprietary rights of the Taluqdars are far more clearly defined than ever before and their economic domination over the entire countryside in Oudh much greater than during any period prior to British rule.

Legal rights in land need a close and careful consideration as they have an important bearing on the well-being of the cultivator.

Tenancy  
Legislation.

Prior to British rule in India the problem of landlord versus tenant was far less acute than it has been during the last hundred and fifty years. This was primarily due to the fact that the proprietary rights of landlords were neither so absolute nor so well defined as they are today. Baden-Powell, Chesney, and some other writers hold that, according to ancient Hindu Law, the sole legal ownership of the soil was vested in the Sovereign. Elphinstone and Colonel Briggs, on the other hand, maintain that the legal ownership of land belonged to the cultivating tenant. In any case the landlord or the middleman who stood between the cultivator and the State had no definite legal claim to the ownership of the land. The military

chiefs who were awarded estates by the Sovereign held these estates at the pleasure of the Sovereign and not as absolute owners. Under the Mohammadens, there were only two separate legal rights in the land. First, that of the cultivator who held his land by hereditary succession and second, that of the State which claimed a share of the total produce. The revenue-farmers were mere agents of the Sovereign who collected revenue for the Central Government and were paid a definite percentage of the total amount collected, as remuneration for their services.

We have already seen how the Zamindari and Taluqdari systems of land tenure deprived the mass of peasantry of their proprietary rights and vested these rights in a small number of revenue-farmers and other middlemen, most of whom under the Moghals were mere rent collectors and had no well defined legal proprietary rights. This sudden change in the legal status of the cultivators led to severe exploitation of tenants by landlords in the shape of wholesale ejections, economic harrassment, rack-renting etc. Deprived of all their rights, the cultivators of the soil virtually sank into a state of complete feudal servitude. However, soon it became obvious that the abuse of the unlimited powers vested in the Landlords called for some legislative protection of the tenantry. The Government adopted a very vascillating policy in this respect but was soon obliged to enact Tenancy laws giving some limited rights to certain types of tenants. In the Agra Province, certain rules defining the rights of a Zamindar in regard to ejection of a tenant and the rights of a tenant for the recovery of his land, if unlawfully dispossessed, were made in 1856. This was followed by a more comprehensive piece of Legislation viz the Rent Act of 1859 which was considerably improved by Act II of 1901. In 1926 the Agra Tenancy Act was passed which repealed the Act of 1901 and brought about important changes in Tenancy Laws.

In Oudh Acts XXVI of 1866 and XIX of 1868 gave certain rights to tenants. The Oudh Law was amended in 1921 and again in 1926.

There are thus two sets of Tenancy Laws in the Provinces, (excluding the Tenancy Rules of 1918 for Kumaun), one for the Province of Agra and the other for Oudh. We shall consider below only those aspects of these laws which vitally concern the economic life of the tenantry, viz. right of occupation, rules regarding ejection and enhancement of rents and landlord's right of distraint.

The Agra Tenancy Act divides tenants into the following 6 main categories:—

Agra Province:  
Classes of tenants.

1. Permanent Tenure holders.
2. Fixed rate tenants.
3. Occupancy tenants.
4. Ex-proprietory tenants.
5. Statutory tenants.
6. Non-Occupancy tenants.

*Permanent Tenure Holders:—*

This class of persons cannot be termed tenants in the ordinary sense of the term. They stand midway between the proprietors and the cultivators, very much like the dependent taluqdars in Bengal. They are found only in the permanently settled areas and can be defined as persons who have under the landlord held some permanent and transferable interest in land otherwise than on a terminable lease, from the time of the permanent settlement at the same rate of rent. They are allowed by law to continue to hold their land at the original rate, fixed at the time of the Permanent Settlement.

*Fixed rate tenants:—*

Those tenants who in permanently settled areas have held their land at the same rate of rent from the time of the permanent settlement are called Fixed rate tenants and are entitled to occupancy at that rate.

*Occupancy tenants:—*

The Rent Act of 1859 had granted a prescriptive right of occupancy to those tenants who had held their land continuously for 12 years. The Tenancy Act of 1926 abolished this provision and laid down that in future the following shall be called occupancy tenant and shall have all the rights and be subject to all the liabilities conferred and imposed on Occupancy tenants by the Act:—

(1) Persons who at the commencement of the 1926 Act had acquired the right of Occupancy under any previous Tenancy Act.

(2) Persons on whom the right of occupancy is conferred by a landlord or a permanent tenure holder.

An occupancy tenant cannot be ejected from his land as long as he pays his rent. His occupancy rights are heritable but cannot be transferred.

*Expropriatory tenants:—*

Prior to 1873, no special protection was granted to a person who had lost his proprietary rights in the land which he cultivated. Act XVIII of 1873 however granted occupancy rights to an expropriator who had lost his proprietary rights either by foreclosure or sale in execution of a decree or order of a Civil or Revenue Court or by voluntary alienation otherwise than by gift or exchange between cosharers provided, that the expropriator had continued in undisturbed possession of the land for at least 12 years. The Tenancy Act of 1926 reduced the minimum period of continued possession necessary for obtaining an expropriatory tenancy from 12 to 10 years and further laid down that the rent at which an expropriatory tenant shall hold his land shall be two annas in the rupee below the rate for occupancy tenants instead of 4 annas below the rate for non-occupancy tenants as provided by the Act of 1873. In all other respects an expropriatory tenant enjoys the same rights as an occupancy tenant.

*Statutory tenants:—*

Statutory tenants were created for the first time by the Tenancy Act of 1926. A statutory tenant is one who is entitled to a life tenancy of his holding. The heirs of a statutory tenant can succeed to his tenancy but they are not entitled to retain possession of the holding of the deceased for more than five years from the latter's death or, if the deceased held a lease, for more than the period of the lease.

The following persons were made statutory tenants by the Tenancy Act of 1926:—

1. All those persons who were tenants without occupancy rights at the commencement of the Act.
2. Those who after the commencement of the Act were admitted as tenants without the right of occupancy.

*Non-Occupancy tenants:—*

Non-Occupancy tenants are usually those persons who hold land under long term leases. Their tenancy rights and liabilities expire at the expiry of the lease.

*Sub-tenants:—*

Sub-tenants enjoy no protection except that they are entitled to hold land for one agricultural year.

Ejectments. A tenant can be ejected from his holding by a landlord for the following reasons:—



- (1) Non-payment of arrears.
- (2) Transfer of the holding otherwise than by a sublease,
- (3) Sublease by a tenant other than a permanent tenure holder or fixed rate tenant in consideration of a sum of money paid in advance or of a debt or other obligation.
- (4) Act or omission detrimental to the holding or inconsistent with the purpose for which it was let.
- (5) Any other breach of conditions of tenure.

In regard to payment of arrears, it may be noted that an instalment of rent if not paid on the day on which it is due becomes an arrear on the next day and the tenant is liable to pay interest on it till such time as he either pays it up or is ejected by the landholder for non-payment.

A tenant can be ejected for nonpayment of arrears on application being made by the landlord to the Tahsildar for issue of notice on the tenant for payment of arrears and ejection in default. A notice specifying among other things the rent and the amount of arrears and requiring the tenant either to deposit the arrear in the court of the Tahsildar within thirty days or contest the claim in the Tahsildar's Court is then served by the Tahsildar on the tenant. If the tenant does not contest the claim the Tahsildar orders his ejection.

Ejection for illegal transfer of land is to be effected by means of a suit filed against the tenant by the landholder and after a decree for ejection has been passed by the Court. The same procedure is adopted in the case of ejection for acts detrimental to the land or breach of conditions of tenure.

The initial rent of a tenant is fixed by an agreement between him and the landlord at the time when he is admitted to the tenancy.

Enhance-  
men of rents.

The rent of a fixed rate tenant, an occupancy tenant, an expropriatory tenant or a statutory tenant can be enhanced or abated either by registered agreement between the landlord and the tenant or by decree or order of a Revenue court.

The grounds for enhancement are:—

(a) that the productive powers of the land held by the tenant have increased either due to fluvial action or to other improvements not effected by the agency or at the expense of the tenant;

(b) that the area of the tenant's holding has increased either by alluvion or by the tenant's encroachment;

(c) that, in the case of ex-proprietary tenants, the existing

rent is below the rate payable by occupancy tenants by more than two annas in the rupee for land of the same class, and that, in the case of an occupancy and a statutory tenant, the existing rent is less than the fair rent paid by other occupancy tenants for soil of the same kind.

Abatement  
of rent

The grounds for abatement of rent are:—

- (a) That the average prices of the produce have fallen;
- (b) that productive powers of the land have deteriorated due to causes beyond the control of the tenant,;
- (c) that the area of the holding has been decreased by diluvion or by the taking up of the land for public utility purposes.

Suits for enhancement or abatement of rents are heard in a roster year by an officer appointed by the local Government who is empowered to fix rents.

Right of  
distrain

The produce of the land is hypothecated for the rent payable by the tenant in respect of his holding and no other claim on the produce is allowed till the rent has been paid. A landlord can in addition to suing a tenant for arrears, recover the rent by distress and sale of the produce of the holding in respect of which the arrear is due. The landholder is entitled to distrain any crop or agricultural product standing ungathered on the holding and any crop or agricultural product grown on the holding which has been reaped and deposited on the holding.

The distrainer after having distrained the property may within seven days from the time of making the distrain apply to the sale officer for the sale of the property. The sale officer then serves a notice on the defaulter requiring him either to pay the amount demanded or to institute a suit contesting the distrain within 15 days from the receipt of the notice. If within this period neither the amount is paid nor a suit instituted, the sale officer fixes a date for the sale and sells the property by public auction.

*Right of Occupancy:—*

Oudh:  
classes of  
tenants.

There are four main classes of tenants in Oudh:—

1. Occupancy tenants.
2. Ex-proprietary tenants.
3. Statutory tenants.
4. Other tenants.

*Occupancy Tenants:—*

In 1866 occupancy rights were granted to those tenants who in the 30 years preceding 1856 had lost their proprietary rights but had continued to cultivate their lands as tenants and were in actual possession of these lands on 24th August, 1866.

Occupancy rights can also be conferred on any tenant by a landlord.

Occupancy rights are heritable but not transferable.

*Expropriary tenants:—*

Expropriary tenants were created for the first time in Oudh by the Amending Act of 1901 which laid down that every person whose proprietary rights in land are transferred on or after the first day of January 1902 either by foreclosure or sale in execution of a decree or order of a Civil or Revenue court or by voluntary alienation otherwise than by gift or exchange between co-sharers shall become a tenant with a right of occupancy in his Sir land and the land which he has cultivated provided he has cultivated that land continuously for 12 years.

An expropriary tenants right of occupancy is also heritable but not transferable.

*Statutory tenants :—*

A statutory tenant is entitled to the occupancy of his holding at the same rent for 10 years from the date of his admission to his holding or from the date of the last change in his rent.

If he is a non-resident tenant and submits to the revision of his rent after the expiry of the statutory period he is entitled to retain the occupation of his holding for his lifetime.

The Oudh Rent Amendment Act of 1921 created this class of tenants and gave the status of a statutory tenant to every tenant who was not a tenant with a right of occupancy or a subtenant and who was admitted to the occupation of a holding at the commencement of the Act.

*Other tenants:—*

This category includes all those tenants who do not enjoy even the rights conferred on statutory tenants. A majority of them are sub-tenants.

The provisions of the Oudh Tenancy Acts regarding recovery of rent, ejectments, enhancement or abatement of rents and landlord's right of distraint are almost the same as those of the Agra Tenancy Act. Hence they need no separate treatment.

Distribution  
of land in  
Agra.

We may now proceed to examine the actual distribution of land between different types of tenants mentioned above. The following table shows the acreage cultivated by Occupancy, ex-proprietary, statutory and non-occupancy tenants respectively in the Province of Agra since 1926.

	Year.	Occupancy	Ex-proprietary,	Statutory.	Non-occupancy.
1,74,76,246	1926-27.	1,04,71,420.	6,04,980.	58,58,521.	5,41,325.
	1927-28.	1,04,10,237.	6,12,934	1,02,157.	6,08,926.
1,77,23,484	1928-29.	1,03,59,241.	6,27,389.	60,77,544.	6,69,310.
1,78,26,226	1932-33.	1,00,87,067.	6,98,420.	60,97,729.	9,43,010,
	1933-34.	96,35,733,	—	50,99,130.	—

It will be observed that since 1926 the acreage cultivated by Occupancy tenants has declined while there has been a steady increase in the acreage of non-occupancy tenants. The amount of land held by statutory and exproprietary tenants has not changed materially.

Distribution  
of land in  
Oudh.

The acreage held by different types of tenants in Oudh is shown in the following table.

	Year.	Occupancy.	Ex-proprietary.	Statutory.	Non-statutory.
4,11,583	1926-27.	1,10,827.	46,340.	63,56,274.	15,98,947,
81,12,843	1927-28.	1,11,453.	43,306.	62,85,417.	16,97,667.
81,21,724	1928-29.	1,12,525.	49,694.	61,73,117.	17,86,388.
80,98,275	1932-33.	1,14,804.	58,702.	57,65,075.	21,57,694.
81,11,654	1933-34.	1,14,641.	60,166.	57,39,559.	21,97,286.

The table shows that the acreage of occupancy tenants in Oudh has increased slightly since 1926. A much bigger increase is noted in the acreage of ex-proprietary tenants. The land held by statutory tenants has shrunk considerably, while there has been a very substantial increase in the land occupied by non-statutory tenants

It is important to note that, in respect of occupancy rights, conditions in Oudh are far worse than in Agra.

Tenancy  
Laws  
examined.

The Tenancy laws of the United Provinces are far from satisfactory from the point of view of the protection afforded to tenants. The greatest defect of these laws is that they leave a very large percentage of tenant without any protection whatsoever. This is particularly so in Oudh where the number of non-statutory tenants is great.

The Agra Tenancy Act of 1926 was a distinctly retrograde step in regard to occupancy rights. It deprived the peasants of their prescriptive right of becoming occupancy tenants after 12 years of continuous cultivation and, instead, empowered the Zamindars to confer these rights at their own discretion. That the Zamindars

have conferred occupancy rights very sparingly is seen from the following figures. In the Province of Agra, in 1927-28 only 12,275 acres were held by those tenants whom occupancy rights had been given by landlords out of a total of 1,04,10,237 acres held by all occupancy tenants. In 1928-29, the acreage held by such tenants rose to 18,680 and in 1933-34 was 40,224 only out of a total of 98,35,733 acres cultivated by all tenants having occupancy rights.

It is obvious that so long as the power of conferring these rights remains exclusively in the hands of the landlords any substantial increase in the number of Occupancy tenants cannot be brought about. Security of tenure is one of the elementary rights of a tenant and therefore every tenant should have a heritable right of occupancy.

Rules regarding ejectment have invested the landlords with very extensive powers over the tenants. The provisions of law are wide enough to enable a landlord to apply for ejectment on the smallest ground. The largest number of ejectments are however for arrears and, in the present dire poverty, prevailing in the countryside the landlord can wield these legal weapons with deadly effect.

The provision regarding the fixing of initial rent by an agreement between the tenant and the landlord is open to a serious objection. In the existing universal land-hunger and the absence of collective bargaining on the part of the tenants, agreements of this nature are bound to be more favourable to the landlord who is economically the stronger party. Unless the initial rent is also fixed legally, the peasant has hardly any protection against the heavy rent demands and the illegal initial exactions of the zamindars.

The rights of landlords regarding distraint of property are no less oppressive and the law is often enforced in the most brutal manner. We think that the elementary needs of the tenant and his family should be the first charge on the produce of his holding and all other claims including rent should be considered after such needs have been provided for.

We may conclude by observing that the Tenancy Laws of the United Provinces need complete overhauling. Not only is it necessary to extend legislative protection to all tillers of the soil but also to change radically the content of the law in favour of the tenantry.

## CHAPTER II

### PRESSURE OF POPULATION ON LAND

There can be no doubt that the population of India is increasing steadily. The population of the United Provinces is also increasing, but at a lower ratio than that of the rest of India. The undermentioned table gives an idea of the growth of population in these provinces during the last 45 years. These figures include the populations of Tehri, Rampur, and Benares States:—

*In round figures:—*

General Increase of Population	Year.	Total population in crores.
	1891.	4.70.
	1901.	4.77.
	1911.	4.75. (The States' population was 7,16,849)
	1921.	4.65. (States' population: 11, 34, 881)
	1931.	4.96. (States' population: 12,06,070)

In any analysis of social problems, population is one of the main questions to be studied. It is intimately connected with agrarian problems in particular. With the growth of population, there arises the problem of unemployment and this has a special bearing on agricultural conditions, since agriculture is the main, and, for the matter of that, the only important industry in India. We cannot say that the growth of population by itself has resulted in any excessive pressure on land here, because the rate of growth in India has not been greater than in other countries—in fact the rate in western countries has been greater. Mr. P. N. Banerji in his book; "A Study of Indian Economics" writes:—"In England from 1891 to 1901 the population increased by 12.17 per cent, and from 1901 to 1911 by 10.91 per cent and between 1911-1921 by 4.01 per cent. In India between 1891-1901 it increased by 2.4 per cent, and in the 20 years between 1901-1921 by 7 per cent. In other words, in 1871 the population of England and Wales was 2,27,12,266 and in 1921, 3,78, 86,699 which means that in 50 years it grew from 100 to 166, If we compare these figures with India, we find that in 1872 the population of this country was 20,61,62,360 and in 1921—3,18,94,280. Thus the population in India increased in 50 years from 100 to 154. This shows that the theory so often loudly proclaimed that the main cause of our poverty is the enormous growth of population is

erroneous. Whatever population problem there be, it is not peculiar to India.

It is not only due to the increase in population that the pressure on land has increased but to so many other factors. The problem here is not of growth of population but of unbalanced occupational distribution of the population. The following figures clearly give an idea of the growth of agricultural population during the last 30 years. People living on agriculture can be classified into different categories which may mount up to over 30. The figures given below, however, deal with the four main divisions of the agricultural population :—

*Number of persons employed in the exploitation of animals and vegetables ;—*

Occupation.	*Population supported, in 1931.	Population supported, in 1921.	Population supported, in 1911,	Population supported, in 1901.	Dis-proportionate increase of agricultural population.
Ordinary cultivation. }	{	3,48,33,693.	3,43,27,199.	3,16,14,865.	
Rent Collectors.		8,18,437.	8,66,419.		
Ordinary cultivators. }	{	2,98,43,168.	2,87,12,015.	2,35,34,772.	
Agents, Managers, Clerks, etc. }		{	1,36,201.	1,96,622.	2,55,919.
Field labourers.			40,35,887.	45,52,043.	43,76,293.

During the last 30 years the people depending on agriculture in the U. P. have increased by 40 lakhs. If we analyse the figures, we shall find that whereas the number of those living on rents and agents and managers etc. has decreased, the number of ordinary cultivators has increased. At the same time, although the number of cultivators has grown, the area under cultivation has decreased in the last decade by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs of acres.

According to the Director of Land Records, the total normal area of cultivation is 3,50,69,000 acres, but during the 10 years, 1921-30 only 3,44,20,171 acres were under cultivation. This means that the total area under cultivation was even less than the normal by 1.9 per cent. According to the Administration Report of 1934-5

Shrinkage of cultivated Area.

\*The figures given in the 1931 census Report have not been shown here due, firstly, to the universally admitted defectiveness of the occupational figures of that Report and secondly, to the different classification adopted which makes it difficult to compare its results with those of the previous censuses but their analysis leads to the same result.

the area under cultivation in that year was 3,57,26 acres less than the normal.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above figures:—

1. The population of the province as a whole has not very greatly increased. In the last 30 years it has increased only by about 19 lacs (19,23,051 between 1901-1931).

2. During the same period the population living on agriculture has increased by 40 lakhs

3. The area under cultivation has decreased.

The figures do not require any comment. They clearly give an indication of the condition of the agricultural population and of the unbalanced occupational distribution.

It is said that during the period 1911-21 the agricultural population increased greatly owing to the rise in prices and the consequent prosperity. People fell back on land because of its profits. It may be true that owing to the rise in prices more people were attracted to land but between 1928-31 there was a tendency in the opposite direction. An article which fetched one rupee in 1928 was priced at only 8 to 9 annas in 1929-30. There was nothing but loss for the tenants. The same condition prevails even now. But the burden on land is increasing. The writer of the 1931 Census Report says: "It is significant that although the pressure of population has materially increased in the decade, there has been no corresponding extension of agriculture...."

By giving the example of a few districts here, the position will be clarified. The population of Gorakhpur has increased between 1901-1931 in the following manner:—

1901. -	29,38,685.
1911. -	32,01,180.
1921. -	32,66,830.

In 20 years the population has increased by 3,28,145. According to the Gorakhpur Gazetteer hardly 5 out of one hundred live in the cities and the remaining 95 per cent live in the villages. While the density of population of England and Wales, Germany and France is 649,332, and 195 per sq. mile respectively the corresponding figure for Gorakhpur district is 721. In the greater part of the district the density of population varies from 721 to 1,100. This means that every acre has to support three persons. The following figures indicate the enormous density of population of two Tehsils of the district:—



Tahsil.	Perganas.	Density of population per sq. mile
Baragaon	Chillupar,	949.
	Dhuruapar.	1011.
	Unaula,	1075.
	Bhauapar,	1021.
Sadar	Bhawapar.	1017.
	Hasanpur.	1006.
	Haveli.	1111.

Such a densely-populated tract can hardly be found in any other part of the world. But while the rural population is increasing at a rapid rate and the pressure on land is also increasing correspondingly, the area under cultivation has shown no appreciable increase. Between 1901—1921 the population increased by about 3,11,738 but the area under cultivation increased by 50,375 acres only. The pressure on land has increased on an average by six persons per acre between 1901—21.

Density of population and proportion of those depending on agriculture.

The case of Gorakhpur is considered to be an exception. It is said that in Gorakhpur the density of population and the number of those dependent on agriculture as compared to other parts of the Province is exceptionally great. We now take the figures for the village Malhera in the Hardoi district. A survey of this village has been made by Mr. Krishna Sahay<sup>A</sup>Asthana. In 1925, the population of Malhera was 1,525. During 35 years (1891-1925) the population has changed in the following manner:-

Year.	Population.
1891.	1,451.
1901.	1,307.
1911.	1,273.
1921.	1,466.
1925.	1,525.

Till 1911 the population continued to decrease, then there appeared a tendency in the opposite direction. In 14 Years the population increased by 252, but during the same period the area under cultivation decreased as follows:—

Year.	Cultivated land (in Bighas).
1892--93.	1686.
1924--25.	1524.

Thus the area of land under cultivation was reduced by 172 bighas. Possibly this may be due to special reasons. For instance owing to heavy rainfall the low-lying area may have been abandoned having become water-logged. Whatever be the reason the fact is that the area has decreased.

The pressure of population on land thus brought about expressed itself, in a rapid increase in the number of ordinary cultivators, which can be seen from the following figures

<i>Persons living on cultivation :—</i>	1891.	1925.
1. Proprietors,	8.	1.
2. Cultivators.	1,006.	1,205.
3. Farm labourers.	138.	275.
4. Landless labourers.	299.	144.

Landless labourers decreased by 155, but farm-labourers increased by 137, There was no material difference in the position of the labourers as a whole. But the number of cultivators increased by 199 and seven of the proprietors were reduced to the position of mere cultivators,

#### Emigration.

Due to the increasing pressure on land, many of the peasants have been forced in the last few years to leave their homes and earn their living in other parts of the province or in other provinces. Some have also emigrated to other countries. In the period 1921-31, the number of emigrants has increased as follows:—

Year.	Total number of emigrants.
1921.	10,90,904.
1931.	12,24,052.

According to the above figures the number of emigrants from this province to other parts of India and abroad increased by 1,33,148 in ten years.

There is also an appreciable number of immigrants to this province. But on the whole the number of emigrants far exceeds the number of immigrants. The writer of the 1921 Census Report says that the number of emigrants exceeded that of immigrants by eight lakhs. According to the Census Report of 1931 the difference was 9,99,000 or ten lakhs in round numbers.

We do not want to dilate here on the benefits of emigration. It is ordinarily argued that to relieve the pressure on land it is better that some people emigrate to other provinces and even to foreign lands. But Mr. E.H.H. Eddy in the Census Report of 1921 referring to the scarcity of labour and the ill-effects of emigration says:—“Roughly speaking the movement of population may be estimated to have left the province poorer permanently, or for all practical purposes by five lakh men and three lakh women or by eight lakh persons in all”. He has previously stated. “This loss of labour the province can ill afford.”

The largest number of emigrants is found in Bihar Province. Next comes the U.P. Emigration from our province has

increased by 1,58,000. These emigrants are mostly distributed over the northern and Eastern portions of the country, but Bengal has the largest share and absorbs about 65 per cent. Mr. E. H. H. Eddy writes that the cause of emigration is mostly domestic dispute. This is not true. It is an accepted fact that the Indian peasant is very reluctant to leave his native village. English writers writing of the Indian peasant have often said that he is always afraid of leaving his home and never goes out of his village so long as he can help it. Only the extraordinary problem of keeping his body and soul together can induce the peasant to leave his home. The chief reason for his inability to earn his living in his village is that with the increasing pressure on land, it is becoming everyday more difficult for every peasant family to make both ends meet and therefore, some families have to migrate to other places, through sheer force of economic circumstances.

The movement of the village population to non-agricultural occupations is increasing everyday. In the last 15 years, it has increased enormously. It is not an easy matter now to depend entirely on agriculture, and the cultivators are finding it very difficult to find employment in other professions. One of the results of the growth of agricultural population and the consequent excessive pressure on land has been an increase in the number of landless agricultural labourers. While in Central and Eastern Europe big estates are being distributed among the peasants and blocks of land are being offered to them as inducements to settle down in villages, the tendency in this country is the opposite. In India the fixed rate or proprietary tenants are decreasing in importance every day. Dr. Radhakamal Mukerji in his book "Land problems in India" writes:— "Landlordism of superior and inferior grade.....has tended to starve the peasant off the land and create a land-hungry peasantry. As population has increased, the peasant has required more land and the landlord who has ready at hand abundant supplies of migratory agricultural labour for seasonal work has taken full advantage of the situation, by assigning to the peasant just enough land to retain him in the village, though on the basis of an irreducible subsistence holding."

Thus there is a tendency on the part of non-cultivating proprietors and landlords to exploit the abundance of landless labourers in the villages. They employ labour from outside their villages or manage only with day labourers. But where there is a certain demand for such labourers on the part of non-cultivating proprietors, the small average farmer tends to do without outside

Movement  
towards  
non-agricul-  
tural  
occupations

Village  
Labour.

labour. He employs the people of his own family on the small holding left to him.

There is a further tendency on the part of proprietary landowners to sublet their lands as they find that as rent collectors and absentee landowners, they can live more comfortably. Between 1891 and 1921 the number of tenants and cultivatory proprietors has increased by 12 p c. and the number of those living on rents has increased by 46%. The result is that the land is mostly divided between small proprietary tenants, and tenants cultivating sublet land, with the result that the difficulties of pure and simple village labourer have increased considerably. In the U. P., on an average 4 farmers employ 1 labourer, whereas in England and Wales the ratio between farmers and labourers is 1 and 3.

The figures given below indicate the number of village labourers during the last 20 years.

Year.	Farm labourers.	Other labourers
1931.	34,19,185.	5,80,106.
1921.	25,08,671.	4,83,943.
1911.	29,64,552.	9,17,861.

In spite of the fact that there has been a tendency to employ less labour in recent years, the number of landless workers increased considerably in 1931. Between 1911-1921, due to increase in prices and the consequent profitableness of small holdings the number of landless labourers decreased. Due to the appalling mortality in the Influenza epidemic of 1918 many fields were left tenantless, with the result that the landless labourer enjoyed the temporary distinction of becoming a cultivating tenant, enough being available for sub-letting purposes. But the normal tendency in Indian agriculture soon asserted itself and between 1921-31 the labourers increased by 9 lakhs.

Labourers on land can be divided in two classes. First, there are the landless labourers and second, those who are partly cultivating tenants. In 1931, the number of the latter class was 16,85,926. Thus 17,33,259 (See table above) were entirely landless.

Tenant-at-will, a landless labourer

Analysing the position further, we venture to suggest that the tenant-at-will should be properly called a landless cultivator. He has no rights in the land he cultivates. He holds it at the mercy of the landlord or the proprietary farmer. As a labourer in a mill works on the machinery supplied by the millowner, similarly the tenant-at-will earns his living from the land, which he has to relinquish the moment the owner of the land demands this. Unfortunately, none of the census reports give the numbers of such tenants.

They have divided the tenants into occupancy and non-occupancy classes. It is to be hoped that future Census Reports will give figures of tenants-at-will also. If we could get the requisite figures for the last 20 years, we should find that the number of tenants-at-will, excluding the statutory tenants, has increased. They pay the highest rents. We estimate that such tenants form 20 p. c. of the tenants population while the land-less labourer is 19 p. c. In any estimate of the condition of the landless peasantry, we believe that the position of the tenant-at-will whose lot is decidedly the most unenviable of all should also be taken into consideration. The tenant-at-will and the landless labourer are the first to be hit by any calamity, natural or otherwise. They have nothing to fall back upon and they are helpless victims of misfortunes which they simply cannot avert.

Their condition is terrible. The Government on whom lies the real responsibility for this state of affairs is indifferent. Surely no one can claim that these peasants can be extricated out of their difficulties without State aid. In Russia, in 1921, the subletting of land to tenants-at-will was declared illegal, under the Agrarian Code. The Code, further, imposed restrictions on employment of labour on land. No one can employ a labourer there unless he is also prepared to work on the land side by side with the labourer. This acts as a check on exploitation of the labourer. If attention is not paid to this problem of a rapidly growing landless peasantry, we cannot say what will happen. We quote here Dr. Radhakamal Mukerji in this connection, who is certainly not an opponent of the Government, and who cannot be accused of special prejudice in favour of the peasants. He says, "So long as there is no radical change in the rural economy of India through land adjustment, agricultural cooperation or scientific farming, the problem of the landless peasants will become more and more acute and there will be a tendency for this class to come in line with the industrial proletariat of the cities. That will portend social upheavals which will be fraught with grave danger, to the agricultural civilisation of India. In Europe at present there are few countries without some State machinery for providing landless peasants with land. In peasant countries where the services of the hired labourer normally are wanted for special seasonal work only, there is an almost universal tendency for this class to have a small holding on which they can fall back". (Land Problems of India).

With obvious reservations, we are in agreement with what Dr. Mukerji says.

Sub-Division  
of holdings.

The main agricultural problems are numerous small holdings, fragmentation of holdings, and the resultant uneconomic holdings. All these are mere expressions of the increasing pressure on land. The total area under cultivation in the united Provinces is 3,50,000,00. Out of the total population of 4,75,000,00, roughly 3,50,000,00 persons are engaged, partially or principally, in agriculture. Thus the average holding works out at 1 acre per person. We give below the opinion of certain authorities on the question of average holding *per peasant*. The following table is taken from the 1931 Census Report:—

Natural Divisions.	Average holding in acres.	Average number of persons per family.
United Provinces.	6.7	4.8
Sub-Himalyan West.	6.9	4.5
Indo-Gangetic Plain, West.	6.7	4.7
Indo-Gangetic Plain, Central.	4.7	4.6
Central India Plateau.	13.0	4.7
Sub-Himalaya, East.	4.3	4.4
Indo-Gangetic Plain, East.	4.7	5.3

The writer of the Report says that the average holding in the province is 6.7 acres per family. This figure, however, differs from the estimate of the U. P. Banking Enquiry Committee Report. This Committee has divided the Province into 44 districts, after excluding the four Sub-montane districts. Its classification is as follows.

Southern tract:—Banda, Hamirpur, Jalaun, and Jhansi. Average holding  $10\frac{1}{2}$  to 12 acres.

Western tract:—Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Bijnore, Bulandshahar, Aligarh, Muttra, and Agra. Average holding 8 to  $10\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

Northern-Central Tract:—Moradabad, Pilibhit, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Sitapur, Hardoi, Bara-Banki, Gonda, Bahraich, Khiri. A little less than  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

Southern Central Tract:—Etah, Mainpuri, Farukhabad, Etawah, Cawnpore, Fatehpur, Allahabad, Mirzapur, Lucknow, Unao, Rai-Bareilly, Sultanpur, 5 to  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

Eastern Tract:—Partabgarh, Basti, Gorkhpur, Jaunpur, Benares, Ghazipur, Ballia, Azamgarh, Fyzabad.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

Thus the average holding varies in different parts of the province. In Hamirpur and other districts, the average is 12, while in Partabgarh it is only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres. The Committee works out the average holding in the province per farmer at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres. Thus there

is a difference of an acre between the Census Report average and this.

The writers of the report on Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, which was compiled in 1931 by the Agrarian Subcommittee appointed by the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee, while recognising that the average holding varied in different parts of the province, stated that in a majority of cases the average holding is between  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres. They say that, for an actual estimate of the situation, we ought to consider the case of the ordinary cultivator. We accept the opinion of the writer of the Congress Agrarian Report and shall try to show that the figures given by the Banking Enquiry Committee as well as by the Census Report do not convey a correct idea of the situation.

Firstly, it is difficult to calculate the average holding. So far no such statistics have been collected which give the area under cultivation in each district for every cultivator. And, then again, there are no figures available according to which one can exclude the area said to be the landlord's *Sir*, *Khudkasht* etc., in calculating the average holding of the ordinary cultivator. The average holding estimated by the Banking Enquiry Committee and the Census Report has been arrived at on the basis of incomplete and inadequate data. But even if an average figure is worked out more or less accurately, it can not give us a true indication of the peasant's condition as a cultivator. A very large number of tenants have a smaller area of land than the average holding. Below we give instances from Gorakhpur District:—

Holdings  
below the  
estimated  
average.

Tahsils.	Average area cultivated by each peasant in acres.
Sadar.	2.1.
Mahrajganj.	2.5.
Bansgaon.	1.4.
Padrauna (Sidhua Jobna).	1.5.
Hata	.9.
Deoria (Saleempur, Majhauri).	.65.

In Hata and Deoria, the average holding is less than one acre. In Southern Gorakhpur, 3 persons depend on every 2 acres. The condition of Nonapar village in Gorakhpur is extraordinary. There the average holding is only .52 acre. Gorakhpur's case may be considered as exceptional. We, therefore, take the example of Musawanpur village in Cawnpore District. Mr. Babu Ram Misra has made an economic survey of this village. There are altogether 250 peasants and the total area under cultivation is 668 acres, out of which 50 acres are cultivated by the Zamindars and 618 by the tenants.

If, while calculating the average holding, we also take into account the area said to be cultivated by the Zamindars, we shall not be giving a correct description of the position of the cultivator. It is, therefore, necessary that 50 acres should be excluded before the average holding for the peasant is calculated. We give below a table for this village showing the average holding:—

Number of tenants.	Area of the cultivated land in acres.	Average holding.
250.	618.	2·47.

Thus the average holding of this village does not exceed 3 acres. But as even these figures do not indicate the true position of the tenants, we give below the holdings of all tenants of this village:—

Size of holding	Number of tenants
1 acre.	140.
2 acres.	50.
Between 3 & 4 acres.	42.
"    5 & 6    "	19.
10 acres.	14.
15 acres.	2.
above 15 acres.	None.

We have estimated 2·47 acres as the average holding in this village. But a very large proportion of the tenants do not have holdings of more than 1 acre, as the figures given above show. Then again, the holdings of all peasants with the exception of 35 vary between 1 acre and 4 acres. No peasant has got a holding of more than 15 acres. Thus it is evident that the average holding as ordinarily calculated can never represent the true condition of the peasant. It is easy to say that the average holding in Meerut is 9·3, in Jhansi 12·4, and in Lucknow 5·6. But do these figures indicate the actual holdings cultivated by a very large majority of the tenants?

Similar is the condition of the village Bakhshi Talab in the Lucknow district. It will not be out of place here to mention that the Banking Enquiry Committee calculating on the basis of figures supplied by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the Provincial Government calculated the average holding in Lucknow division at 5·6 acres. There are 736 bighas of 460 acres under cultivation in Bakhshi Talab. 719 people depend on them. Therefore the average figure for the inhabitants of the village including women and children works out at 1·0236 bighas or ·64 acre. If we take only the tenants' cultivation into consideration, leaving aside the Zamindars, we find that the former, who number, 115, have between them 319



bighas, 6 biswas, 11 Biswansis, or 245 acres. Thus the average holding works out for every cultivator at 3 bighas, 8 Biswas, and 1 Biswansi or 2.13 acres. The following table will bring out our point very clearly:—

Area of the holding	Number of tenants with such holdings	Percentage to the total number
from 0 to 1 bigha 12 bis. i. e. from 0 to 1 acre,	46.	40.
from 1 bigha 12 bis. to 4 bighas i. e. from 1 to 2.5 acres.	37.	32.17.
from 4 bighas to 8 big i. e. from 2.5 to 5 acres.	20.	17.39.
from 8 bighas to 12 i. e. from 5 to 7.5 acres,	10.	8.69,
from 12 bighas to 16 i. e. from 7.5 to 10 acres.	X	X
from 16 bighas and upwards i. e. 10 acres.	2.	1.74.

( From "Fields and Farmers in Oudh" ).

The above figures show that though 9% of the tenants have an average holding of less than 5 acres 72% have holdings not exceeding 2.5 acres. Compare with this the average of 5.6 calculated by the Banking Enquiry Committee for the Lucknow division. Again 17% have average holdings between 2.5 and 5 acres. Only 9% of the tenants have holdings between 5 and 10 acres and, out of this number, only 1 has a holding of 10 acres. If we take the tenants-at-will alone the average will come to a much lower figure. The total number of tenants at-will is 80, and they have 159 bighas between them. The average works out in their case at 1.25 acres.

We can similarly multiply examples from villages of other districts whose economic surveys have been made, but it is not necessary to go into such details. We have chosen our examples at random and they are fairly representative of conditions all over the province. It is clear that actually the average holding of the tenant is much less than 6.7 and 5 acres. The Agrarian Distress Committee has said that the average holding should be taken to be between  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres. We think that the above is a more correct representation of the situation than the figures of the Banking Enquiry Committee and the Census Report. We think that 60% of the tenants' holdings vary between less than 1 acre and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

Hindu and Muslim laws are such that, after the death of the

head of the family, the land is divided into many parts for the various claimants. The point that we want to make out here is that these laws have been very rigidly enforced by the present Government. In Hindu and Muslim days these same laws existed, but there was not so much rigidity about them. The laws of inheritance were not very strictly enforced. They were just customary laws and the Government did not bother to enforce them scrupulously. Legal justice has got to be modified according to the needs of the circumstances. We shall deal with this problem in detail later.

Fragmentation of holdings.

Side by side with the problem of small holdings there is also the equally ominous and inter-related problem of the growing fragmentation of holdings. Even a peasant who has a holding of 2 acres does not own all his plots in one compact area. We have previously shown that, as compared to the growth of population, there has been a decline in the area under cultivation. It has been stated in the Census and other Government Reports that there is not much scope for increase in the area under cultivation, and that it has reached the limit. Then the problem arises as to how the increasing population is to employ itself in agriculture. To divide the existing plots into still smaller plots is no remedy. This process of fragmentation of holdings has steadily continued for the past so many years. It is difficult to estimate the number of peasants who own plots of from 1/100 to 1/400th of a bigha, but it is fairly large.

We take the example of Malhera village in Hardoi District which was surveyed in 1928. We do not know how far the process of fragmentation has proceeded after 1928. We give below the number of small plots in the village:—

Bighas.	Biswas.	The number of plots in which the land is divided.
9.	2.	11.
13.	16.	13.
16.	19.	17.
13.	—	14.
25.	—	16.
10.	—	12.
4.	5.	10.
10.	7.	14.
12.	5.	15.
24.	2.	22.
8.	7.	12.
16.	19.	25.

Bighas.	Biswa.	The number of plots in which The land is divided.
15.	5.	21.
24.	13.	27.
12.	9.	15.
8.	—	10.
13.	6.	18.
13.	4.	16.
17.	8.	19.
10.	14.	13.
8.	19.	16.
33.	14.	25.
14.	13.	19.

The above will give an idea of how many small plots of land there were even in 1928. The example of Nonapar village in Gorakhpur district is also worth noting.

An economic survey of this village was made in 1931 and we give below figures regarding the sub-division of certain plots :—

I. Holding No. 601.—The total area of the holding at the beginning was 14 acre. This was parcelled out thus :—

Holding No.	Shares.	Average.
601.	601/1.	0.03.
	601/2.	0.03.
	601/3.	0.04
	601/4.	0.04.

Plots Nos. 601/3 and 601/4 were again sub-divided :—

Plot No. 601/3.	601/3/1.	0.02.
	601/3/2.	0.02.
Plot No. 601/4.	601/4/1.	0.02.
	601/4/2.	0.02.

II. Holding No. 1403.—The total area was '18. It was divided in this manner :—

	1403/1.	0.06.
	1403/2.	0.06.
	1403/3.	0.06.

These plots were again fractioned as follows :—

Plot No. 1403/1.	1403/1/1.	0.03.
	1403/1/2.	0.03.
No. 1403/2.	1403/2/1.	0.02.
	1403/2/2.	0.02.
	1403/2/3.	0.02.
No. 1403/3.	1403/3/1.	0.03.
	1403/3/2.	0.03.

III. Holding No. 1164.—The total area of 0.04 was divided into two shares :—

	1164/1.	0.02.
	1164/2.	0.02.

IV. Holding No. 224.—It was divided into 3 Plots at first :—

(A)	224/1.	0·06.
(B)	224/2.	0·06.
(C)	224/3.	0·08.

Plot A was divided up again into 3 pieces ;—

	224/1/1.	0·02.
	224/1/2.	0·02.
	224/1/3.	0·02.

Plot C met its fate like this :—

	224/3/1.	0·02.
	224/3/2.	0·02.
	224/3/3.	0·02.
	224/3/4.	0·02.

The above four examples give an idea as to how far the process of Sub-division of plots has continued. We cannot close our eyes to this process by saying that this is a special case. We have no doubt that this state of affairs will be found in other districts also. These examples only illustrate how fast this process is proceeding, resulting in a rapid deterioration of the economic condition of the peasant.

Fragmentation increases the difficulties of management by the cultivator. It is well-nigh impossible for a peasant family to manage these small plots efficiently and labourers have to be employed, resulting in an increase in the expenses of cultivation. One can concentrate more on cultivation if the plots are contiguous. Cultivation in the case of distant plots can only be inefficient. With the onset of the monsoon, ploughing and other preliminary operations have to be undertaken simultaneously on all the plots, but fragmentation increases the difficulties of a busy season. This problem is growing every day more serious, but so far no attention has been paid to the consolidation of holdings. We are again giving an example from Gorakhpur District. This will give an idea of the problem. A peasant of that village had 7 plots in respect of his chak No. 1/19.

Plots.	Distance from home in yards.	Direction,
667	462	South,
742	396	West,
761	396	”
762	396	”
2062	442	North,
2128	50	”
2338	462	East,

Explaining the difficulties of that particular peasant, Mr. Krishna Sahai Mathur says:—

“The cultivator as a rule has to visit these plots each day, wasting both time and energy. He cannot prevent cattle going into his distant fields and damaging his grown-up crops, for he or some of his representatives cannot always afford to be there. How difficult and tiring he finds to carry manures or agricultural implements from place to place? Can he effect any improvements on these scattered fields? The answer is an emphatic “No.” To talk of using improved agricultural machinery on these plots seems to be ridiculous.”

Similar is the condition of Masawanpur village in Cawnpore District. A peasant has a holding of 2 acres which is divided into 10 plots all over the village. Another peasant has a holding of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres which is divided into 15 plots at great distances. The biggest plot is half a bigha in area and the smallest 3 biswas. Some of the plots lie 2000 yards apart.

It is, however, surprising that the writer of this survey considers that, after weighing its advantages and disadvantages, it is better, on the whole, that the existing condition should continue. Some of the advantages of fragmentation, as usually stated, are:—

(1) If the plots are at a great distance from one another, one plot may escape hail and frost etc. if the other is affected by them.

(2) The situation of plots at a distance from each other gives an opportunity because of differences in the qualities of the soil to raise different crops. If, for example, the tenant has got plots fit for cultivation of paddy only, he will have nothing to do in the rabi season and might have to starve.

The Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee has given an adequate reply to this sort of argument. Referring to hail and frost it says “In one village hailstorms would rarely occur more than twice a year; the remedy is worse than the disease.” As regards different qualities of soil, fragmentation has a tendency to outrun the number of classes of soil so that no special benefit can be derived from it. Another strong argument advanced in favour of fragmentation is that consolidation of holdings will necessitate building of separate houses and barns the expenses of which the peasant cannot bear, and that chances of theft and dacoity would increase. Owing to the prevalent custom, the peasant prefers to

remain in a group. Considering all these factors, the Banking Enquiry Committee says, "Nevertheless, fragmentation, though it may suit the people, is a serious evil, both to agriculture and to the agriculturists." The Committee adds, "It is less certain that consolidation is the best remedy." But Mr. Blunt himself as settlement Officer in 1917 in Basti district helped a Zamindar in a consolidation experiment through his subordinates, about which the Banking Enquiry Committee says,....."a highly successful experiment in consolidation was carried out in a certain Basti estate in 1917, as a result of which each holding, save for a tiny plot or two of rabi land near the village site, consisted entirely of rice land; and the tenantry was, and is, remarkably well-to-do."

Un-economic  
holdings.

The most important result of sub-division and fragmentation is that the holdings are becoming un-economic. We can define an economic holding as an area of land on which a peasant family after paying rent and necessary expenses of production can satisfy its necessities of existence and maintain itself in working efficiency. Now the problem arises what should be the area of an economic holding. There is a great difference of opinion on this point. Some have fixed a very big area and some a very small one.

We should here note that the same holding may be economic in the hands of one tenant and un-economic under the management of another. For instance, a plot of land usually gives a better yield under the management of a Koeri or Kurmi than when it is cultivated by a Bania or Kshatriya. Then, again, if a plot of land has better irrigation facilities it may give a comparatively better yield than a plot of land otherwise situated. The proximity of a field to a market or a city also increases the profits of a cultivator. There is no doubt therefore that the area of an economic holding will vary in different parts of the province. In order to find out whether a holding is economic or not, we shall have to calculate the yield, the income from the sale of produce, the expenses of cultivation, and the rent. If after deducting the expenses of production from the income, the peasant has left just sufficient to meet his expenses of food, clothing and other necessities as well as his expenses on social obligations, then we can say that the holding is economic. We are giving below some figures from the Banking Enquiry Committee and the Census Reports:—

TABLE I.

*From the Banking Enquiry Committee's Report.*

## CULTIVATOR'S EXPENDITURE:—

Division,	Value of out-turn.	Food and clothes.	Rent and	Other.	Total.	Surplus.	Percentage of average to minimum economic holding.
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Statutory Meerut.	585/-	272/-	105/-	78/-	455/-	130/-	142/-
Jhansi.	354/-	188/-	39/-	65/-	292/-	62/-	131/-
Gorakhpur.	296/-	243/-	19/-	45/-	308/-	12/-	95/-
Lucknow.	454/-	220/-	50/-	65/-	335/-	149/-	153/-
OCCUPANCY:—							
Meerut.	585/-	272/-	47/-	78/-	397/-	188/-	142/-
Jhansi.	354/-	188/-	33/-	65/-	286/-	68/-	136/-
Gorakhpur.	296/-	243/-	17/-	46/-	308/-	10/-	97/-

TABLE No. II.

*( From the Census Report )*

## STATUTORY:—

Sub-Himalya, West.	483/-	265/-	69/-	55/-	389/-	94/-	135/-
Indo Gangetic Plain, West.	502/-	272/-	90/-	67/-	429/-	73/-	126/-
Indo Gangetic Plain, Central.	296/-	220/-	33/-	42/-	295/-	1/-	100/-
Central India Plateau.	351/-	188/-	39/-	65/-	272/-	59/-	131/-
Sub-Himalya, East.	335/-	243/-	21/-	52/-	316/-	19/-	107/-
Indo Gangetic Plain, East.	376/-	250/-	26/-	61/-	337/-	39/-	115/-

## OCCUPANCY:—

Sub-Himalya, West.	483/-	265/-	41/-	55/-	261/-	122/-	147/-
Indo Gangetic Plain, West.	502/-	272/-	40/-	67/-	379/-	123/-	146/-
Central India Plateau.	351/-	188/-	32/-	65/-	66/-	285/-	135/-
Sub-Himalya, East.	335/-	243/-	19/-	52/-	314/-	21/-	107/-
Indo Gangetic Plain, East.	376/-	250/-	19/-	61/-	330/-	46/-	117/-

Table No. I, shows that in Meerut, Jhansi, and Lucknow divisions the economic condition of the peasants possessing average holdings is satisfactory. After deducting the cultivation and other household expenses they have a net income of 22.2%, 17.5% and 26.2% respectively. Only in Gorakhpur the income from the average holding is not enough to meet the expenses and the peasant suffers loss.

The Banking Enquiry Committee's statements do not seem to be correct, and the actual conditions are decidedly much worse.

According to Table No. II, the writer of the 1931 Census Report arrives at the conclusion that the peasants of the Sub-Himalayan, West, the Indo-Gangetic Plain, West, and the Central India Plateau are economically well off, and, in ordinary circumstances, they make a saving. But in Sub-Himalayan East their condition is bad and in the Indo Gangetic Plain Central they are able to eke out their living with great difficulty. If any unusual condition prevails they incur great losses. The Report says, "When it is remembered that a large proportion of tenants have holdings below the average, it will be realized that there is a considerable body of agriculturists in Indo Gangetic Plain, Central and East, and Sub-Himalaya East, who cannot make ends meet on the proceeds of their cultivation."

It will not be out of place to state here that these two Tables deal with figures before 1929 when the price of grain had not fallen. Moreover, in considering the question of economic holdings we should not forget that the present standard of life of the peasant is very low.

We now want to draw attention, by way of example, to some facts about the economic condition of Malhera village in 1924-25, when the price of grain was high. The Table given (in the Fields and Farmers of Oudh") by the writer who surveyed that village is interesting and instructive. There are altogether 216 families belonging to 30 castes in this village. The writer has divided them into three classes (1) Higher class (2) Middle Class (3) Lower class. In class No. 1, are the families whose income from all sources exceeds Rs. 500/-per annum, which have quite big holdings and whose condition is satisfactory. In class 2, are families whose annual income from agriculture and subsidiary occupations is less than Rs. 500/-, and which are mostly insolvent, and are in a bad economic condition. In Class 3. are those who own lands in name only and earn their livelihood as labourers. Naturally, their position in society is very low.



Total savings of all the three types "middle class" families:-

	Family No. 1.	Family No. 2.	Family No. 3.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Total income from all sources	438	265	259
Total expenditure including costs of cultivation	321	414	275
Nct result	117 (Saving)	149 (Deficit)	16 (Deficit)

"Lower class"

	Family No. 1.	Family No. 2,
	Rs.	Rs.
Total income from all sources	84	154
Total expenditure	133	158
	49 (Deficit)	4 (Deficit)

Thus we see that the families No. 2 and 3 of the "Middle class" have a deficit of Rs. 149/- and Rs. 16/- respectively. The two "Lower class" families have a deficit of Rs. 49/- and Rs. 4/- respectively.

The income and expenditure of the two families of the "Higher class" are as follows:—

	Family No. (1)	Family No. (2)
Total income from agricultural trade, service etc.	Rs. 1371/-	1595/-
Total expenditure:—	Rs. 1031/-	1388/-
Annual saving:—	Rs. 340/-	Rs. 207/-

In the first of these two families there are two daughters and four sons. The expenses on their marriages; if spread over a period of 15 years, comes to Rs. 200/- per year. After deducting this amount from the total saving of Rs. 340/-, we note that the first saves 140/- which it lends to other peasants. The second family, in addition to expenses on marriage, had to purchase a pair of bullocks for Rs. 105/- in that year thus turning the above mentioned savings into a deficit.

For a family in this village the average income required to meet the necessary expenses is Rs. 534/- per year. Moreover, every family is indebted to some extent and has to pay, on an average,

The peasant's standard of life.

Rs. 37/- per year on account of interest and capital. If it has no debts to pay, an ordinary peasant family requires an income of at least Rs. 500/-. Out of 216 families in this village, 55 families which belong to Brahman, Kshatriya, Kayastha, Kalwar, and Murao castes have incomes of Rs. 500/- each. If we do not take into consideration the expenses on marriage etc., their economic condition can be said to be good. They form 25% of the village population. Therefore we come to the conclusion that 75% of the families are living in very unsatisfactory circumstances. Their standard of living is very low. Out of these, at least 20 % are such whom starvation stares in the face every moment. In "Fields and Farmers in Oudh" the condition of one such family has been described as follows:—

"His life is most miserable, and he has to support three small children who are motherless. These children are always underfed and are seen begging for a loaf or two. They all sleep on the ground, or on straw payal in winter, if the Taluqdar is kind enough to spare some. The children, at least for six months in the year, go naked. In winter they sometimes get a rag from a kind-hearted villager, or else try to protect themselves from cold near a fire. For all these reasons they are sickly and weak. Their home life is pitiable."

We should also keep in view one fact while considering the budget of such families. We have not made any allowance in their expenses for illegal exactions and nazrana which, if they are not nearly half of the legal rent, come at least to one-fourth of it. In a considerable number of cases, they actually exceed it.

The above gives an indication of the condition of an average district, which is neither very prosperous nor very destitute. But even there, taking into consideration the plight of all tenants including those holding about 15 acres, we arrive at the conclusion that, at present, the number of un-economic holdings is increasing rapidly. Now-a-days, in view of the fall in prices we can state with certainty that not less than 60 % of the holdings in the province, as a whole, are un-economic or very nearly so.

Size of an  
economic  
holding.

Referring to the Deccan village, Dr. Harold Mann has said that a holding of 20 acres ought to be considered economic. The Baroda Economic Enquiry Committee has fixed something between 30 and 50 bighas as the area of an economic holding. Dr. Stanley Jevons fixes the area at 29 to 30 acres. We believe that in the present state of low prices, an economic holding should be between 15 and 20 acres. If prices are reasonably high and the rents not excessive and there are better facilities for irrigation, improved

cultivation and marketing, we think that an economic holding in the U. P. can be reduced to a lower figure. But we are not prepared to accept the figures of Mr. H. Kerr who says that, for a family of 5, 2½ acres is an economic holding. Moreover, it should be remembered that this figure is for 1903 when rents were low.

We have divided this chapter into four parts (1) pressure of population on land (2) Sub-division of holdings (3) fragmentation and (4) un-economic holdings. In fact, all the four are interdependent.

The pressure on land has increased and is increasing. As in other parts of the country, the village handicrafts, and cottage industries have virtually perished in this province.

Unemploy-  
ment total  
and partial.  
Subsidiary  
occupations.

We need not go into the history of their destruction. In the U. P. in every district there was a flourishing village industry and hundreds of peasants earned their living therefrom. Many augmented their income by adopting them as subsidiary occupations. Beautiful cotton and silk yarns were spun and cloths woven. Excellent carpets were manufactured. Wood-work, cane-work, brass-wares, and earthen-wares were manufactured on an extensive scale. We can give a long list of such industries but what we want to point out here is that, with the destruction of these industries, millions of people were deprived of their living and had to fall back on agriculture only. Thus while the agricultural population has increased, subsidiary occupations have perished, and the peasant has never faced such difficult times as in these days of slump in prices.

It may be asked why it is that, inspite of his present miserable condition, the peasant clings to his land. The only explanation of this fact is that there are no other avenues of employment open to him. Acute unemployment prevails in the towns, and in the rural areas the supply of unskilled labour is far in excess of the demand. In his village, the peasant has at least a cottage for shelter and some grain for a bare subsistence. If he leaves his village he may be deprived of even these meagre belongings and may have to undergo severe hardships.

Our educated young men do not take to industry and trade and open up new avenues of employment for themselves and for others. After graduating, a hopeless future stares them in the face. They run after low-paid services and petty jobs. Even if a young man has an aptitude for industry or trade, the position is such that,

disinclined though he is towards academic education, he has to sit for examinations, and fail from year to year. The so-called Technical Colleges, Agricultural, Engineering and others, in no way differ from academic institutions. Their alumni have no practical knowledge. They can start no business of their own, and simply augment the ranks of job-hunters. Chaudbry Mukhtar Singh in his book Rural India says, "If you go to an Agricultural College, you will hardly find an atmosphere different from that prevailing in college.....We can assert without the least fear of contradiction that it (education in these Agricultural Colleges) has been a total failure so far. If the graduates from these Colleges can not venture to start their own farms and run them successfully, their education stands self-condemned."

The boys of the villagers after passing Middle or Entrance Examinations become mere sit-at-homes. They cannot engage in cultivation and are a burden on their families. The result is that the burden on agriculture has further increased. The Government alone can take an initiative in tackling this problem.

Industri-  
alisation.

Such European countries, as were primarily agricultural about 50 years ago, are pre-dominantly industrial now. Millions of men have been diverted to industries, and the burden on agriculture has decreased. In our country, the only way out seems to be either to develop large-scale industries and provide more employment to the people, or create subsidiary industries to supplement the income of the peasant, or both. So long as an adequate number of mills and factories cannot be established, a policy of protection to help our indigenous industries should be adopted. Imports of goods competing with indigenous manufactures should be restricted. Mahatma Gandhi, despite discouragement from the Government Protection, has succeeded in popularising the spinning-wheel, and the hand-loom. Any one who has seen the 1936 Exhibition of the Congress held at Lucknow can estimate how the village handicrafts which are a very valuable subsidiary occupation have developed. If non-official efforts can produce such results, official agencies can work wonders, if they want to. But those who are in power want to protect and foster foreign industries.

Statutory  
Restriction  
of  
Fragmenta-  
tion.

The increasing sub-division of holdings must also be stopped. The laws of inheritance ought to be altered to suit the present times. Dr R.K. Mukerji says that formerly the holding and its parts belonging to a joint family used to be regarded as one unit. There was one joint master for the entire holding, and sub-divisions

were not permitted. Now the joint-family system is gradually breaking up and individualism is asserting itself. In these circumstances the Government ought to take a lesson from other countries.

In Germany, there is a permissive, though not compulsory, law which lays down that members of a joint family should get their shares of land registered, and one who is selected as the heir of the property should get the entire property. The other shareholders are compensated for their share on the basis of the profitableness of the plots, and not on the basis of their market-price. Thus the holding remains economic, and the peasant runs less risks of getting indebted.

According to a law of Prussia passed in 1924, the ordinary laws of inheritance do not apply to agricultural property. The property is not equally divided between the various shareholders, but all the shareholders nominate one among themselves as future owner. A similar law exists in Denmark. In order that the new heir should not be burdened with debt, the compensation given to other shareholders is usually fixed at a lower rate than the actual price of the land. If the owner of the property dies without nominating his heir, the Government applies this law. Ordinarily the members of the family come to an agreement among themselves.

In Austria, the eldest or the youngest gets the property according to local custom. Where there is a system of partition, some of the heirs are given bigger plots than they are entitled to and the remaining are compensated for the smaller share they get. Generally, the custom in Europe is that one son succeeds to the entire property and he gradually compensates other brothers for the loss of their shares. If he sees that the holding which he has inherited is not profitable, he sells it in entirety to some other person, and the holding is not allowed to become small.

According to the Russian Agrarian Code of 1922, the property of a family could be divided only if there is a possibility of enlarging the area of cultivation in a particular case, and in doing this only the good of those among whom the plots are divided is taken into consideration. If there is a fear of larger holdings becoming less profitable by sub-division, the Provincial Government limits their sub-division on the advice of the local agricultural authorities. In a case where sub-division has been stopped, a peasant can withdraw from the land if he wants and he is compensated for his share in kind or cash, but the holding is not allowed to be partitioned.

In India, and specially in the United Provinces, where the density of population is greater even than in England, there is great

need for considering the applicability of this kind of law. Such a law would prevent sub-division and fragmentation, and at the same time reduce the pressure on land. No doubt the Government will have to provide some occupation to the people excluded in this manner from agriculture. As Dr Radhakamal Mukerji says. "The straits to which agriculture has been reduced as the result of the disparity between the increase of population and the capacity of the soil to feed it demand drastic remedy."

Collective  
farming vs.  
consolidation.

With regard to fragmentation, even though we may accept some of its advantages, its disadvantages far outweigh the former. Different views have been expressed for a solution of this problem. It is generally stated that this can be remedied by means of a consolidation of holdings. Choudhary Mukhtar Singh in his "Rural India" says that this is not practical and that it would be very expensive. The Royal Agricultural Commission states that in the Punjab the consolidation of a holding of one acre costs from Rs. 1/6- to Rs. 2/11/-. Calculating on this basis Choudhary Saheb says that a country-wide consolidation of holdings would cost nearly 33 crores. He adds that even if this money was to be got through taxation, the tax-payers would not get as much in return. His opinion is that, instead of consolidation of holdings, the method of collective farming be adopted, and he asserts that the tenants, instead of being opposed to it, are very much in its favour. We feel that the tenants should be encouraged to adopt collective farming. A comprehensive scheme should be drawn up in this connection, and efforts should be made to bring it into operation with the co-operation of the tenants. This is, everything considered, a more beneficial measure than consolidation and, at any rate, so far as our Province is concerned, decidedly more feasible. By mutual agreement, peasants in the Punjab and other Provinces have exchanged their lands for consolidation purposes. But, in our Province, the Zamindari system creates difficulties in the way. Dr. Mukerji says "An exchange or consolidation of holdings is impossible under the existing Tenancy Law of the United Provinces, since occupancy tenants cannot be bought out." The fact is that, under the existing Tenancy Law, there is not much scope for improving the condition of the peasant. The whole system has to be revolutionised if we really want any improvement, and we are of opinion that whatever is done should be done on a large scale, keeping in view all the circumstances. Any impartial man will admit that minor changes would produce no material effects.

Sub-division and fragmentation divide an adequate holding

into un-economic plots. Our greatest problem is the un-economic nature of the holding. We have already stated what its effects on the peasant and the labourer are. It is often asserted that, even with the present holdings, the peasant makes the two ends meet but his un-productive expenditure on marriage etc leaves him poor. This is not true. A peasant or a labourer in ordinary circumstances spends something between 50/- and 100/- on a marriage. We can quote here the case of a Kurmi peasant who came to Allahabad some months ago and asked a Congress worker for some financial help, as he intended giving his daughter in marriage. The Congress worker could only offer him the meagre amount of Rs 2/- which was considered by the peasant as a very substantial help, since the amount was enough to enable him to purchase sugar for the marriage party. His total expenditure on marriage according to him could not exceed Rs. 25/-. This will give an idea of the expenses of a poor peasant on such occasions.

Plea of  
Villager's  
Extravagan-  
ce examined.

The majority of the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committees have expressed the view that the picture of extravagance by the peasant has been overdrawn. The Central Banking Enquiry Committee also does not agree with the view that "Extra-vagant expenditure on ceremonies is the main cause of the indebtedness."

We may now profitably compare the average holding in this province with that of other countries. Mr. Darling in his book "Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt" has estimated the average holding in U.P. at 2.5 acres. Now compare it with holdings in other countries:—

Comparison  
with other  
provinces  
and  
countries.

Other countries:—	Average holding in acres.
Denmark.	40.
Holland.	26.
Germany.	21.5.
France.	20.5.
Belgium.	14.5.

The Agricultural Journal of 1926 has classified the size of holdings for percentages of the population as follows:—

1 acre or less.	23 per cent.
1 " to 5 acres.	33 per cent.
5 " to 10 "	20 per cent.
Over 10 acres.	24 per cent.

Such figures are not available for every province. But in respect of the Punjab, whose peasants are said to be better off than in other provinces, the Royal Agricultural Commission has given the following figures (see p. 133):—

1 acre or less.	22.5. per cent.
1 ,, 2½ acres,	15 per cent.
2½ ,, 5 acres.	17.9 per cent.
5 ,, 10 acres.	20.5 per cent.

The Commission says that in Bombay the state of holdings is the same, and in Burma perhaps a little more, but in other provinces it is less. Now we give the corresponding figures for Germany, England and Wales.

		<i>England &amp; Wales.</i>	
1-5. acres	.. .. .	1.1	%
5-20. ,,	.. .. .	5.0	„
20-25. ,,	.. .. .	9.7	„
Total under 50 acres.	.. .. .	15.8	„
50-100 acres	.. .. .	16.0	%.
100-150	.. .. .	14.5	%.
150-300	.. .. .	29.0	%.
above 300	.. .. .	24.7	„
Total over 50 acres..	.. .. .	84.2	„
		<i>Germany.</i>	
Under 1¼ acres	.. .. .	1.1	per cent.
1¼-5.	.. .. .	4.3	%.
5-12½	.. .. .	13.4	%.
12½-50.	.. .. .	32.7	%.
Total under 50 acres.	.. .. .	48.5	%.
50-125 acres.	.. .. .	21.4	%.
125-250	.. .. .	7.9	%.
250-500	.. .. .	4.7	%.
500-1250	.. .. .	9.4	%.
1250-25	.. .. .	6.5	%.
2500-over.	.. .. .	1.6	%.
Total over 50 acres.	.. .. .	51.5	%.

In England and Germany holdings of 50 acres are 50% of the total, but in India 76% of the holdings are of less than 10 acres, and 15.4% are of 1 acre or less. Holdings of 50 acres will be perhaps not 1% of the total, and hardly even a big peasant will have such a holding. The vastness of the problem of uneconomic holding in our province and the country can be realised from the above.

The Government refuses to face these questions squarely. Whenever any specific problem forces itself to the fore-front and threatens to become so acute as to disturb the public peace, palliatives are applied which enable the Government to muddle through, for the



time being. But palliatives cannot effect a permanent cure of the diseases that have found a lodgment in the body politic, in many instances due to the criminal negligence of the Government itself. The Zamindari System, as it exists today, is a creation of the Government and the whole of our rural economy is based upon it. Whatever else may happen, the Government will not spare any pains to buttress up this System which is crumbling to pieces by the laws of its own being. On the other hand, neither the system of land tenure is to be radically changed, nor is any serious attempt to be made to stop holdings from becoming un-economic. The loss in national wealth which this produces and the grave social, moral and cultural deterioration to which it gives rise in the countryside is, apparently, no concern of the Government. That there is no serious and genuine desire to solve the problems which are shaking Indian society to its foundations is evidenced by the fact that an examination of our system of land tenure was specifically left out of the terms of reference to the Sapru Committee. Such reforms, legislative and otherwise, as the Government sponsors from time to time have certainly a demonstrational and propaganda value. They are loudly advertised and given a brilliant press. But they do not touch even the fringe of the real problem.

## CHAPTER III.

### RENTS.

Rents. There are varying rates of rent for definite categories of tenants in this Province. We have already noted that there are two different Tenancy Laws in operation, one in the province of Agra, another in Oudh. As a matter of fact, the tenancy laws in Kamaun division may be said to form a separate class by themselves. Here we shall deal with the problem of rent as affecting tenants.

Rent has always been the most important problem for the tenant. Before 1901, the tenancy laws in this province were very un-satisfactory. The number of occupants being very small and most of the cultivators being yearly tenants, the landlord could easily enhance the rents by taking advantage of the competition for land among the peasantry. Thus rents continued to increase, as there was no check on enhancements. In 1901, the law was modified and resulted in an increase in the number of the Occupancy tenants but the Tenancy laws of 1926 did not add substantially to this class. On the other hand, since the passing of the Agra and Oudh Tenancy Acts of 1926, there has been a steady decrease in the area of the occupancy tenancy in Agra, and but a very slight increase in the area held by such tenants in Oudh.

The Government affected to believe that the tenancy laws would confer greater security of tenure on the cultivator and would thus put a check on the enhancement of rents. There is no doubt that the enhancement of rents has stopped since 1931 but this has been due, not to the effects of the tenancy legislation, but to the slump in prices and the problem of rent has become far more acute during the present depression than ever before.

We may note here the fluctuations in prices since 1915, in order to realize the present burden of rents on the peasant.

The price of grain began to rise during the War from 1915. In 1920-21, it was at its highest. In 1924, prices declined slightly, but they remained at that level till 1929. The economic effects of the war were felt in India in the same manner as in the rest of the world. Demand for all sorts of things rose during this period. Big factories were opened and manufacturers of iron, metal, cloth, and other

essential products became very rich. The cultivator also profited. With the rise in prices of other articles, the price of grain also increased. But the peasants of India could not reap the full benefit of the appreciating prices. They had to face many natural and other calamities during the period.

In 1924, heavy floods did damage to 29 districts. Thousands of bighas of kharif crops were destroyed. In 1925, both the winter and summer monsoons were inadequate. The year 1927 was a year of heavy rains, storms and cyclones. Crops all over large areas were affected. In 1928, the Rabi crop was greatly damaged by frost and the kharif was adversely affected by inadequate rains. Then hordes of locusts invaded the fields and did severe damage. If in one place there was inadequate rain, in another floods worked havoc. Similar calamities occurred in 1929, 1930 and 1931. From 1929, began the fall in prices, but, in addition to this, in every year that followed, frost, hail, inadequate rain or heavy rains did great damage to the crops. We give below figures relating to crop damage in a few districts in 1930:—

Out-turn in annas of the principal rabi crops (1338 F),  
16 annas denoting a normal crop.

District.	Wheat.	Barley.	Gram.	Arhar.	Peas.	Tobacco.
Muzaffarnagar.	12.	12.	10.			12.
Aligarh.	12.	12.	10.	8.		12.
Agra.	11.	11.	7.	7.		
Etah.	8.	8.	7.	8.		12.
Badaun.	10.	10.	9.	8.	11.	13.
Cownpore.	9/6/-	10/6/-	8/5/-	9.		
Garakhpur.	10.	10.	12.	12.	12.	
Sultanpur.	11.	12.	11.	9.	9.	
Rai Bareli.	11.	12.	12.	10.		15.

These figures are enough to support our contention, though we are of opinion that "Arhar" and "Peas" were more affected than indicated above. An enquiry was made into the condition of the peasants of Sarai Inayat circle of Phulpur Tahsil, and Saida bad, Sarai Mamrez and Handia circles of Handia Tahsil in Allahabad district. It was found that in such un-irrigated tracts, where the produce used to amount to between 7 and 8 maunds per bigha. the yield was something between 3 and 4 maunds in that year. Owing to such conditions prevailing in other parts of the province also, remissions in revenue had to be made to the extent

of 60 lakhs. The Government further suspended the realisation of nearly 20 lakhs in 1928-29. In 1929-30 Rs. 33 lakhs were remitted and 24 lakhs suspended and in 1930-31 Rs. 31 lakhs were remitted. But it should be remembered that these remissions and suspensions were grudgingly granted and pitiably below what the situation demanded. It is a well known fact that owing to the inadequacy of remissions and the consequent discontent amongst the peasants, Allahabad, Cawnpore, and some other districts after negotiating with the Government for a long time and exploring all avenues for a settlement, were forced totally to suspend the payment of rents, and this culminated in the second Satyagraha fight of 1932.

Increase in  
rent.

Though it is true that since 1928, with the beginning of the depression, the rent problem has become serious, as a matter of fact, even in 1901 it was felt that rents were increasing rather rapidly. The enhancement of rents in the period 1901-15 was twice as great as the enhancement in the period 1915-30. In the former period rents increased by 31 per cent, while in the latter they increased by 17 percent only. In Oudh, the difference was still greater. In the first period the increase was 40%, and in the second only 20 per cent. The table given below shows how rents have increased during the last 30 years:—

*Index numbers of rent and revenue in the U. P.*

Year.	Rent per acre.		Land Revenue demands.
	Privileged tenants.	Ordinary tenants.	
1901.	99.	96.	99.
1910.	106.	112.	103.
1920.	113.	133.	107.
1930.	121.	166.	111.

The above figures show that during this period the rent of occupancy tenants has increased from 100 to 122 and of the non-occupancy tenants from 100 to 173. According to the 1931 Census Report, the rent has increased by Rs. 6,65,000,00. In this connection we should note that during the last decade the average net cultivated area of the province decreased by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lakh acres. The figure for the increase in rent given above therefore does not in any way exaggerate the situation. The Settlement Report for Lucknow for 1926-28 says that during the last 28 years the rent of statutory and non-statutory tenants increased by 60 per cent and the rates from 6.3 rupees to 10.1 rupees per acre. These figures were accepted by Mr. J. Smith, the then member of the Board of Revenue. Mr. A. A. Waugh in his "Rent and Revenue Policy in U.P." says, "But while prices of produce rose by a round 100 per cent between 1921-26

the rent of what was already occupancy in 1901 rose by 25 per cent only, while the rents of what was yearly tenant land in 1901 rose by 110 per cent upto 1930." The following table taken from "Land Problems of India" illustrates the rise in rent of occupancy and non-occupancy tenants in different districts:—

Districts,	1929-30 (1337 fasli)		Percentage of Occupancy to other tenants' rate.		Percentage of Col. 1 to 2 (1929-30.)
	Occupancy rate per acre.	Statutory tenants' rate per acre.	1904.	1910.	
	1. Rs.	2. Rs.	3.	4.	5.
Saharanpur.	5.8.	13.3	72.	63.	44.
Muzaffarnagar.	6.1.	16.9.	58.	53.	36.
Meerut.	6.4.	16.3.	60.	54.	39.
Bulandshahar.	6.6.	14.8.	60.	54.	45.
Aligarh.	7.1.	15.3.	60.	56.	53.
Mainpuri.	5.3.	10.2.	81.	75.	52.
Etah.	4.8.	9.1.	95.	87.	53.
Bareilly.	5.2.	9.2.	85.	74.	57.
Bijnor.	6.9.	10.9.	86.	81.	63.
Badaun.	4.4.	9.3.	85.	70.	47.
Shahjahanpur.	3.8.	5.9.	100.	90.	64.
Pilibhit.	4.7.	5.2.	127.	123.	90.
Farukhabad.	5.4.	8.7.	107.	92.	62.
Etawah.	6.2.	10.8.	91.	85.	57.
Fatehpur.	5.1.	8.4.	98.	95.	61.
Benares.	4.8.	9.2.	75.	74.	52.
Jaunpur.	5.2.	7.3.	92.	91.	71.
Ghazipur.	4.5.	8.5.	73.	70.	53.
Azamgarh.	5.6.	6.7.	(?)	98.	84.

We give further detailed figures from the different Revenue Reports of the rise in rents in the whole province:—

Year:	Agra Total demand.	Oudh Total demand.
1915-16.	10,44,50,432.	5,43,59,372.
1917-18.	11,39,06,890.	5,45,73,877.
1922-23.	12,64,44,294.	5,43,47,164.
1925-26.	13,17,47,952.	5,65,33,203.
1928-29.	13,40,57,509.	5,74,07,368.
1932-33.	12,96,49,087.	5,91,88,826.

Owing to the continuous rise in rents and their high rate, poor crops, and the fall in prices, the tenant has found it well-nigh

impossible to pay his rent. To illustrate the above point we give the figures for actual collections from 1924 to 1933:—

Fall in collections.	AGRA.		OUDH.	
	Year:—	Percentage of collections to rental demand.	Percentage of collections to rental demand.	Percentage of collections to rental demand.
	1924-25.	83 per cent.		94 per cent.
	1928-29.	63 „		78 „
	1932-33.	55 „		64 „

It will be seen from the above table that the average of collections has been decreasing constantly since 1924 and in 1932-33 was 55 percent of the total rental demand in Agra and 64 per cent in Oudh. Even before the slump in prices the peasant found it difficult to pay the rents, not to talk of the present situation which is much worse. Between 1929-1935 the price of grain has fallen by 40 to 55 percent. The peasant's crops do not fetch him sufficient returns to enable him to pay the rents at the present rates. The following price-index table gives the trend of prices from 1880 onwards.

Year.	Prices General Index number. (Basis 1873=100).	Year	Prices General Index number (Basis 1873=100)
1880	104	1921	236
1890	100	1923	215
1900	116	1925	227
1905	110	1927	202
1910	122	1929	203
1913	143	1930	171
1915	152	1931	127
1918	225	1932	126
1920	281	1934	121

It will be apparent that the existing prices correspond with those of 1900-1910. The following figures showing prices in seers per rupee of principal food grains further clarify the position:—

Fall in Prices.	Year.	Wheat.	Barley.	Gram.	Rice.
		1873.	16.6.	21.05.	28.77.
	1914-1915.	8.	13.33.	12.12.	7.01.
	1916-20.	7.42.	10.	8.77.	6.4.
	1931.	18.37.	27.74.	19.79.	9.81.
	1932.	14.63.	21.40.	18.82.	9.40.
	1933.	13.08.	18.36.	15.86.	10.00.
	1934.	15.24.	22.23.	17.61.	10.72.

The prices of certain main crops correspond with those prevailing in 1873. But no effort has been made to reduce the rents accordingly.

The existing high rates of rent are defended on the ground that the value of land has increased, the yield has improved, there are better irrigation facilities, better means of transport, and lastly that more money crops are being produced. It is therefore stated that the rent cannot be brought down to the level of the last quarter of the 19th century. But it is no use pointing to such improvements when we know that the majority of the tenants have not profitted from them. There are thousands of villages which are not served by modern means of transport, and are situated at a distance of 25 to 30 miles from railway stations. Of what use can money crops be in such circumstances? Where money crops are being produced, the cost of production, labour etc. has increased. The report on Agrarian Distress in the U. P. Says that the cost of production has increased since 1901 about 200 per cent. Dr. Radhakamal Mukerji is of the opinion that the cost of production in this period has increased by 180 per cent. It is therefore fallacious to defend the existing high rents on the ground of the increased facilities.

Again, to justify the high level of rents owing to certain agricultural improvements made by the State and the general economic development of the country is very unfair to the tenant. The improvements made by the State are due to the taxes paid by the tenants. And, if the tenant earns a little more because of them, to allow him not to profit by this is to perpetuate his poverty. By depriving him of the increase in profits caused by these improvements, the State shows that it does not want to raise the present standard of living of the peasant.

The laws are also particularly favourable to ex-proprietory tenants. It has been enacted that the rates of ex-proprietory tenants should be less than those of the occupancy tenants by  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. But there is nothing in the law, giving any such advantage to the ordinary tenant. Occupancy tenants form 51 per cent of the total, 39 per cent are statutory tenants. There is no protection or concession given to the remaining 10 per cent whose condition is the worst. The Government has not attempted to do anything for this class of peasants. Leaving aside the 51 per cent of the occupancy tenants who also are finding it difficult to pay their rents, we find that during the last 30 years the rents of the 49% of the statutory and other tenants have increased by 170 per cent. The condition of this latter class of peasants can be well imagined.

Burden  
Rent

The result is that, after paying the rents, the tenant would have as a matter of fact nothing left for himself. Owing to the depression, he can neither pay the rents nor meet his expenses. The correct theory of rent ought to be that a tenant should pay only that amount as rent which remains after meeting his personal and family expenses and the prime cost of production. The writers of the Agrarian Distress in the U.P. also say, "Rent should be the first charge on surplus, but it can be a charge on the surplus alone." A.A. Waugh also admits, "Payment of rent and revenue constitute the first claim on the tenant's *surplus* produce value....."

However, as we have shown elsewhere in this report, there is hardly any surplus left for most of the cultivators after meeting their cost of production and paying their rents.

#### Arrears.

Due to the slump in prices, the problem of arrears of rent has been considerably aggravated. Arrears have existed even at the best of times, but the peasant has always tried to pay them up within three years of their falling due, after which period the zamindar cannot claim the unpaid amount, although he has the right of ejecting the tenant for arrears at any time.

We do not refer here to such peasants as are habitual defaulters. There can be no two opinions that, since 1930-31, arrears have increased. The present economic condition of peasants is such that it has become well-nigh impossible for them these days to pay even their current rent. They are incurring a loss on cultivation. If, in these circumstances, they cannot pay their rents in full or even in part, there is nothing to wonder at. The arrears have mounted to such figures that, whatever payments a tenant makes in the current year, goes only towards paying off the arrears. And, again, the current year's rent becomes an arrear for the next year. Thus the vicious circle continues. There are very large numbers of peasants whose rents have not been paid for the last three years. Some owe Rs. 50/-, others Rs. 100/-, or Rs. 200/- and there are even those who owe from Rs. 300/- to 500/- as arrears of rent. It is difficult to estimate from the figures available how many peasants are free from arrears. We can however have a rough estimate from the Government Revenue Reports, and the Reports received from the different District Congress Committees. The Congress Committee Reports say that the majority of the ordinary cultivators are in arrears for rents which they cannot pay in the existing circumstances. We give below some figures for the arrears in rent both for Agra and Oudh:—



Year.	AGRA		OUDH	
	Arrears in rent. Rs.	Percentage of arrears to total rental demand.	Arrears in rent. Rs.	Percentage of arrears to total rental demand.
1915-16.	80,66,705.	13 per cent.	29,27,133.	5 per cent.
1917-18.	1,76,78,290.	16 „ „	31,47,671.	6 „ „
1922-23.	2,60,28,998.	21 „ „	34,73,610.	9 „ „
1925-26.	2,98,52,525.	23 „ „	.. ..	11 „ „
1928-29.	4,93,05,900.	37 „ „	1,12,13,825.	22 „ „
1932-33.	5,77,72,531.	45 „ „	2,12,05,774.	36 „ „

The result is that a large number of suits for the realization of rents are being filed. When such suits are decreed, the interest as well as the costs of litigation are added to the arrears. And the peasant being unable to pay is often ejected from his land. The zamindar earns a further profit as he gets Nazrana when the dispossessed land is farmed out. The legal provisions under which such suits are filed, and the difficulties experienced by the peasants have been described in Chapter II. We find that the courts also do not give an adequate consideration to the peasant's difficulties. In such suits, what is considered to be the zamindar's prestige is often maintained, as it is felt that the peasant might otherwise become hot-headed, and therefore he is often ejected from his land. We can quote several examples where the sums due could have been realised in easy instalments, or the realisations put off. Apparently, it is not the business of the courts to pay any attention to the wretched condition of the peasantry. No sooner is an ejectment suit decreed than the processes of ejectment begin. Without due warning in accordance with the law, ejectment processes are carried out and the tenant is dispossessed. In Allahabad, a case has been filed by a peasant who stated that the legal three notices before ejectment were not served on him. The Kurk Amin has usually no sympathy for the tenant. He is more under the influence of the zamindar.

In July and August, when the peasant has ploughed and sown and little green plants have changed the face of the country-side, there comes the zamindar with his men and the Kurkamin, and takes possession of the land. All the hopes that the cultivator had built for the future, the hope that he might be able to feed his children from a good crop, are dashed to the ground. There are many cases where vindictiveness has gone to the length of destroying the crops, and the lands are ploughed or sown again, or even left fallow.

Ejectments and suits for arrears have been increasing. The number of such suits between 1929-34 has exceeded all records of the last 30 years. In 1930-31, they reached the highest point. In Allahabad district alone, in 1931, the ejectments rose to the stupendous figure of 6,000. From 1932 to 1934 the total number of suits for ejectment were 3,37,038 and actual ejectments 1,59,967, and the area from which ejectments took place was 4,45,476 acres.

The figures clearly indicate that the economic condition of the peasants is miserable. They simply cannot pay the arrears, for no peasant wants to leave his land so long as he can help it. To save his land, the peasant would sell his wife's all too few ornaments or whatever little things he possesses. He has no savings, on which he can depend in time of distress. Many have now become landless labourers. Reports of the growing ranks of the landless peasantry have been received by us from several districts. Those who had had the courage to participate in the No-rent or the Satyagraha campaign have been made the special target of repression. The Zamindar as well as Government servants have set themselves against such peasants and have victimised them for being Congressmen. Incidentally, the fact that the officials and the Zamindars direct their attacks specially against Congressmen is an admission on their part of the power of the Congress.

We have several instances before us where a peasant has not been given back his land even after he has offered to pay the arrears, because he happened to be in sympathy with Congress. He may not have gone to jail or actively participated in the movement, but that did not minimise his offence. In 1931 the Commissioner of Allahabad described the judgment of a S. D. O. as "wooden", since he had refused to sanction the return of the land from which a tenant had been ejected, in spite of the fact that the tenant was prepared to pay up the arrears. On the one hand, there is the great depression, the growing arrears, and unprecedented economic difficulties of the peasant; on the other, there is the British system of justice which refuses even to take note of the difficulties of the peasant.

Auction of  
property.

The ejectment and dispossession of the land do not end the story of the arrears. A tenant's household goods are also sometimes sold by auction, though the law prohibits this. Such auctions are a painful sight to see. The cultivator usually does not own much. Lotas, thalis, cots and even the framework of the doors and thatched roofs are often taken out and sold. Legally, the bullocks and the agricultural implements cannot be auctioned for arrears, but the ignorant villager does not know the law, and his

protests are always ineffective against the powerful landlord or the money-lender. A thing of common occurrence is the auction of articles at one-fourth or one-eighth of their value. Valuable groves and plots of land are auctioned. We give here the example of an auction sale for arrears in the village of Aura in the district of Allahabad. In this case the tenant owed Rs. 150/- to the zamindar as arrears. For the recovery of this amount, his four bullocks actually worth Rs. 300/- were auctioned for Rs. 55/-, out of which Rs. 35/- were deducted as cattle-pound charges and Rs. 20/- only taken in payment of the arrears. Finally, a decree for 162/- was granted by the court against the tenant as the amount still outstanding as arrears, in satisfaction of which the tenant paid Rs. 60/- cash and gave a hand-note for Rs. 145/-. On a general estimate, nearly one-fourth of the number of ejectment suits that are decreed end in auctions of this nature.

Nazrana

In addition to the burden of rents, the illegal exactions of the zamindars weigh very heavily on the tenants. In recent years, illegal exactions have been increasing rapidly. The zamindar or the rent-collector has found new methods and new pretences for the purpose. Nazrana is a very common affair. Everyone knows it and even Government Reports have mentioned it. The Lucknow Settlement Report for 1926-28 says, "Owing to the prevalence of Nazrana in most of the larger estates... additions to the recorded rents had to be made in a considerable number." New varieties of Nazrana have been invented in this Province. For planting a grove or digging a well, a Nazrana is exacted, and when a new plot of land is given to anybody, he is asked to pay a Nazrana. Then, again, the tenant has to pay a fixed yearly Nazrana in many places. Owing to the more limited occupancy rights in Oudh as compared to Agra, there is a greater competition for land among the tenants there, and the zamindars, landlords, and taluqdars, take advantage of the situation. It is estimated that, in Partabgarh, nearly 20 per cent of the total rent is realised as Nazrana. In Lucknow district for a bigha of land whose rent is Rs. 10/- the Zamindar takes Rs. 10/- as Nazrana, and the Karinda and Patwari get one rupee each. The rate elsewhere for hundred bighas works out as follows:—

Talukdar's Nazrana.....	Rs. 200.
Agent's Nazar.....	Rs. 100.
Village accountant's share...	Rs. 25.

These figures worked out per acre amount to Rs. 3/2/- Rs. 1/9/-, and Re. -/6/3, respectively. It is difficult to give the,

details of other kinds of extra-legal and illegal exactions because figures are not available, though such exactions are many. They deserve a chapter by themselves. Here one can only remark that when he cannot even pay the legal rent, the extent to which these exactions weigh on the tenant can well be imagined.

Zamindars,  
big and  
petty.

According to the "Rent and Revenue Report in the United Provinces" there are altogether 12 lakh land-holders in the U. P. of whom 1,60,000 live mainly on rents, the rest being cultivators. The number of tenants is about 55 lakhs and the labourers are estimated at 8 lakhs. Each of these individuals represents a family of 4 or 5 persons. Nearly 20 per cent of the cultivated land is stated to be self-cultivated by the zamindars. Out of the number of land-holders stated above, 203 zamindars are such as can pay land-revenue of Rs. 20,000/- or above, nearly 909 pay a revenue of Rs. 5000/- and above. Over 86½ per cent of the total pay less than Rs. 100/- as land revenue per annum, and 56 per cent pay a land revenue of less than Rs. 2/4/. Calculating on these figures, it is apparent that there are only 1, 62, 000 land-holders who pay land revenue of Rs. 100/- or above, and the remaining 10,38,000 pay less than Rs. 100/- Those paying less than Rs. 24/- as land revenue total 6,72, 000. A little more than 1000 zamindars and taluqdars pay revenue of more than Rs. 5000/- in fact those who pay a revenue of less than Rs. 100/- are zamindars in name only. There is not much difference between them and the ordinary cultivator.

In former days, a large proportion of a zamindar's rental income was paid to the Government as land revenue but conditions have changed since, in favour of the zamindar.

The following table shows the reduction in the ratio between revenue and rent for the last 150 years.

Disproportion between Rent and Revenue.	Year.	State share in rents.
	1793 and near-about.	90 per cent.
	1822.	83     "
	1833.	66     "
	1855.	50     "
	1929.	40     "

The above is a proof of the fact that concessions have been granted to zamindars in the settlement of revenue.

Between 1900-1930 the total revenue has increased by 85 lakhs, but the rent in this period has increased by 6,65,00,000. Dr. R. K. Mukerji in his book "Land Problems of India." says that the percentage of revenue to rental in the U. P. is from 20 to 42 per cent and the average works out at 27 per cent. Mr. A. A. Waugh says,

“The land revenue has risen by 75 lakhs since 1901, and most of the rise in rents has not been assessed to revenue.” It is therefore evident that in spite of the small increase in revenue, the burden of the tenant has increased considerably. The above clearly shows the extent of loss to the Government owing to the zamindari system, because no system of settlement can be evolved in which a zamindar will not manage to appropriate a share of the rent for himself, which under the Rayatwari or some other system would have gone to the Government.

However, we might conceivably not have grudged the extra share of the realisations to the zamindar, had it not been for the fact that nearly 99 per cent of the zamindars (we mean the big zamindars), are not prepared to spend any part of the margin of net profit they derive between one settlement and another for the good of the tenant on agricultural improvements. We do not forget, for a moment, that under the present system of Government, even if that money had found its way into the State treasury, not a pie of it would have been spent on the peasant. It would all have gone to make a top-heavy administration still more top-heavy. We sympathise with the zamindars also in the present depression. They also have been hard hit. Most of them are heavily in debt. But we are sure no one expects us to sympathise with them in their financial distress, if it is caused by extravagance, by trying to live up to a standard which circumstances do not warrant in an attempt to hobnob with the white and brown bureaucracy.

In these circumstances, no amount of Government support can really save the zamindars. They ought to think for themselves, and take their share of the work for the good of society. By forming Zamindar Associations or political parties to contest the elections they cannot solve the problem facing them. It is quite possible that individuals might profit by entering the Councils but that would not help the zamindar class. A class which decides to ally itself with the authority in power can only temporarily benefit itself. In these days of change and revolution, there are many mighty forces smouldering beneath the surface which are trying to come up. Greater and more powerful Governments have succumbed to these forces. The peasants' discontent is deep and based on the realities of the situation and is not fanned by a handful of agitators. It is the zamindars' duty to consider the problem from an enlightened point of view, and decide if the existing relations between the peasants and themselves can continue any longer.

In this chapter we have dealt with three main questions (1)

Rents, (2) Arrears and (3) Ejections. We have referred to illegal exactions and also to the relations between the zamindar and the peasant. The heavy burden of rent on the peasant has been described, and it does not require any repetition. The occupancy tenants are in a slightly better condition than other tenants but they also do not make enough profit to pay the existing rents.

Rent as  
cost of  
production.

It has often been asked whether rent should be taken as tax or as mere rent. According to Ricardo, a tax is based on fixed income. In taxing a person, it is always kept in view that the taxation should not be such as to deprive the man of the means of meeting his expenses. In the determination of rent, the cost of production is the main consideration, and any surplus produce after that is taken as rent. Many peasant conferences have passed resolutions to the effect that, as in the case of income-tax, a certain minimum margin of income should be exempted from land revenue or rent. In the present economic condition of the peasantry, there is hardly any surplus left over from which rent can be taken.

Mr. Loveday says "When an alternative to agriculture as a means of subsistence is practically non-existent, it is ridiculous to speak of earnings sufficient to call capital and labour into the industry; it is no less ridiculous to contend that rent does not enter into the cost of production, when the effect of that rent is so to lower the standard of living and efficiency that the cultivating classes, forced on to the margin of existence, are rendered unable to sink capital into the land they till or to maintain the personal energy with which they are endowed."

The suggestion has been made that there should be no rents on un-economic holdings, and that in other cases it should be reduced considerably. In order to meet the deficit in revenue, it has been further suggested that the Government should tax the income of intermediaries and those tenants who live merely on rents and that death duties on big estates should be levied. However, before these questions of principle are decided, it is essential that the existing burden of rent should be reduced, and the un-economic holdings exempted from rent. In Ryotwari provinces where Government realise the rent directly from the cultivator, it makes allowance not only for the expenses of cultivation, but also for the marketing charges, and the profits of the intermediary traders. In the case of unirrigated or badly irrigated land, a further reduction of 25 per cent is made. And on the net cash produce thus calculated, the Government takes less than 50 per cent as land revenue.

In our province, if the above allowances are made, the tenant will have nothing to pay as rent. Dr. Mukerji says, "Indeed, were land revenue entirely abolished, many Indian peasants still would find themselves below the subsistence minimum." But Mr. A. A. Waugh says that the existing rate of rent is not excessive, as the proportion of rent now-a-days is much less than what it was in the Mughal days. He says that in olden days first one-fourth and later half of the produce was taken as rent. But at present not more than 20 per cent is taken as rent.

Ratio  
of rent to  
produce.

The customary rent in ancient days was one-sixth of the produce. Manu lays down the above rule. And Huen-Thsang who visited India in the time of Harsha, in the 7th Century, said that rent was one-sixth part of the produce. The ratio varied from place to place. In some places, it was one-sixth and in others one-eighth or one-twelfth. In the Moghal days, the Government's share was increased and it rose up to one-third of the produce. Mr. Waugh's figure refers to the decadent days of the Moghals, when the central power had become effete. Moreover, it is wrong to compare the present rates with those of the olden days. Now-a-days, the taxes are many and varied. The Government's income and expenditure have both increased. In the Moghul days, the land revenue was the main source of income. There were very few indirect taxes and, even if they took a higher share of the produce as rent, it would not be proper to compare that rate with the present.

Under British rule, the Government has no direct relation with the tenant. In a way, it is not concerned as to how the tenant is paying his rent and how its burden lies on him. The rent has steadily increased at a rapid rate during the last 50 years, but the Government has never thought of intervening. It has left this as a matter mainly to be settled by the zamindar and the tenant, under the stress of the forces of supply and demand. This rigid adherence to a so-called policy of laissez-faire, and ignorance of the human element in economic relations, has produced a disastrous situation, which the Government was forced to recognise only after the catastrophic fall of prices.

Officials of the kind of Mr. A. A. Waugh are even now not convinced of the un-bearable burden of rent on the peasant. We quote here the opinion of Mr. O'Connor, former Director-General of Statistics for the benefit of such officers. "It is doubtful whether the efforts now being made to take the cultivator out of the hands of the money-lender will have much effect, or, even if they have the fullest effect, that they will materially improve the cultivator's posi-

tion, until a large share of the produce of the soil is left in his hands, and he is protected against enhanced assessment by Government Officials and against enhanced rent by private landlords.....  
..... But, important as these are, specially the development of irrigation, I have little doubt that the reduction of land revenue by 25 or 30 per cent, if the reduction is secured to the profit of the cultivator, would be of far more value in the improvement of the class who constitute the bulk of the population and who contribute most largely to the finances of the State."

The above statement refers mainly to Ryotwari villages. But we feel that if the advice given by Mr. O'Connor is followed in this province—as here the position of the tenants is still worse—and adequate reductions made in rent, it will have a very beneficial effect. If in Ryotwari villages, where the peasantry is comparatively more prosperous, a reduction of 25 to 30 per cent is needed, there ought to be a reduction of at least 50 percent in this province.

The problem of arrears of rent is also of great importance, though not much attention has been paid to it so far. People have talked of remissions and reductions in rent, but they have kept quiet on this question. It is only the Congress which has drawn people's attention to this problem. Very few writers have referred to it. Mr. Waugh has divided the tenants with arrears into three classes. He thinks that the majority of them default deliberately. He has nothing to say in respect of those who have heavy arrears owing to the slump, and has no solution to offer. His thesis is an excellent example of how certain persons can evade a problem. His statement that the majority are deliberate defaulters is wrong. After seeing the continued depression for the last seven years, and the natural calamities, such as floods and famines, it is not difficult to realise the main causes of the accumulating arrears. We can multiply hundreds of examples showing the trend of arrears, and how the rent paid for the current year is debited to arrears, and the current rent becomes arrears for the next year. And thus the vicious circle of arrears has continued for years. There is no scope for argument in the face of hard facts. The Provincial, District, and other Congress Committees have passed resolutions for total remission of arrears after considering the whole situation. They do not want to encourage habitual defaulters. But they have to solve the problem as a whole. It is better that a few undeserving tenants should profit than that a large number of others who form the majority should suffer.



We have already referred to the hardships caused by ejectments. The peasant and those who are in the know of their condition very well realise the inequities of the ejectment laws. The suffering involved in the ejectment process is such that a large number of peasants have grown desperate and are prepared to do anything to end it. In some districts of Oudh, the peasants organised a strong agitation against these laws in the year 1921. As a result of the universal discontent among the peasantry, in 1926-27 the Agra and Oudh Tenancy laws were amended and statutory rights were conferred on a large section of the tenants. But any real amelioration of the condition of the peasant is difficult without the conferment on him of permanent and hereditary occupancy rights.

The Government's efforts to meet the situation created by the fall in prices have been very unsatisfactory and inadequate. The prices fell in 1929 and their effects were felt by the tenants in 1930 but the Government had not realised the problem till then. In October 1930, when the no-rent campaign was started in Allahabad, and had its repercussions in other districts also, the Government came forward with its remission proposals. In 1930 after the Gandhi-Irwin truce, the no-rent campaign was stopped. But the economic problem was there as before. The Congress tried to bring the difficulties of the peasant to the attention of the public and the authorities. But, in spite of this, no remission was made for the 1931 Kharif crop. For Rabi a remission of Rs. 1,57,38,000/- was made which amounted to only 8 per cent of the total rent. In subsequent years more remissions were granted as it was absolutely impossible for a very large section of the peasantry to pay the dues. In 1934-35 the total remissions amounted to 407 lakhs, which is still very inadequate in view of the heavy fall in prices.

Remissions  
of rent.

The Report on Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, (1931) after fully discussing the question in all its aspects, has clearly demonstrated that the remissions were altogether inadequate, and that great injustice was done to the peasants. We do not want to repeat those arguments here. It is only enough to point out that, since 1932, the same rate of remissions has continued till today. Though the prices have remained at the same low level since 1931, there has been no increase in the amount of the remissions. A long-drawn-out slump needs increasing remissions every year as the economic capacity of the peasant is rapidly deteriorating. The peasant's condition since 1930-31 has thus grown much worse. His burdens have continued to increase, and his financial difficulties are growing everyday. Whatever reserves he had have been used up.

In these circumstances, the continuance of the same rate of remissions is unfair and unjust. There has been proportionately a greater remission in revenue than in rent, but neither the Zamindars nor the peasants are satisfied. The Government has not even reduced the rent to the 1901 level. According to Mr. Waugh, between 1901 and 1930, the rent increased by Rs. 5,32,00,000/-. But he himself admits that "the amount of rent remission therefore falls short by some Rs 122 lakhs." This shortage he justifies on the ground of improvement of cultivation etc. We have however dealt with this argument before.

Remissions alone cannot solve the peasant's problem, though they can afford him some relief. So long as the rate of rent is not altered, legal and other disabilities removed, and the entire system modified to meet the present situation, the peasant's difficulties cannot be solved. But if the Government wants to give some relief, it should increase the amount of remissions. In 1931 Mahatma Gandhi advised the U. P. Government to grant remissions of -/8/- in the rupee to non-occupancy and -/4/- to occupancy tenants but this advice was not accepted. If this is given even now, the peasant can get some real relief.

Irrigation is an important part of the agricultural operations. In our country, the peasant depends largely on the monsoon, but the rains are not evenly distributed all over the country, and are not constant from year to year. The result is that, in certain places and in certain seasons, the peasant experiences great water difficulties. Between June and October, there is usually a good monsoon. In the winter, there is some rainfall late in December and January, in the Northern and Eastern parts of the province. Nearly 50 inches of rainfall is sometimes recorded in the North-East but in the South-West it varies between 25 and 30 inches. The monsoon rains are of use for the Kharif crop, but for the Rabi during the winter season, there is a lack of water.

There are three main sources of irrigation in this province (1) Wells (2) Canals (3) Tanks, ponds, rivers etc. The Table given below gives the area of land irrigated by different sources between 1921-1931.

*Area, in thousands of acres, irrigated during the year from:—*

Year.	Govt. canals.	Private canals.	Reservoirs.	Wells.	Other Sources.	Total.	Estimated irrigable area.
1921-2.	2,240.	16	61.	5,261.	2,254.	9,832.	14,781.
1922-3.	2,260.	38.	65.	4,889.	2,596.	9,848.	14,873.

Year.	Govt. canals.	Private canals.	Reser-voirs.	Wells.	Other Sources.	Total.	Estimated irrigable area.
23-4.	1,613.	23.	63.	4,252.	1,995.	7,946.	14,955.
24-5.	1,879.	22.	66.	4,309.	2,083.	8,459.	15,008.
25-6.	2,281.	27.	68.	4,973.	2,380.	9,729.	15,065.
26-7.	2,434.	28.	70.	5,379.	2,369.	10,280.	15,147.
27-8.	1,926.	21.	61.	2,848.	650.	5,506.	15,210.
28-9.	2,928.	20.	56.	5,807.	1,593.	10,404.	16,704.
29-30.	3,325.	24.	64.	5,511.	1,947.	10,971.	16,592.
30-31.	3,060.	37.	64.	4,915.	2,110.	10,186.	16,757.
Average.							
1921-31.	2,395.	26.	64.	4,824.	2,008.	9,317.	15,509.

Thus the total irrigated area in this province is nearly 95,00,000 acres. Fifty lakh acres are irrigated from wells, 25 lakhs from canals, and 20 lakhs from other sources. In 1929-30 the highest area was reached when 1,10,00,000 acres were irrigated or one-third of the total cultivated land was under irrigation. The largest area is irrigated by wells; the canals play a much smaller part.

Some of the canals were constructed in the days of the Mughals. Even in the time of the East India Company, the Eastern Jumna Canal was functioning. Under British rule canals were first constructed in the Punjab, and then in the western parts of the U. P. Construction of the Ganga canal was started in 1854 and by 1928, 15 lakhs of acres were brought under canal irrigation. The digging of the Sharda Canal began in 1921 and the Canal started functioning in 1928.

The total irrigated area from canals is roughly 10 or 12 per cent of the total area under cultivation. Therefore there is a great need and scope for canal extension. The canals are doing useful work, but the peasants have many complaints, and rightly, against the Irrigation Department. Firstly the canal rates are very high and the peasant is not able to pay them in the present circumstances. The reports from the District Congress Committees show that the canal water is not supplied to them at the proper time, and they do not get what they are entitled to. The patrols and other servants of the department do not give the facilities that are due to the peasants. Complaints of bribery and harrassments have also been received. The Government have constructed the canals from loans, but the return they get from the canals is more than the total interest paid on the capital. The Sharda canal has been constructed at a cost of 9.5 crores. When the canal works at its maximum, it yields a

revenue of Rs. 67 lakhs per year. Thus it will fetch a profit of 71 per cent. This is a very high return considering the present rate of interest. Yet the canal rates show no signs of coming down.

The Hydro-Electric Grid Scheme has been started in the Western parts of the province and tube-wells are being constructed on a large scale. In 1935 the Legislative council accepted a scheme for the construction of 1,353 State Tube-wells. Out of these 530 have been constructed up till now. But these are mainly in the western districts, and the eastern and central parts remain untapped.

In spite of these developments, the well has great importance in the economy of irrigation. Wells are of three kinds (1) Pucca (2) Kachcha and (3) Temporary. Temporary wells do not last for more than one season. The following are the figures for masonry wells in the province:—

Year.	Standing at beginning of year.	Collapsed during year	Newly built during year.	Standing at end of year,
1921-22.	7,18,642.	5255	14,949.	7,28,336.
2-3.	7,28,336.	6,026.	12,617.	7,34,927.
3-4.	7,34,927.	7,278.	14,772.	7,42,421.
4-5.	7,42,421.	6,049.	12,409.	7,48,781.
5-6.	7,48,781.	7,636.	13,053.	7,54,196.
6-7.	7,54,196.	5,804.	14,515.	7,62,907.
7-8.	7,62,907.	7,899.	12,881.	7,67,889.
8-9.	7,67,889.	9,521.	22,261.	7,80,629.
29-30.	7,80,629.	8,884.	19,773.	7,91,518.
30-31.	7,91,518.	7,730.	13,084.	7,96,872.

*The number of non-masonry wells is as follows:—*

Year.	Number of non-masonry wells available.
1921-22.	8,08,297.
1922-23.	6,87,180.
1923-24.	6,36,765.
1924-25.	5,96,393.
1925-26.	6,31,162.
1926-27.	7,38,468.
1927-28.	6,35,855.
1928-29.	7,91,279.
1929-30.	7,94,427.
1930-31.	6,94,382.

Between 1921-31, the masonry wells have increased by 1,50,314. They have been mostly constructed by the tenants. Mr.

Waugh says that most of these have been constructed from money lent by Government. But that he is wrong in this, as in many another statement, is proved by the 1931 Census Report which says, ".....It is safe to say that the majority of these were built at the expense of the tenants themselves."

According to experts, irrigation through wells is superior to other methods of irrigation. We refer in this connection to the written evidence submitted by Dr. Radhakamal Mukerji to the Royal Agricultural Commission. In spite of the superiority of irrigation through wells, the Government has given little attention to it. The fact that canals have been constructed cannot justify the neglect of well-irrigation which is responsible for watering about half of the irrigated area. The urgent need of the day is to construct wells in large numbers so that no area should be left unirrigated. Digging wells is not so spectacular as the construction of canals and this is, quite possibly, one reason why it is not receiving adequate attention at the hands of the authorities. The construction of kacha wells costs very little. The peasants can construct them with the help of their own families or their neighbours. They cost approximately from Rs. 3/- to Rs. 8/- each, but they do not last long. It is the Government's duty to construct masonry wells for irrigation purposes. Lala Sukhbir Singh in his evidence before the Royal Agricultural Commission suggested the creation of a separate department on the lines of the Canal department, to construct new wells, to repair old ones, and to keep a general supervision, and construct permanent and scientific irrigation channels in every village. In view of the importance of wells to the peasant, immediate attention should be paid to this question.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ILLEGAL EXACTIONS.

In the chapter on Rents, we referred casually, without entering into details, to the illegal exactions to which the tenant is subjected. The Zamindars can certainly claim some credit for the ingenuity displayed by them in devising this system. There is no other province, except the neighbouring province of Bihar, which can put up a comparable record.

We have already mentioned Nazrana. This is not always technically illegal. The Zamindar takes note of the hard competition for land and drives as hard a bargain as he can. He knows that the person who is to-day offering him a large Nazrana and high rents is bound to go bankrupt in the near future. The rents are sure to fall into arrears. He will then have a chance to eject the man and offer the land to a fresh set of competitors. In the mean time, he can pocket a handsome Nazrana on each transaction.

Almost in the same category, though technically more on the shady side of the law, falls Ikhfa (concealed rents). To avoid paying full revenue on their total rental receipts, many Zamindars show only a part of the rents in the patwari's papers. The rest is exacted from the tenant but no receipts are paid to him. Naturally, extra-legal methods have to be employed for its realization. The State is thus balked of its share and the tenant debarred from seeking even that measure of meagre relief which the law grants. Whatever payments he makes gotowards liquidating the concealed rents and the legal rents remain constantly in arrears, which continue to soar up till they finally lead to his ejection.

Non-pay-  
ment of  
Receipts.

We have said that receipts are not paid for concealed rents. This does not necessarily imply that they are regularly paid for the legal rents. In many cases the smaller Zamindars consider it an insult to be asked to pay a receipt and some of the bigger Zamindars who have instituted an elaborate system of granting receipts deliberately withhold them from tenants whom they consider to be contumacious. The non-production of a receipt where receipts are usually granted itself constitutes a piece of *prima facie* evidence against the tenant.

Hari and  
Begar.

Another customary extra-legal exaction takes the form of Hari. Every tenant is under an obligation to devote at

least one day in the season to the Zamindar's land which he has to plough up free of charge. Closely allied is Begar or forced labour. The tenant is forced to carry loads, build houses, tile roofs or perform any other odd job absolutely free of charge or, at the best, for a purely nominal payment for the Zamindar and, in most cases, for his officials. The rigour of the system has abated in recent years but it exists almost all over the province.

There are many to whom the doctrine of Demand and Supply offers not only the most satisfactory explanation, but the most correct justification, for all this. They are right when they assert that the tenant is free to throw up the land, if these conditions prove irksome. He is certainly free to do so which means, in other words, that he is free to commit suicide and to kill his family by slow starvation. But to say that he can enter into a bargain with the Zamindar on equal terms is to state an absolute untruth. He is as helpless vis-a-vis the Zamindar as the labourer in face of the capitalist. Unless Society, in the form of the State, comes to his help, he will continue to sink deeper into the mire. He will, as now, pledge himself in his desperation, to fulfil any conditions that will permit him to cling to a bit of land for some time, knowing all the while that they are impossible of fulfilment.

With Hari and Begar, we leave the region of exactions which, although they are indefensible, have acquired a certain amount of respectability in that they are publicly admitted, even though reluctantly and even find mention in official records. Beyond them, we meet with exactions which the law positively condemns and even custom does not sanction. It is impossible to give a complete list and equally impossible to estimate their amount. We can only indicate their nature by giving a few examples. The mildest is the compulsory sale of articles like ghee, oil, milk, and gur on the occasion of a marriage or a similar event in the Zamindar's family. The tenant certainly gets a price for the commodity he is forced to sell but if the bazar rate happens to be eight chhatakas a rupee, he will be fortunate, if he can get a rupee for two seers and a half.

If the Zamindar goes in for a house or an elephant or a motor-car or engages dancing-girls to grace a festive occasion at his house, every tenant has to bear a proportionate share of the cost. 'Proportionate share' is really an inaccurate expression. As a matter of fact, the actual expenses are covered several times over by these contributions. If the tenant builds a room or drives a new stake into the ground for tying up cattle, he must propitiate the lord of the land by payment of a tax. There are curious levies like 'pet-piravan'.

Compulsory  
sale of  
commodities

The word means "pain in the stomach" and is an euphemism for labour pains. It is paid when a lady in the Zamindar's family is safely delivered of a child. Enquiries have shown that in some Zamindaries over twenty varieties of such illegal dues are exacted. It is idle for the Government to plead ignorance of their existence and an evasion of public duty to point out that complaints are not received or cases filed. The tenant is helpless and, unless such things are made cognizable offences and the government shows a determination to stamp them out, they will continue to flourish.

Methods  
employed  
to extract  
money.

Ingenious as some of these exactions are, the methods of realizing them are no less ingenious. We have already referred to suits for ejectment, decrees and auctions. But all this is cumbrous and expensive. The Zamindar does at times have recourse to the courts but there is a good deal behind this imposing legal facade which is entirely in his control.

Fields, already sown, are ploughed up and crops forcibly reaped or burnt down. The tenant is called up to the Zamindar's Kutchery and there kept in confinement for several hours, some times for two or three days, without any food. He is made to stand in the sun, sometimes with a stick between his legs so that he cannot bring them together. He is beaten, care being taken not to leave marks on the body and some times the members of his family are forced to witness the beating. He is made to kneel down, put up his arms from under the knee-joints and clasp his ears with his hands. This is called "sitting like a cock". His cattle are forcibly impounded. No Zamindar has ever experienced a difficulty in having a troublesome tenant hauled up under the notorious sections 109 and 110 and, in nine cases out of ten, a charge by the police ends in a conviction. The law, in this respect, is criminal in the letter and criminal in the spirit in which it is administered. The burden of proof is thrown on the accused who finds himself helpless before a powerful combination of Zamindar and the Police. His witnesses are terrorized and will not speak for him. In many cases, such persons are arrested while away from home, on business or on a visit to a relation, and find themselves in prison, because they cannot get into touch with their friends. There are cases where such men have been re-arrested within a day or two of their release. It seems never to strike the Courts that a man, even if he was actually a vagrant before his conviction, must get a reasonable time to turn into a respectable citizen.

This does not exhaust the Zamindar's armoury. For instance, it is not feasible to inflict physical violence on members of the



higher castes. But the Zamindar resorts to more powerful methods of coercion. He has bones burnt before the man's house and, in this way, wounds him in his religious susceptibilities.

There are some good people who might feel startled by all this. We can only say that they have no knowledge of the power wielded by Zamindars. Several instances of looting, tortures, extortion, and firing by Zamindars were brought to the notice of the Government by Mahatma Gandhi in 1931 in his famous Charge-sheet and the authenticity of many of these was admitted in part, if not wholly, by the Government. True, the times were exceptional, but the power was there all the while. The Zamindar has money and physical force under his control and the tenant finds that in his unequal fight against the Zamindars, the so-called forces of law and order are almost invariably ranged against him.

It is this which makes all organized resistance difficult and un-organized, individual resistance futile and suicidal. The public worker who tries to teach the peasantry to stand up like men in defence of their rights is looked up on as an enemy by the Zamindars. This one can understand. But, at the same time, he is a suspect in the eyes of the authorities who have, for reasons best known to themselves, constituted themselves the guardians of these vested interests. This has had two effects, on the mentality of the villager; on the one hand, it has made him a fatalist, devoid of all initiative, and a pessimist; on the other, it has filled him with rage, impotent today, but un-compromising, against the Zamindari system and the administrative machinery which upholds it.

We should like to make it clear that the illegal practices to which we have referred above are not resorted to by all Zamindars. Nazrana is universal and Hari and Begar are also fairly common, but there are Zamindars who cannot be blamed for anything more serious. But they are exceptions and even the best of Zamindars cannot escape from the system under which he prospers and which, for that reason, inexorably uses him as a pawn to work out the inherent laws of its own existence.

## CHAPTER V.

### INDEBTEDNESS AND A GENERAL SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL INCOMES.

Rural indebtedness is one of the most important and tragic aspects of the agrarian problem. The village money-lender has existed since time immemorial, but all evidence goes to show that the burden of indebtedness on the peasantry has increased very rapidly during the British period. This has been due largely to the impoverishment of the agricultural classes under British rule and, to a smaller extent, to a more elaborate formulation and stricter enforcement of Civil Law.

Estimated indebtedness. It was estimated by the Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee in 1929 that the total rural indebtedness of the United Provinces was 124 crores. There is every reason to believe that since 1929 this amount has increased considerably and on a rough estimate we can put the total figure at about 200 crores today. This increase has been due almost entirely to the rapid fall in agricultural prices since 1929. The fall in prices, in addition to increasing the total volume of indebtedness, has added considerably to the real burden of old debts, contracted at a time when the price-level was higher.

The Banking Enquiry Committee estimated that of the total rural indebtedness of 124 crores, only about 20 crores represented the debts contracted by landlords. Dr. Mukerji, while surveying some of the villages in the Province, found that the debt of the statutory and occupancy tenants was on an average three times the amount of their annual rents, while in some cases it amounted to about eight times the recorded rent. (U. P. Government Gazette, September 10, 1932). The replies to a questionnaire issued by the Revenue Secretary to the U. P. Government in January 1932 regarding rural indebtedness revealed that in Meerut Division about half the rural debt represented three years' rent; in Rohilkhand the proportion of debt representing three years' rent rose from  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to 50 per cent since the commencement of the present fall in price; in Allahabad Division, the amount outstanding was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times the annual rent and had increased by 40 per cent during the present depression, while in the same period the debt in Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions increased by 45 and 55 per cent respectively.

In Oudh as a whole the increase was 20 per cent. (Government Gazette, September 10, 1932).

All this shows the extremely heavy burden of indebtedness and the rapid increase in the amount borrowed, A sub-committee appointed by the U. P. Government in April 1932 to examine the question of rural indebtedness came to the conclusion that "About 40 per cent of the agriculturists are so seriously involved in debt that they are only a little better than the slaves of the money-lender; that another 20 per cent obtained their working capital from him and that about 40 per cent are farming on their own capital." The Committee further stated that "Two-fifths of the cultivators are inextricably involved in debt and have their produce and their labour mortgaged for life, and perhaps for generations, to a third party." (Government Gazette, Part 8, p. 257, 10 th September, 1932).

The causes of indebtedness are many, but here we shall note only the principal ones. The poverty of the Indian peasant and his complete inability to provide his own working capital coupled with high rents and illegal exactions of the Zamindar bring about a state of affairs in which the peasant is inevitably thrown into the clutches of the money-lender. In the United Provinces, an additional factor of great importance is the frequent occurrence of floods and famines which cause a very considerable devastation of the countryside.

Causes of  
indebted-  
ness.

The general poverty of the peasant has been discussed elsewhere in this report. The pressure of population on land is exceedingly great and the under-industrialisation of the province helps to increase it. As already stated, the old cottage industries and handicrafts are almost entirely dead and there are very few lucrative subsidiary occupations open to the peasant, who has to rely almost exclusively on his miserably small holding. His time annual income is not enough to make the two ends meet, and, at the of payment of rents, he is almost invariably obliged to borrow from the money-lender. We have already discussed the high rates of rent prevailing in this province. We only wish to point out here that, in the case of almost over 40 per cent of the tenants, the cost of production plus the rent exceed the total net income for the year, while for a very large number of peasants the margin of profit is exceedingly small. The money-lender takes advantage of this position and lends at exorbitant rates. Floods and famines deprive the tenants of all their worldly possessions. During floods, hundreds of villages are wiped out, with a loss of all property including cattle. During famines, shortage of cattle-fodder brings about a wholesale destruction of live-stock, leaving the peasant completely resourceless

After a famine or a flood, the peasant has to start everything anew, which requires capital. The money-lender alone can provide him with the money necessary to make a fresh start in life, and, in most cases, this fresh start costs the peasant a whole life-time of virtual servitude to the money-lender. The present slump in agricultural prices has a special bearing on the problem of rural indebtedness. World over-production in agricultural goods has hit the Indian peasant very hard. In a country where agriculture is the main industry and where the people are deprived of the power of framing their own economic policy, the rapid fall in agricultural prices has brought about appalling poverty and distress in rural areas. The peasant is now obliged to borrow money in order simply to keep his body and soul together.

It is often held that the greater part of rural indebtedness is due to the extravagance of the peasant and his heavy expenditure on social and religious ceremonies. This is disproved by the findings of the Banking Enquiry Committee which stated ".....  
 ....the total debt is distributed over the province as a whole in the proportions 30 productive, 34 unavoidable, and 36 unproductive. Of the total debt 30 per cent is due to the needs of cultivators' industry, 34 per cent is due directly and definitely to his poverty, and 36 per cent is due to the social, religious or legal customs by which he is bound."

Classes of  
 money-  
 lenders.

We may now proceed to examine the different classes of money-lenders who supply credit to the peasant. Money can be borrowed from the Mahajan, the Cooperative Credit Societies and the Government but the Mahajan supplies about 87 per cent of the rural credit, the share of the Cooperative Societies in the lending business being only 5 per cent of the total and that of the Government only 2 percent. Mahajans are of many kinds. There are the village Bania, the Sahukar, the Kistwalla, the Kabuli, and, finally, the money-lending Zamindar. The village Bania is a petty tradesman, a dealer in grain or provisions who sells goods on credit and lends out small sums of money. His total capital seldom exceeds Rs. 1000/-. The village Mahajan is a mere important person. His capital is greater, he deals in bigger amounts and has a more numerous clientele. He is essentially a city-man and advances money on the security of land, and often lends even to Zamindars and Taluqdars. The Kistwala is a wandering money-lender. He usually lends out money and realises it in monthly instalments, charging a fairly heavy rate of interest. The Kabuli is the worst type of money-lender. He lends both cash and clothes, and usually

charges the highest rates of interest. The Zamindars play a very important part in the money market of the villages, and it is estimated that about 40 % of the total amount borrowed by the peasantry is from the Zamindars.

The rates of interest charged are exorbitant. Even for loans on good security, the interest is seldom less than 18 per cent and may be as high as  $36\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. But for loans without proper security the rates are much higher and may even be above cent per cent. In addition to these exorbitant rates, the money-lenders adopt many illegal devices to extort money from their debtors. Thus, for example, it is very common for a money-lender to make the debtor execute a deed for a sum of money much larger than that lent. In many cases, the debtor is made to place his thumb-impression on a blank piece of paper on which a bigger amount is entered, later on, by the Mahajan. Very often, the Mahajan keeps false accounts and manipulates figures in his own favour.

In addition to all this, the money-lenders force the debtors to pay certain charges over and above the interest. Thus for example in the hills, *Ganth Kholai* which varies from 2 to  $6\frac{1}{4}$  per cent is paid by the debtor at the time of receiving the loan; in Allahabad, a *Gaddi Kharch* of 2 to 25 per cent is paid; in Muzaffarnagar, 6 pies in the rupee are paid as *khatauti*; in Sitapur, 1 to 2 per cent as *Tipawan*; in Gorakhpur, 10 per cent as "*salami*"; and in Basti, 5 per cent as '*Paharawa*'.

Such local illegal exactions are found in many other parts of the province.

Where the money-lender is also the Zamindar, the peasant is in a far more helpless condition. Default in payment may result in very serious consequences for him in such cases. The defaulter can be harrassed by the Zamindar in a hundred and one ways. The total produce of the year is often taken away in payment of interest and the tenant ejected on the ground of non-payment of rent. It is fairly common, in several parts of the province, for Zamindars to insist on having the free services of one or more members of the family of a tenant who is unable to pay back the amount borrowed, in lieu of the sum and the interest thereon. Since there is no prospect of the debt being repaid within any reasonable period in the near future, these unfortunate people find themselves doomed to virtual slavery for life.

Great as the burden of indebtedness has been all through, the present slump in prices and a succession of bad harvests have rendered it almost unbearable. The situation has recently become

so serious that even the Government have had to abandon their apathetic attitude and sponsor through the Legislature no less than five measures, all seeking, in one way or another, to give relief to one section or another of the agricultural population. These are The Agriculturists' Relief Act, The Encumbered Estates Act, The Temporary Regulation of Executions Act, The Regulation of Sales Act and the Unsurious Loans Act. The Government were no doubt actuated by the very laudable desire to help the peasantry in their hour of need but we have every reason to believe that they were moved, no less, by the growing discontent among the masses and the spread of what is politically disruptive propaganda from their point of view. They imagined that, by lightening the economic burden, they would be lessening, if not entirely removing, discontent and, in this way, destroying the conditions under which such propaganda flourishes. No less keen must have been their desire to prevent the Zamindars from going under that flood of bankruptcy that threatened to engulf them. The collapse of the Zemindari system would mean the collapse of the entire Revenue system and necessitate far-reaching changes which the Government is not, at present, willing to undertake. It might, moreover, entail political consequences which would be undesirable, in the eyes of the Government. They were, therefore, forced to take cognizance of the situation and place on the statute book measures granting some relief to the debtor. In this task, they received the fullest co-operation from the Legislative Council, with its predominantly Zamindar constitution. The money-lending classes set up a howl but their protests received scant attention. It is well known that many Zamindars carry on money-lending as a profitable secondary occupation. They have not been seriously hampered by the restrictions sought to be imposed on creditors, for they manage, in most cases, to realize their dues without recourse to the law-courts.

The Agriculturists' Relief Act is meant for those who pay a land revenue or rent not exceeding Rs. 200/- and to agriculturist labourers living outside the boundary of any municipality, notified area or town area who follow such occupations as those of cow-herds or goat-herds. It specifically restricts itself to persons who are not assessed to income-tax. It enables the debtor, *inter alia* to apply to a civil court to get his account settled and to fix instalments for the payment of the sum due, and permits the courts to limit usufructuary mortgages to a period not exceeding twenty years. The credi-

tor can be compelled to maintain regular accounts and forward a statements of accounts to his debtor. The Act, further, provides a summary method for the redemption of debts and limits the sale of agricultural produce in execution of decrees to four years.

The Encumbered Estates Act is intended to assist larger land-owners whose land revenue, actual or nominal, is more than Rs. 100/-. The Regulation of Sales Act attempts to ensure that the creditor shall not get more land in satisfaction of his loan than he could have expected to get if there had been no slump, and to prevent an undue amount of land from passing from the hands of the old land-owning classes. The Temporary Regulation of Executions Act is intended to supplement the Encumbered Estates Act. It applies to the smaller landlords whose land revenue, actual or nominal, is Rs. 300/- or less, to whom the Encumbered Estates Act does not apply and to all tenants, and only to a decreed debt of Rs. 30/- to Rs. 3000/- inclusive. It ensures that, by following a specified procedure, a debtor can liquidate his debt in full by paying only 70% of the decreed amount. Finally, the Usurious Loans Act enables the Courts to lay down the limit beyond which the rate of interest should be considered excessive. It applies to non-agriculturists as well.

Apart from the Usurious Loans Act which is of a general nature, the Agriculturists' Relief Act and the Temporary Regulation of Executions Act may be said to apply to the tenantry, although not exclusively. They seem to grant substantial relief but this expectation turns out to be illusory on an examination of the facts. There is a legal process to be gone through in the Civil Court and the ordinary cultivator cannot see this process through without undergoing considerable expense. In this respect, he will always be at a disadvantage compared to his creditor and if the latter happens to be his landlord as well, as is not un-often the case, he cannot even dream of seeking redress or relief against him. The result is that in the vast majority of cases, the class which these Acts, particularly the Agriculturists Relief Act, were ostensibly meant to help has not derived any appreciable benefit from it. Records are not available but those who have any knowledge of the condition of the agricultural population of the Province are not aware of any considerable number of agriculturist labourers following the occupations of cow-herds and goat-herds being any the better off for the passing of these Act.

The Zamindars, on the other hand, have received an immense boon from every one of these acts, but the Encumbered Estates Act has proved a veritable god-send. Many estates which were on the

point of passing into the hands of new proprietors have been guaranteed to their old masters and the land-owning classes have been ensured against the effects of their extravagance and mis-management. The normal process of the transfer of property from one set of persons to another has been violently arrested and an effete class is being artificially buttressed up. This may earn the Government the gratitude of the members of this class but whether it will bring in more substantial political results is more than doubtful.

Shrinkage  
of credit.

We have referred to the negative results of these Acts, so far as the great mass of agriculturists are concerned. As we have shown, they have not benefitted them to any appreciable extent. Their burden of debt remains as heavy as before and every day their resources are getting more and more slender. They require loans for domestic purposes as well as for carrying on agricultural operations. Up to now, they have managed to get money from the local money-lender but now he has been rendered more cautious. His clients have not deliberately defaulted or availed themselves of the provisions of the Debt Acts, as they are popularly called, but he feels that any day a new piece of legislation, more detrimental to his interests and more simple in the procedure it lays down, may be enacted. He is, therefore, unwilling to risk his money in this business. Credit has perceptibly frozen. Cultivators are finding it more difficult to negotiate loans and have to consent to more rigorous conditions than before. Simultaneously with the passing of the Agriculturists' Relief Act, they should have devised a suitable machinery for providing credit on easy terms to the peasantry. Their failure to do so has been one of the potent causes, among others, for depriving the Debt Acts of a great deal of such utility as they might, otherwise, have possessed.

A General  
Survey of  
Agricultural  
Incomes.

Sir M. Visvesvaraya estimates that "on the normal pre-war basis the average production of British India, including irrigated crops, cannot be more than Rs. 25/- per acre." Attempts have been made to calculate the standard out-turn of certain crops and in specified areas by the Congress, University village surveys, and the Government, but an estimate of the average production for the whole province is not available. There is usually a very wide margin of difference between the calculations of the Congress and those of the Government even in regard to the standard production of specific crops in specific areas, as, for example, the out-turn value for the Meerut Division which the Congress (Agrarian Distress in U. P.) calculated at Rs. 28/- per acre and which the Government ("Rent



and Revenue Policy in United Provinces") put at Rs. 45/- per acre. That the Government has at its disposal a more scientific statistical apparatus is true but it is equally true that the Government allows its findings to be vitiated by political considerations and, often, loses sight of the wood in search of the trees. In the above example of the Meerut Division, for instance, the Congress seems to be nearer the truth for a number of reasons, the average level of prices prevailing all over the country and in the province, the standard production of crops per acre, the total agricultural production of the province and the share per capita of the population etc. In attempting an estimate of the average production in our province on the bases enumerated above, we arrive at a figure which in no case can, at prevailing prices, extend to Rs. 30/- per acre.\*

The average production of our province, in the light of these calculations, may be put at Rs 30/- per acre. An Attempt may now be made to arrive at the respective shares which are distributed among the various classes, agencies and factors which live on land or are employed on it. How much does the landlord receive and what share of it is the direct demand of the State on land ? What is the moneylender's due, both by way of interest on loans and payment towards principal ? What share is spent on the costs of cultivation such as seeds, manuring, wages of labour, cattle and tools ? We may safely put the rental demand per acre at Rs. 5/-, out of which the Government realises Rs. 2/-. The annual charge on an average acre of cultivated land only by way of interest on loans, excluding all payments towards principal, comes on a moderate calculation to another Rs. 5/-. On a moderate basis, the costs of cultivation average Rs. 10/- per acre. Aside of the direct demand of revenue on land, the Government takes approximately another Rs. 2/- by way of indirect taxation from the proceeds of every acre of cultiva-

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\* Of the total area under crops in the United Provinces, 78 lakh acres are under rice, that is, a little over 20 per cent of the area is under a 4½ Rs. per maund crop; 62 lakh acres are under wheat, that is, about 17 per cent of the area is under a 3 rupee crop and the rest, 230 lakhs is under crops varying between Rs. 2/- and Rs. 3/- per maund. Even a generous estimate of the average yield will not exceed 8 maunds per acre for un-irrigated and 12 maunds per acre for irrigated areas, and, as the irrigated areas form one-fourth of the total area under crops, the average yield per acre may be put at 9 mds. Calculating on the basis of the percentages of area under different crops stated above, we arrive at a uniform value of Rs. 3/- per maund for all crops in the whole province. Taking 5 mds. to be the average yield, the average production of the province is considerably below Rs. 30/- per acre.

ted land. Thus a sum of Rs. 22/- is distributed either among the State, the landlord, the money-lender and the various factors employed in cultivation, and the tiller of the soil is left with an average annual net outturn of Rs 8/- per acre.\*

We have worked out the different elements of agricultural income on the basis of the average acre, so that we may obtain a composite picture of the agricultural society of our province. This becomes so much more illustrative, in view of the fact that the cultivated area per head of the agricultural population is also 1 acre (35 million people directly dependent on agriculture). So, whatever, has been said about the average acre applies in equal measure to the average agriculturist.

The picture is gloomy enough. The agriculturist lives through the year on Rs. 8/-. One can easily imagine his standard of living. It is a bare minimum of subsistence, at the best of times; normally, it means slow death by starvation and disease. He cannot even dream of such commodities as are necessary to human existence.

But that is the average, and the average level is in most cases higher than the actual. Enquiries conducted by the Congress and the University economic surveys have revealed a number of

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\* The rental demand during the last 10 years has fluctuated round Rs. 18 Crores. Both in 1926-27 and in 1929-30, the rental demand was a little over Rs. 18 Crores. In view of remissions following the slump in prices and the no-tax agitation, the demand has fallen to Rs. 14 Crores. The actual realisations, however, are below these figures, thus, for the pre-depression years round Rs. 15 crores and, later, between Rs. 10 crores and Rs. 11 crores. Distributed over the total sown area of around 35 million acres, the normal demand works out at Rs 5/- per acre, and the realisation for the depression years at Rs. 3/- per acre. The normal demand is here taken into account both because the average production is calculated on the basis of present prices, which are higher than those of depression years and the fact that there are several other dues, legal and illegal, which the cultivator pays to the landlords. The share of the State has averaged at Rs. 7 crores which makes it out at Rs. 2/- per acre. The total agricultural indebtedness of the province has been calculated by the U. P. Banking Enquiry Committee at Rs. 124 crores and, since then, the fall in prices and further debts have increased this figure to anything between 50% and 100%. Even on the basis of the Enquiry Committee's calculation, the average indebtedness per acre works out at Rs. 35/- per acre and, charging a standard rate of interest of 15%, we obtain Rs. 5/- as the annual interest charge per acre. Assuming that half the income of taxation, barring land revenue, falls on the rural and the poorer classes, the State makes a further demand of Rs. 2/- per head of the population. As we shall see later, this works out at Rs. 2/- per acre.

instances where the agriculturist works on a loss. Steeped in debt and burdened by an oppressive tax and revenue system, a very large part of the peasantry in the province drags on an existence which deteriorates every year. Very pertinently enough, the question is often asked, how does the peasant manage to live at all ? If he does not obtain so much as 1 pice (  $\frac{1}{4}$  anna ) per day for his subsistence, how does he exist ? For those who have not lived in the villages and seen this peasant live on " *Mahua* " and on " *Makra* " ( a food crop not even known in the cities ), dressed in garments showing holes which can no longer be sewn up but must be tied in a knot, the question is pertinent enough.

Aside of the big and the small landlords ( 3 lakhs of men who appropriate nearly one-sixth of the gross produce or one-fourth of the net produce without deducting rent, interest and other charges ), the agricultural society of our province consists of nearly  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million tenants, who, with their working and non-working dependents, number nearly 30 millions. These have to rest content with nearly one-third of the gross produce or two-fifths of the net produce. Of these  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million tenants, 30% are such as own holdings below 2 acres, that is every 6 men of this class live on a collective annual income of Rs. 16/. Then there are the agricultural labourers who number about 40 lakhs. These are the broad divisions of our agricultural society, the middle tenant, the poor tenant and the labourer, and any programme of amelioration of peasant conditions must take full account of them.

The Government state that they are "bound to combat proposals which seek to use the emergency (agricultural crisis) as a means for affecting the ruin of the State, or of the landholder, or of the tenant. Each of them is an essential part of the structure of society; and, if one collapses, so will the whole fabric". This can only mean that the fabric of the imperialist State which has meant vast poverty and servitude to the peasant is so intimately bound up with the interest of the other class, which has brought about his decline, that opposition and collapse of the one would inherently involve opposition to, and collapse of, the other.

## CHAPTER VI.

### RECOMMENDATIONS.

In our previous chapters, we have considered the historical back-ground as well as the present condition of our land system. The problem has its roots in the past and it is difficult to understand it without some reference to that past. But we have to do with the present with its complexities and burdens. These burdens are so great that it is not possible to ignore them or to imagine a continuation of them. The land problem is the fundamental problem of our province as well as of India as a whole. In our report we have collected some material to enable the Provincial Congress Committee to view this problem and to suggest a way out of our present difficulties. We would have liked to make this material more comprehensive and detailed but, under the circumstances, and within the short time at our disposal, we were unable to go into further detail. We trust however that the material is sufficient for conclusions to be arrived at.

In drawing up our recommendations we have to face a certain difficulty. We feel that a real solution of this problem inevitably involves a consideration of the whole field of our economic life. It involves a planned system which will embrace not only agriculture and the land but also industry, both large scale and village, as well as the development of social services which are so badly needed today. A mere consideration of agriculture will leave the great problem of unemployment unsolved. Rational and scientific agriculture will no doubt increase the yield and wealth of the country but it may increase the number of unemployed which must be absorbed in industry and social service.

Thus, if we are to face the reality of the situation, we must view this problem as a whole in all its implications on the life of the community. We cannot do that in this report or in our recommendations, as that would be outside our province. But we should like to lay stress on this close relation between agriculture, industry and other aspects of our public economy, and to emphasize that this problem should be viewed as a whole. Only then can a real solution be found.

In considering the land system by itself, we can also look

upon it from the point of view of fundamental objectives or the immediate necessities of the situation. Both these are closely allied to each other and cannot be wholly separated or considered apart from each other. We feel that radical remedies are required, involving fundamental changes in our land system. The Zamindari system which prevails in this province is patently decaying. It is a tremendous burden on the tenant, a burden that he can no longer support. It is further a burden on the community and the State, for, because of it, a large proportion of the wealth of the country is diverted to wasteful channels. It is essentially parasitic and is the root of most of the evils with which we have to deal. Even from the point of view of the zamindar it has ceased to have the value it once had and the worsening condition of most of the middle Zamindars is proof of the decay of this system. Many intelligent Zamindars recognise this fact and seek a way out of this difficulty.

The abolition of the Zamindari system will have to take place in India, as in other countries, sooner or later. How it will take place will depend on the circumstances then existing and it is a little difficult to lay down hard and fast rules as to what should happen when such a contingency arises. We should like this change over to take place with as little injury as possible to various groups. Conflict is inevitably an expensive process and it is always desirable to lessen conflict. Some of us are clearly of opinion that compensation should be given to the expropriated zamindars. Some other members of our committee are opposed to this idea of giving compensation. This is a question which does not immediately arise for decision. As we have indicated above, it will depend on many factors and circumstances and we, as a committee, do not feel called upon to discuss this matter in any detail. We have indicated, however, that both the views, for and against compensation, are represented in our committee. If the Provincial Congress Committee or its Council so choose, they can discuss the matter on the basis of the material supplied by us and come to some conclusion in regard to it, or may postpone further consideration of this issue. There is another point on which there is a difference of opinion among the members of the Committee. Some of us are in favour of peasant proprietorship of land, while others stand for the principle of State ownership.

For the present therefore we propose to consider the other possible changes and reforms which are urgently needed even under the existing zamindari system. There is no reason why these changes should not be given effect to immediately.

Rack-renting has, in our province, been a normal feature ever since the Zamindari system was introduced and poverty has been the lot of the peasantry. During the war, however, and for a few years after it, due to the high prices which agricultural produce fetched, the condition of peasants improved. But soon came large enhancements in rent, reducing their profits greatly. In 1928 the Government inflated the value of the rupee and prices began to go down. Then world factors intervened and there was a slump all over. Other countries have been adjusting themselves by depreciations of their currency and other means to the situation thus created, but in our country due to obvious political reasons conditions have gone on worsening. In particular, the rural population has been hit the hardest, and the whole fabric of village economy has collapsed. The governing classes have not only shown no imagination and strength in grasping the situation but a collousness of heart which is amazing and which only brings out to what limits self-interest may lead those who are in power. The no-rent campaign which was launched in October 1930 in our province was the direct result of this attitude of the Government. It ceased with the Gandhi-Irwin Settlement in March 1931. But the troubles of the peasantry remained. The same rent was demanded from them which had been fixed as a result of enhancements in prosperous days when prices were abnormally high i. e. during the boom after the war. The tenants were simply unable to pay these rents. But all over the province, zamindars resorted to all kinds of oppressive means to wring out as much as possible from the tenants and, in this, they were at some places helped by the police and revenue officials. The Government continued to be apathetic.

Re ad-  
justment of  
revenue and  
rent on  
account of  
fall in  
prices.

After much hesitation and waiting, they recognised that the tenants could not pay the full rents and in May 1931 they came forward with a scheme of remissions. They announced a reduction of about 220 lacs in rent and about 67 lacs in revenue for the year 1338 Fasli (1930-1). The bulk of these remissions was for the Rabi demand and the amounts included remissions on account of natural calamities also. The reduction in revenue amounted to 9.15% and that in rent to 12% of the annual demand, although the prices were actually less than a half of what they had been before. Since then Government has been compelled, year after year, to grant remissions for both the Kharif and the Rabi crops and the percentage of remissions has been higher than in 1931 but it still has been thoroughly inadequate to meet the situation, and no serious attempt has been made to tackle the agrarian problem as a whole.

The last published administration report of the province shows that the total remissions for 1934-35 amounted to 407 lacs in rent and 112 lacs in revenue. In this report it is said, "Since 1931, when the present system of granting rent and revenue remissions for the fall in prices was devised Government have repeatedly endeavoured to find a satisfactory means of regularizing the existing scale of remissions but have come to the conclusion that it would be difficult and inequitable to enforce over the whole province any single measure involving radical alterations in the established rent and revenue system. They have now under consideration proposals to revise the revenue demand on the basis of prevailing prices by re-settlement where due or over-due and by revision of assesment under section 97 of the Land Revenue Act where the period of settlement has not yet expired and at the same time to eliminate the present temporary rental remissions for the fall in prices by modifying recorded rents where necessary in accordance with a proposed amendment to the United Provinces Land Revenue Act."

The above excerpt indicates that the Government now recognise that the fall in prices is not of a temporary character. They therefore propose a revision of the revenue assesment and a modification of recorded rents. Big landholders are already making efforts that the recorded rents should be so prepared as to reduce the remissions in rent which they have to allow at present and signs are not wanting that some officers of the Government are looking with favour at this move of the zamindars. Congressmen will therefore have to be alert in this matter.

Reduction  
of rent  
necessary:  
Rent a  
portion  
of surplus.

As shown in a previous chapter the rental demand in the province has considerably increased since 1900. It was 12 crores and 71 lacs in 1900-01. It rose by 6 crores and 65 lacs between 1901 and 1930 while the demand in revenue has increased only by 85 lacs, that is to say, the zamindars increased their profit by about 5 crores without any contribution on their part of capital or labour. When prices have gone down to the level of what they were in 1901 and even earlier and the peasants are in deep distress, it seems to be clear that the zamindars have no right to this unearned increment, which is a result of large enhancements in rent made at a time when the prices were high; but it would obviously not be enough to reduce the rent, even to the level of 1901, for the actual cost of production has increased since 1901. The reduction in rents should properly bring them to a level lower than what they were in 1901. As a matter of fact, the proper way to look at the question is not as to what reduction

should be given but as to what should be taken from the tenant under the totality of the circumstances now prevailing. Rent should be properly conceived as a portion of the surplus remaining with the tenant after he has defrayed the cost of production and of his maintenance. This principle appears to be generally accepted not only by economist but also by some officers of the Government. Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerjee, professor of Economics in Lucknow University in his 'Land Problems in India', says, "Assesment in India must be guided by scientific economic principles of agricultural costing. This will necessitate that in calculating the annual value as the basis of assesment the value of the gross produce should be estimated *less* the true and full cost of production, which would include an adequate allowance for all labour expended by the cultivator and his family on the holding, the return for enterprise, the depreciation of agricultural capital and payment of interest, and insurance against the inevitable cycle of droughts in the Indian climate. It is thus that settlement officer may have to fix an assessment for a holding lower than what the rent, sale and price statistic or even crop experiments may justify, in order to avoid an encroachment upon the cultivator's normal surplus, or an appropriation of his bare minimum of subsistence. This will be no radical change in the revenue policy of the Government for, as we have seen, some of these fundamental economic principles of agricultural costing form the basis of revenue assèssment in the new land revenue code of the Central Provinces. The more scientifically agricultural costings are worked out, the greater the stability of agricultural conditions, and the less the possibility of the land revenue becoming a tax on the necessaries of better living and farming".

In ancient times, when the concept of 'economic holding' could not possibly arise, the standard rate of the King's share was one-sixth of the produce. There are also authorities which mention such rates as one-eighth, one-tenth, and one-twelfth. It is not improbable that for heavy crops which required more industry, or in modern phraseology greater cost of production, the share claimed by the King was less than the standard one-sixth according to the nature of the crop and of the soil. The Artha-Shastra seems to contemplate such variations according to the difference in soil and crop. When comparing the share of the produce paid by the peasants in ancient times to the modern rents, it must also be remembered that they enjoyed free of charge rights and amenities for which they would have to pay under modern conditions; e. g., the grazing grounds and sources of irrigation were open to all cultivators and



could not be encroached upon. In the time of Muslim rulers the King's share of the produce increased but even then what was contemplated to be taken was always such a share as would leave enough for the cultivator's requirements.

Under present conditions, when a large majority of the rural population live in perpetual want, the rents paid in cash form such a large part of the produce that they come out of the very subsistence of the peasants and not out of any surplus. The whole system of present-day land-taxation should therefore be overhauled in the light of this principle.

Uneconomic holdings: their exemption from taxation. Agricultural incomes to be taxed; Death duties.

This leads to the very large question of rents levied from those holdings which normally leave no surplus or which in other words are uneconomic. Whether a holding is economic or otherwise depends on its size and the nature of the crops grown on it. An economic holding has been defined to be one "which allows a man a chance of producing sufficient to support himself and his family in reasonable comforts after paying his necessary expenses." Mr Jafri the author of the History and Status of Land-lords and Tenants in U. P., taking this definition as a basis considers that "an average holding of 10 to 12 acres with a good well and house might be termed as an economic holding." In this connection he also says, "It is clear that the majority of holdings in this province is uneconomic." Some other authorities have regarded holdings of 6 to 7 acres as on the margin of economic production. In any case it is obvious that the number of uneconomic holdings not only in this province but in the whole country is very large. All these uneconomic holdings possess virtually no ability to pay rent. A rent imposed on an uneconomic holding naturally results in lowering the physical efficiency of the cultivator and his family. In course of time such a holding is bound to lead to indebtedness and its consequent misfortune. In this matter we might well take a lesson from the Soviet Law which, says Dr. R. K. Mukerji, completely exempts from taxation the holdings of the poorest peasants who form from 35 p. c. of the total peasant population. We recommend that all these uneconomic holdings should be exempted from rent or land-tax by whichever name it may be called.

At the same time, to distribute more equitably the burden of taxation we recommend that agricultural incomes which are at present exempt from the income-tax be assessed to that tax like other incomes, on a progressive scale and that death duty be levied for incomes exceeding a certain limit.

In the interest of the State and also in the interest of the cultivators a properly worked out scheme of consolidation of holdings is a crying need of Indian Agriculture. We have seen, in the chapter on the pressure of population on land, how fractionalisation has led to the formation of holdings of about an acre and of fractions of an acre. We are conscious that all schemes of consolidation would involve expropriation on certain conditions. Those who will become land-less will naturally have to seek opportunities in the field of labour and industry and it will be the duty of the State to create openings for them. To prevent further fragmentation, laws of taxation will also have to be changed. As in some European countries, a preferred heir could succeed and compensate the other heirs. At the same time we recommend that, cooperative farming be introduced even before schemes of consolidation, which may take time in maturing, are taken up.

Consolidation of Holdings. Cooperative farming.

No scheme of consolidation of holdings can be properly carried out so long as there are varieties of tenants existing side by side. Statutory and non-occupancy tenants and sub-tenants side by side with occupancy tenants would make an impossible condition for consolidation. Economic holdings would require that almost all tenants should possess occupancy rights. No tenant while he pays his dues should be liable to ejection at any one's will.

Occupancy tenancy to be generally introduced.

Such a right was enjoyed by the cultivator in ancient and medieval days according to time-honoured customs of this country. It is now admitted generally by political economists that when the British Government under Lord Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement in 1793 it made the grievous blunder of not taking into account the customary rights of the actual cultivator and creating in a hurry a class of land-lords on the model of the English system. In this province also, at first the model was followed in the Benares division and Azamgarh district but later on, when its defects became very patent, it was somewhat modified. But apparently political exigencies continued to favour the creation of land-lords, though not on the Permanent Settlement basis. The rights of the cultivators were in U. P., as in Bengal, trampled upon in the desire to create a class on whom the Government could rely both for revenue and administrative purposes. The earliest Revenue Laws gave the land-holders very extensive powers over the tenants. Gradually, the Government saw its error and Tenancy Laws came into existence with the object of safeguarding the interests of the tenants but the process has been dilatory and half-hearted. The Oudh Rent Amendent Act of 1921 created what are called statutory tenants and

gave them a life tenure, thus raising the standard of what previously were non-occupancy tenants. Statutory tenants were created in the province of Agra by the Tenancy Act of 1926. This Act while it partially benefited those tenants who had been previously altogether unprotected worsened their position in another direction by stopping the accrual of occupancy rights on a continuous cultivation for twelve years. Occupancy rights could now only be conferred by the Zamindars as a matter of agreement.

In the province of Agra as far back as 1859, the Rent Act gave a right of occupancy to those tenants who had held their land continuously for twelve years. This right continued to be recognised till it was abrogated by the Agra Tenancy Act of 1926 and, during this period, 67 p. c. of the total area cultivated by peasants came to be held under occupancy tenure. In Oudh, however, 98 p. c. of the tenants continued to be unprotected. Only a small number of tenants could secure the right of occupancy by agreement with the landlord. The act of 1926 has, as shown before, actually resulted in a progressive reduction in the number of the tenants having occupancy rights and in the area under occupancy tenure. What is now necessary is to recognise that all tenants both in Agra and Oudh must as a rule possess rights of occupancy.

That this is an absolutely moderate demand and should have been conceded long before now is borne out by what the then Governor of the United Provinces, Sir William Marris, thought about it in 1926. With reference to the Agra Tenancy Bill, he sent a message to the U. P. Legislative Council in which he remarked "We ourselves would have liked to make occupancy rights universal. Against that course, there was the precedent of the Oudh Rent Act and the patent difficulty of getting a legislature on which the landlords predominated to accept our view. We contented ourselves, therefore, with asking for statutory rights. We were very anxious to get the principle of statutory rights recognised, and for that purpose we resolved on concessions to the land-lords about the abstract equity of some of which we were doubtful."

These inequities continue and the economic and general condition of the tenants is very much worse today than it was in 1926. The no-rent movements of 1930 and 1932 were the direct result of these inequities.

Sub-tenants. An important question which arises in this connection is as to the status of sub-tenants who are the actual tillers of the soil, holding from tenants having occupancy or non-occupancy rights. Consistently with our recommendation that all cultivators should

have occupancy rights, we think that all sub-tenants also should be given occupancy rights and that sub-letting, as a matter of fact, should stop and, except for very small periods and special reasons, it should not be permitted.

Sub-infeudation of the kind prevalent in Bengal is not found in our province. Since holdings are small, by far a majority of tenants cultivate their own holdings. The number of sub-tenancies is, therefore, comparatively small. Still their number is appreciable.

Sub-tenants from sub-tenants are unknown. The process of tenancy sub-infeudation stops with the first sub-tenant. But even this form of profiteering in tenancies must be discouraged.

A similar question arises in the case of tenants on the sir land of the zamindar. Under the present Law in Agra province, the sir lands may go on increasing till they bear a certain fixed proportion to the total area of the zamindari land. In Oudh there is no such limit. Since no statutory tenancy can by law accrue on such land, the cultivator can only remain a tenant-at-will, and is liable to pay any rent which the zamindar may demand and his necessity compel him to agree to. This provision has naturally led the zamindars to increase the area of their sir land as much as they can for they get the highest possible rents from such lands. The law must be changed. No lands, not under the actual cultivation of the zamindars, should be classed as sir and tenants' rights should accrue to all cultivators on the sir in the same way as on other lands.

Tenants on  
Sir Lands.

In addition to the high rents are semi-feudal dues such as hari, cesses on bhusa and the like which are levied by the Zamindars from the peasantry. There are also illegal taxes of which there is a large variety. Some of them like Ekhphas (concealed rents), Nazranas, forced labour, purchasing articles at very low prices, and the like are regular and periodical, while others are levied for particular purposes and on particular occasions according to the zamindar's or his family's need. Mr Jafri at page 131 of his book mentions as an instance, a case of 'gramophoning' — a charge which the Zamindar levied when his son went round the village with a gramophone. Similar exactions which have come to our notice have been mentioned in a previous chapter of the report.

Abolition  
of feudal  
dues and  
penalization  
of illegal  
demands  
and  
methods.

As a matter of fact, the Zamindar is in such a strong position with respect to his tenant, particularly those belonging to castes other than Brahmin and Kshatriya, that generally there is no limit to what he may demand except the inability of the tenant to pay.

These illegal exactions and even legal demands are often

realised by subjecting the tenants to all kinds of inhuman brutalities. Some of the methods employed by the Zamindars have been mentioned in this report. Government officials in the districts know about these things but they seem to look upon them as ordinary incidents of the Zamindari System. We suggest that all feudal dues should be abolished and that demands other than rent be made illegal and one way of stopping these exactions would be to make them cognisable offences.

The zamindar does not usually grant receipts to tenants even for legal payments. He feels insulted if the peasant has the temerity to ask for a receipt. This is the general practice though there are exceptions. Yet Revenue Courts daily grant decrees for arrears when receipts are not forthcoming. The difficulty of courts in such cases is obvious, but Government could very well take steps to enforce the granting of receipts. We recommend that the practice of not granting regular receipts for rent should be penalised. And whenever it is proved against any zamindar that he does not grant receipts regularly, no presumption in his favour should be drawn from the absence of receipts in any particular case.

Necessity  
of Kisan  
Sabhas

So long, however, as the tenants are weak and unorganised, it will be hardly possible, even if the law is in their favour, to protect them from the oppression of the Zamindar. Therefore it is essential that the State should recognise and encourage the organisations of the peasantry in unions or kisan sabhas.

Problem of  
arrears of  
rents.

Connected with the question of rents is that of arrears which have gone on piling up during the period of distress which began acutely in 1930 and is still continuing. Arrears give rise to suits by Zamindars and to decrees for ejections, and ejection makes the tenant homeless and throws him and his wife and children on the world, without any means of subsistence except such as he may raise in the village from intermittent demands for his labour. Ejection from his land is about the last thing which a tenant would care to face. He sells his little trinkets, his bullocks and even his few brass utensils required for daily use, to save his land. He would incur debt at the most exorbitant rates of interest, if he could get them, to stave off the evil day of his bidding adieu to his homeland. The figures showing the arrears for rent in U. P. for 1932-33 at Rs 7, 89, 78, 305 are an indication of the utter misery to which the tenants are reduced. Some of us who have made personal investigations into the conditions prevailing in villages and have come in personal contact with village life know, however, that the reality is even gloomier than what one might imagine from these

figures only. Any scheme of village reorganisation can only succeed if tenants are allowed to begin life without this daily stiffening rope of unpayable arrears round their necks. Zamindars have, as a class, as the figures in a previous chapter have shown, generally received so much as unearned increments that they should not grudge the entire remission of arrears.

Ejectments are as a rule due to arrears. In most cases of ejectment, the Zamindar admits new tenants on the vacated lands on receipt of substantial *Nazranas*, thus often more than making up for the loss of arrears. Instances have come to our notice of tenants who could not pay the arrears in time but were able after ejectment to obtain from relatives or friends money for the full payment of the decretal amount. The Zamindars, however, declined to accept the payments for the simple reason that they could get much more from the new tenants as *Nazranas*. Our opinion on this matter is that the law relating to the ejectment of occupancy and statutory tenants should be greatly modified and that a provision should be made enabling the Zamindars to realise arrears of rent somewhat in the same manner as land revenue is realised by Government from Zamindars, i. e. by attachment and sale of movable properties, and by giving the land on a temporary lease and realising the income until the arrears are paid.

Ejectments  
of tenants:  
change in  
law  
necessary.

In the present state of the law, the rights to build houses and plant trees are not possessed by the tenants including those who have occupancy rights. (Once the right of occupancy tenants is recognised, as above recommended, this question will probably solve itself.) A proper reorganisation of villages will very often mean taking up building operations and making roads and lanes in the *Abadi* on a more sanitary basis. Such unofficial schemes are at present defeated by the power which the Zamindar possesses to prevent new constructions. The only right which belongs to the tenant in respect of his house is to live in and to repair it, or when it falls, to remove the debris. In the case of trees, the tenant's right consists only in taking the fruits. He cannot cut the trees. The timber is generally claimed by the Zamindar. We think that these powers of the Zamindars should be entirely abolished, that the tenant should be free to build houses and plant trees on his land both in and outside the *Abadi*, and that he should be regarded as absolute owner of his houses and of the trees which he plants.

Right to  
build houses  
and plant  
trees.

One of the most important problems which face village life today relates to the upkeep of the cattle. In ancient times as the authorities show villages had common pasture-lands which could

Pasture  
lands,

not be encroached upon. In Muslim times also they continued to be part of the village economy, as the old village system was left intact by the Muslim rulers. With the new Zamindari system introduced by the British Government and the consequent break-up of the old communal system the customary rights of the people were gradually disregarded by land-holders and common pasture lands no longer exist today; owing to the great pressure on land probably it will not be possible now to leave very large spaces for pasture-lands but it is an absolute necessity that some common pasture-lands though on a smaller scale than formerly, be provided between a circle of villages.

Similarly rights of people in tanks, ponds, wells jungles and the like should be recognised and Zamindars prevented from encroaching on these rights and irrigation rates should be reduced.

There are a few more fundamental issues with which we shall deal now.

Rural un-  
employment  
and Rural  
indebtedness

A very important issue connected with the agrarian problem is that of rural unemployment among the classes that possess land as tenants and the landless classes whose source of living is such work as they can get in villages as labourers on farms or in village industries. Every Government worth the name must accept the principle that it is one of its primary functions to provide opportunities for every individual to earn the chief requirements of life and to provide a living wage to all who are willing to work. We think that by a multiplication of industrial concerns and a proper organisation of village industries and giving them necessary protection from foreign competition employment could be found for our people.

Liquidation  
of Debts:  
Moratorium.  
Cheap credit

Rural indebtedness is another big problem. We have dealt with it in a previous chapter. Our recommendation is that special tribunals should be organised to go into the whole question of debts in detail and all those debts which are unconscionable or are beyond the power of the peasants to pay should be wiped out. Such liquidation of debts has, in emergency, been resorted to in other countries both in national and international affairs, and we submit we should have the courage to adopt such a measure. Before, however, such a comprehensive enquiry is taken up, it is necessary that a law be immediately introduced preventing the filing of suits against peasants by creditors and the accrual of interest on debts due from them on which interest has already accumulated upto a certain extent. At the same time measures must be taken for

providing cheap credit to the peasantry. The present Debt Relief Acts are useless for the purpose.

We give below a summary of our principal recommendations :

1. Rent and revenue should be readjusted with regard to the present conditions.

2. Rent should be greatly reduced. It should be conceived as a portion of the surplus remaining with the tenant, after he has defrayed the cost of production and of his maintenance. The whole system land revenue should be overhauled in the light of this principle.

3. Uneconomic holdings should be exempted from rent or land tax, by whichever name it may be called.

4. Agricultural incomes should be assessed to the income tax like other incomes, on a progressive scale, and death duties be levied for incomes exceeding a certain limit.

5. Holdings should be consolidated. To prevent further fragmentation, laws of succession should be changed. A preferred heir could succeed and compensate the other heirs.

6. Co-operative farming should be introduced.

7. All tenants and sub-tenants in Agra and Oudh should, as a rule, be given rights of occupancy on the lands under their cultivation. Sub-letting, except for very small periods and special reasons, should not be permitted.

8. The law relating to sir lands must be changed. No lands, not under the actual cultivation of the Zamindars, should be classed as sir and tenants' rights should accrue to all cultivators on the sir in the same way as on other lands.

9. All feudal dues should be abolished and demands other than rents should be made illegal. Illegal exactions should be made cognisable offences.

10. The practice of not granting receipts for rent should be penalized.

11. Arrears of rents should be wiped out.

12. The law relating to the ejectment of tenants should be greatly modified and arrears of rents should be realised somewhat in the same manner as land revenue is realised by Government from Zamindars i. e. by attachment and sale of movable properties, and by giving the lands on a temporary lease and realising the income until the arrears are paid.

13. The right of tenants to build houses and to plant trees should be clearly recognised, provided they do not interfere with the



property of neighbours and they should be regarded as absolute owners of their houses and of the trees which they plant.

14. Common pasture lands should be provided between a circle of villages. Rights of people in tanks, wells, ponds, forests, (both Zamindari and Government) and the like should be recognised and no encroachment on these rights should be permitted.

15. For relieving rural unemployment, national industries, both large scale and cottage, should be developed on a planned basis.

16. The problem of rural indebtedness should be courageously attacked. Special tribunals should be organised to go into the whole question of debt in detail and all those debts, which are unconscionable or are beyond the power of peasants to pay, should be wiped out. Before, however, such a comprehensive enquiry is taken up a law be immediately introduced preventing the filing of suits against peasants by creditors and the aereal of interest on debts due from them on which interest has already accumulated upto a certain extent. At the same time measures must be taken for providing cheap credit to the peasantry.

17. There should be statutory provision for ensuring a living wage and suitable working conditions for agricultural labourers.

18. Canal and other irrigation rates should be substantially reduced.

19. Statutory Committees of District Boards should be formed with a special power to undertake improvements in villages, and provide lands for building purposes to those in need of it.

## NOTE.

(By B. Sampurnanand.)

I have signed the report subject to certain reservations. Some of these involve question of principle while others are, more or less, matters of detail. It has been stated in the preamble to our recommendations that no radical improvement in the condition of the peasantry is possible without the abolition of the Zamindari System. But we must take care, while eliminating one set of vested interests, not to create another set which might prove equally hostile to our ultimate goal, viz., social ownership of the land and its produce. We have advocated, and quite properly, the conferment of occupancy rights on the tenants but this must not be done in such a way as to imply any recognition of private ownership in land.

The chapter on recommendations provides that sub-letting should not be permitted but it lays down no restrictions upon the employment of labour. I am of opinion that no one should be permitted to retain more land than is necessary for an average family in the locality, whether he works it entirely by himself or with the help of hired labour. Any land over and above this which comes to a man, by inheritance or otherwise, must go to the community.

I come now to the important question of un-economic holdings. The Report looks upon the income from such holdings as similar to non-agricultural incomes which fall below what might be considered a fair living wage. I am afraid I cannot accept the accuracy of this analogy. Accepting the present economic structure of society, ordinary incomes are earned by a utilization of the individuals own resources. Agricultural incomes, however, are earned from land with which the individual is provided by the community. There is no reason why any particular piece of land should not make its proportionate contribution to the State revenue. If a particular individual finds his holding unprofitable, he should relinquish it. There would be three possible ways of dealing with such pieces of land. The State should prohibit the existence of holdings below a certain size. All holdings below this minimum should be compulsorily consolidated with contiguous tracts. An alternative method, and the one which commends itself to me, is that all such holdings should become communal property. There is a third method also: the holdings would form part of the village collective farm, sharing the incomes and paying proportionate rents.

But all this presupposes that there will be avenues of

profitable employment for those who will have to leave the land under any of these schemes. This can be possible only if the State deliberately embarks upon a policy of industrialisation and guarantees, as does the new Soviet constitution, the right to work or maintainance of every citizen. Pending this, I concur in the recommendation that such holdings should be exempted from payment of rents. Even so, I should welcome any measure which the State might adopt to bring about the fusion of such holdings with one another or with contiguous economic holdings.

Lastly, I should like to state that, in my opinion, the consolidation of holdings is not a practical proposition. The diversity in the nature of soils, apart from the existence of the Zamindari system, makes this difficult and, in any case, it will require payment of compensation by one cultivator to other. Collective farming meets all these difficulties; moreover, it reduces costs, increases profits and makes possible the employment of more capital and better methods of agriculture, besides ensuring credit on easier terms than individual tenants can secure. I may point out in this connection that co-operative farming, in the restricted sense of the term, to which a reference has been made in the Chapter on Recommendations is inferior to collective farming in its benefits. The latter is, moreover, a stepping stone to social ownership of land and its produce, which to my mind, is the goal we should have in view.

SAMPURNANAND,

Bareilly, dated 21st November 1936.

## APPENDIX.

### किसान प्रश्नावली

[ संयुक्त प्रान्तीय कांग्रेस कमेटीने ३ मई १९३६ को अपनी बैठकमें किसानोंकी दशाकी जांच करनेके लिये एक उपसमिति नियुक्त की थी । इस उपसमितिकी ओरसे उसके संयोजक श्री लालबहादुरजीने यह प्रश्नावली प्रकाशित की है । ]

#### लगान

- १—लगानकी साधारण या अवसत दर मौहसी काश्तकारों और तौर मौहसीकी फी बीघा क्या है ?
- २—पिछला बंदोबस्त कब हुआ था ? उस समय लगानकी दर क्या थी ?
- ३—पिछले बंदोबस्तके समय गल्लेका क्या भाव था और अब क्या है ?
- ४—१९२०-२१ में दोनों तरहके काश्तकारोंके लगानकी दर क्या थी और उस समय गल्लेका भाव क्या था ? इस समय १९३५-३६ में लगान क्या है ?
- ५—इस समय ज़्यादासे ज़्यादा और कमसे कम लगान मौहसी, हीन-हयाती, और शिकमी काश्तकारोंको क्या देना होता है ? तीनों किसके लिये अलग-अलग अङ्क दीजिये ।  
यह बहुत मोटी तौरपर काश्तकारोंके तीन विभाग किये गये हैं । आपके ज़िलेमें अगर और तरहके किसान हों तो उनका भी अङ्क दीजिये । यह मानकर कि और बातोंके बदलनेमें अभी समय लगेगा आपकी रायमें भिन्न-भिन्न काश्तकारोंके लिये कितना लगान मुकर्रर करना उचित होगा ?
- ६—अगर मौजूदा लगानमें साधारणतः आधेकी कमी कर दी जाय तो इससे किसानोंका बोझ क्या स्थायी तौरपर हलका हो जायगा ? इस समयके लगानका आधा लगान क्या उचित लगान होगा ?
- ७—इस समय हरसालका पूरा लगान अदा कर देनेवाले किसानोंकी फी सदी कितनी संख्या है ?
- ८—इस समय जो किसान पूरा लगान अदा करते हैं वह कैसे करते हैं ? ज़मीनकी आमदनीसे, कर्ज लेकर, या खेत या ज़ेवर बेचकर ?
- ९—ज़िलेमें अधिक भाय देनेवाली चीज़ें क्या पैदा होती हैं ? उनकी काश्त ज़िलेकी कुल काश्तका कौनसा भाग है ?
- १०—क्या किसी ख़ास चीज़के पैदावारके कारण लगान बढ़ाया गया था ? वह पैदावार अब अगर नहीं है तो क्या बढ़ा हुआ लगान घटाया गया है ?
- ११—अवसतन फ़ी बीघा पैदावारकी क्रीमत क्या है ? और जुदा जुदा काश्तकारोंका उसपर खर्च क्या पद्धत है ?

- खर्च लगानेमें काश्तकारकी मेहनतका जो वह अपनी खेतीपर करता है ख्याल न किया जाय लेकिन जो मजदूरी देनी पड़ती है वह खर्चमें शामिल की जाय ।
- १२—क्या पिछले कुछ वर्षोंमें ज़मीनकी पैदावार कम हो गई है ? अगर हो गई है तो कितनी ? इसका क्या कारण है ?
- १३—क्या सन् १९३० या उसके बाद लगानमें इज़ाफ़ा हुआ है ? अगर हुआ है तो किस क्रिसके काश्तकारोंमें और कितना ?
- १४—यह इज़ाफ़ा अदालतकी मारफ़त हुआ है या ज़मींदारने अपनी तरफ़से किया है ? क्या सरकारी छूटको छोड़कर ज़मींदारोंने लगानोंमें किसी तरहकी कमी की है ? अगर की है तो थोड़ा व्यौरा दीजिये ।
- १५—ज़मींदारोंको एक सालके कुल लगानमेंसे इस समय कितना वसूल होता है ? उसका औसत क्या है ? क्या ऐसे भी कुछ ज़मींदार हैं जिन्हें मालगुजारीका कुछ हिस्सा अपनी जेबसे अदा करना पड़ता है ? अगर हैं तो आपके ज़िलेमें सैकड़ा पीछे कितने होंगे ?
- १६—ज़िलेको कुल तहसील लगान कितनी है ? गवर्नमेंटको मालगुजारी कितनी मिलती है ?
- १७—क्या किसानोंकी बेदख़ली ख़सूसियतसे कुछ ज़्यादा हो रही है ? और क्या किसानोंको कुछ ज़्यादा लगानपर खेत उठाये जा रहे हैं ? पिछले साल फसलीमें कितनी बेदख़लियाँ ज़िलेमें हुईं, क्या आप बता सकेंगे ?
- १८—क्या आम तौरपर ऐसा होता है कि बेदख़ल किसान अगर किसी तरह अपना बकाया देनेका प्रबन्ध कर लेता है तब भी उसको खेत न देकर दूसरेको ज़्यादा लगान मिलनेके ख़यालसे दिया जाता है ? ऐसी हालतमें नज़राना आम तौरपर कितना लिया जाता है ?
- १९—क्या काश्तकार इसे पसन्द करेंगे कि लगान रुपयेकी शक़्क़में न हो बल्कि शक़्केकी शक़्क़में पैदावारका एक हिस्सा हो ? अगर ऐसा उनका ख़याल हो तो पैदावारका कौनसा हिस्सा लगान होना चाहिए ?
- २०—क्या कुछ ऐसे भी किसान हैं जिनकी ज़मीनसे उनके कुटुम्बका पूरा भरणपोषण नहीं होता ? क्या ऐसी ज़मीन इस समय लगानरहित न कर दी जाय ?
- २१—ऐसी ज़मीनका क्या कुछ ठीक-ठीक रक़बा बताया जा सकता है ?

### लगानमें वर्तमान छूट

- १—इस समय मौरुसी और ग़ैर मौरुसी काश्तकारोंको ज़िलेमें औसतन क़ी रुपया कितनी छूट प्राप्त है ?
- २—यह छूट पहले-पहल किस सन् या फ़सलीमें मिली थी ?
- ३—तबसे यह छूट बराबर दी जा रही है या नहीं ?
- ४—ज़मींदार लगान वसूल करते समय यह छूट काटकर लगान लेते हैं या छूट देनेमें दिक्क़त डालते हैं और नहीं देते ?
- ५—क्या ऐसा भी होता है कि ज़मींदार जो लगान वसूल करते हैं वह बकायमें

काट लेते हैं और हालके लगानमें जो छूट मिली है उसका काश्तकार फ़ायदा नहीं उठा पाते ?

६—जिस समय छूट मिली थी उस वक्त ग़ल्लेका भाव क्या था और अब क्या है ? क्या क़ीमत कुछ बढ़ी है ? अगर बढ़ी है तो कितनी ?

### बक्राया लगान

१—ज़िलेमें बक्राया लगान कितना है ?

२—फ़सली सनोंके हिसाबसे क्या आप पिछले ५ वर्षोंकी संख्या दे सकेंगे कि बक्राया लगानमें कितनी बेदख़लियाँ हुईं, और कितनी नालिशें हुईं ? कितने खेत किसानोंके क़ब्ज़ेसे बेदख़लीके बाद निकल गये ?

३—फ़ौ काश्तकार औसतन कितना बक्राया लगान होगा ? एक किसानपर इयादासे इयादा और कमसे कम बक्राया लगान कितना है ? फ़ौ सदी कितने किसानोंपर बक्राया लगान है ? इस तरहके भी क्या किसान हैं कि जिनपर बक्राया लगान न हो ? काश्तकारोंमें फ़ौ सदी उनकी संख्या क्या है ?

४—क्या यह सम्भव है कि किसान कुल बक्राया लगान अदा कर सकें ? अगर बक्राया लगान क्रिस्त द्वारा वसूल किया जाय तो क्या किसान पाँच सालमें भी चलते लगानके साथ कुल बक्राया अदा कर सकते हैं ?

५—मौजूदा बक्राया लगान अगर आधा माफ़ कर दिया जाय तो क्या बाक़ी आधा किसान अदा कर सकेंगे ?

६—कुल बक्रायेका आधा माफ़ करना क्या नाक़ाफ़ी होगा ? अगर होगा तो क्या यह ज़रूरी है कि कुल बक्राया लगान रद्द कर दिया जाय ?

७—जबतक बक्राया लगान रद्द नहीं किया जाता तबतक गवर्नमेंटकी विशेष आज्ञासे यह प्रबन्ध करानेका उद्योग क्या उचित होगा कि बक्राया लगानकी वसूली बढ़ कर दी जाय. और बक्राया लगानके कारण किसीको बेदख़ल न किया जाय ?

८—बक्राया लगानका बोझ किस तरीक़ेसे हलका किया जाय या हटाया जाय। इसके बारेमें आप अपनी राय अपनी ज़िलेकी हालत देख कर और अच्छी तरह सोच कर लिखिये ।

इसमें राय देनेमें यह ख़याल रखिये कि एक तरफ़ तो ग़रीब किसानोंका बोझ बिल्कुल हटे या इतना कम हो कि वे उसे बेबाक कर सकें, और दूसरी तरफ़ यह भी ख़याल रहे कि जो किसान सुविधासे दे सकते हैं और जानबूझ कर नहीं देते उनके साथ बेजा रिआयत न हो ।

९—बक्राया लगानकी माफ़ीके साथ क्या मालगुज़ारीमें भी किसी तरहकी कमी करनेकी ज़रूरत होगी ?

१०—बक्राया लगानकी वसूलीमें क्या क्या चीज़ें कुड़क और नीलाम की जाती हैं ? इन चीज़ोंमें क्या चीज़ें कुड़क और नीलाम नहीं होनी चाहिये ?

११—बक्राया लगानकी वसूलीमें क्या ज़मींदार नाजायज़ तरीक़े भी काममें लाते हैं

या क्रान्नी रास्तोंपर ही चलते हैं ? अगर नाजायज़ तरीक़े काममें लाते हैं तो उनका व्यौरा दीजिये ।

१२—क्रान्नी तरीक़ोंमें भी अगर ऐसी सफ़्तियाँ हैं जिनको बदलनेकी ज़रूरत है तो उनके बारेमें अपनी राय लिखिये ।

### क्रज़

१—ज़िलेमें कुल क्रज़ सच्चे किसानोंपर ( यानी उन लोगोंको छोड़कर जिनकी गुज़र ज़मींदारीसे है ) कितना है ? जहाँतक भी सम्भव हो इसका पता लगा कर लिखिये । इसमें नक्रद दिया हुआ या ग़ल्लेकी शक़लमें दोनों तरहका क्रज़ बताइये । अगर हो सके तो यह भी बताइये कि असल कितना है, और सूद कितना है ?

२—किसानोंका क्रज़ नीचे लिखे तीन क्रिसमोंमें किस अनुपातसे बँटा हुआ है—

अ—खेतीके साधारण कामके लिये ।

इ—खेतीकी स्थायी उन्नतिके लिये, और ख़ास मौक़ोंपर जैसे फ़सल बरबाद हो जानेपर, या लगान आदि देनेके लिये ।

उ—ऐसे कामोंके लिये जो अनुत्पादक हों । जैसे विवाह, मरनी, करनी आदि ।

३—सूदकी दर औसतन क्या है ? ज़्यादासे ज़्यादा और कमसे कम क्या है ?

४—कितनी अवधितकके लिये क्रज़ लिया जाता है ? क्रज़के लिये ज़मानतका क्या रूप होता है ?

५—किसान क्रज़ लेना महाजनोंसे ज़्यादा पसन्द करते हैं अथवा कोआपरेटिव बैंक आदिसे ?

६—क्रज़ अधिकांश महाजनोंका ही है, या बैंक इत्यादि अथवा ज़मींदारोंका ?

७—क्या किसानोंको ज़मींदारोंसे ज़बरदस्ती क्रज़ लेना पड़ता है ?

८—क्या किसानोंको महाजनोंके तरीक़े नापसन्द हैं ?

९—क्या महाजन लेन-देनका हिसाब ठीक रखते हैं ?

१०—क्या इस तरहकी शिकायतें आम हैं कि महाजन ठीक हिसाब न रखते हों, झूठे रुक्के लिखवाते हों, सादे कागज़ोंपर दस्तख़त करा कर उनसे अनुचित फ़ायदा उठाते हों ? क्या कोई ऐसी मिसाल दे सकते हैं जिसमें इस सम्बन्धमें कोई मुक़दमा अदालतमें चला हो ?

११—क्रज़ क्या नक्रदके अलावा ग़ल्लेकी शक़लमें भी लिया जाता है ? वह किस तरह और किस हिसाबसे वापस दिया जाता है ?

१२—क्या यह बता सकते हैं कि पिछले ५ सालोंमें हर साल महाजनोंके क्रज़ोंके कारण ( बक्राया लगानमें नहीं ) कितने किसान खेतीसे अलग हो गये हैं ? जो इस तरहसे क्रज़ोंके मारे खेतीसे अलग हो जाते हैं वे क्या करते हैं ?

१३—कोआपरेटिव बैंक कैसे चल रहे हैं ? उनसे रुपया लेनेवाले किसानोंकी ज़िलेमें क्या संख्या है, और कुल कितना रुपया लिया गया है ?

१४—कोआपरेटिव बैंकसे किसानोंको लाभ प्रतीत होता है या नहीं ?

१५—इनसे वे व्यवहार करना चाहते हैं या नहीं ? क्या उन्हें इन बैंकोंके तरीक़े पसन्द

हैं ? क्या कोआपरेटिव बैंकके अधिकारी कर्ज देनेके सम्बन्धमें और उसकी वसूलीमें किसानोंकी कठिनाइयोंको सुलझानेका यत्न करते हैं ? क्या कोआपरेटिव बैंकके काम करनेवाले नाज़ायज़ फ़ायदे उठाते और रिश्वत लेते हैं ? अगर लेते हैं तो किस तरह ?

- १६—क्या आपके ज़िलेमें ऐसे बैंकोंके खोलनेकी राय है जो केवल ज़मीनपर रुपये दें ? उन किसानोंको जो अपना खेत रेहन बय नहीं कर सकते, इस तरहके बैंकोंसे किस प्रकार लाभ हो सकता है ?
- १७—महाजनोंके लेन-देनके सम्बन्धमें क्या कुछ नियम बनानेकी ज़रूरत है ? अगर है तो किस तरहके नियम आवश्यक हैं ? यह भी सोच लीजियेगा कि आपके कथित नियमोंके होते हुए क्या महाजन रुपया देना पसन्द करेंगे ?
- १८—इस समय सूदकी दर घटानेके क्या उपाय हैं ? सूदकी दर कमसे कम क्या की जाय ? पुराने और हालके कर्जोंके सूदके सम्बन्धमें क्या कुछ कर्क किया जाय, इसके सम्बन्धमें अपनी पूरी राय लिखिए । क्या सूद दर सूदको ग़ैर क़ानूनी करार देना ठीक होगा ?
- १९—क्या क्रिस्त द्वारा कर्जों किसी तरह अदा हो सकते हैं ? यदि नहीं तो विचारपूर्वक वह साधन बताइये जिससे किसानोंके कर्जोंका बोझ हलका हो या हट जावे । सब क्रिस्तके किसानोंकी हालतपर ग़ौर कर राय दीजियेगा ।
- २०—क्या आपकी रायमें उचित होगा कि ५ वर्षके लिये कर्जोंके असल या सूदकी वसूली, या उसके लिये नालिश आदि बिलकुल बन्द कर दी जाय ?
- २१—इस समय किसान कुछ कर्ज अदा करना चाहें तो वह क्या साधारणतः अपनी सम्पत्ति बेच कर अदा कर सकते हैं ?
- २२—हालमें कर्जोंके सम्बन्धमें जो नए क़ानून बने हैं उनसे किसानोंका क्या फ़ायदा हुआ है ? क्या इन क़ानूनोंका फ़ायदा अधिकतर राजा, नवाब, ताल्लुकदारों, जमीदारों और बहुत बड़े कार्तकारों हीको प्राप्त है ?
- २३—क्या महाजनोंसे रक्षा करनेके लिये ये क़ानून कुछ हदतक फ़ायदेमन्द हैं ? अगर नहीं तो इनमें क्या सुधार चाहते हैं ?
- २४—कर्जोंकी डिगरीमें किसानोंकी क्या क्या चीज़ें नीलाम नहीं होनी चाहिए ?

### ज़मींदारी प्रथा

- १—वर्तमान ज़मींदारी प्रथाके बारेमें क्या राय है ? यह प्रथा रहनी चाहिए या नहीं ?
- २—अगर ज़मींदारी प्रथा बिलकुल ख़त्म कर दी जाय तो उसका किसानोंकी दशापर क्या असर पड़ेगा ?
- ३—ज़मींदारी प्रथाके ख़तम करनेसे काँग्रेसके वर्तमान स्वराज्य आन्दोलनपर क्या असर पड़ेगा ? क्या इससे राष्ट्रीय आन्दोलनको किसी तरह धक्का पहुँचनेकी आशंका है ?
- ४—ज़िलेमें कितने ज़मींदार हैं जो राष्ट्रीय कामसे सहानुभूति रखते हैं ?
- ५—ज़मींदारी ख़त्म करके ज़मींदारोंको क्या कुछ मोआविज़ा देना उचित होगा ? मोआविज़ाका प्रश्न उठाया जाय या नहीं ? अगर उठाया जाय तो क्या यही



कहा जाय कि मुनासिब मोआविज़ा गवर्नमेंट बान्डों ( Government Bonds ) की सूरतमें दिया जावे या इस वक्त कोई उसूल आपकी रायमें तय किया जाय ?

- ६—मोआविज़ा देने और न देने इन दोनों सूरतोंमें, क्या ज़मीदारोंके हज़में कुछ अन्तर पड़ेगा ? मोआविज़ा मिलनेकी आशापर क्या उनकी सहानुभूति राष्ट्रीय कार्यकी ओर अधिक रहेगी ?
- ७—बड़े और छोटे ज़मीदारोंमें क्या कुछ फ़र्क़ किया जाय ? दोनोंकी परिभाषा क्या रखी जाय ?
- ८—क्या यह सम्भव नहीं हो सकता कि गवर्नमेंट सब ज़मीन ज़मीदारोंसे ख़रीद कर किसानोंके हाथ कुछ सस्ते दामोंपर बेचे, और इस क्रीमतको क्रिस्तोंमें वसूल करे ?
- ९—क्या किसानोंके लिये यह सम्भव नहीं होगा कि अगर बक़ाया लगान और कर्ज़के मामलेमें उनके साथ सहूलियत की जाय और लगानकी दर उनकी ठीक घटाई जाय तो वह अपने लगान और दूसरे खर्चके साथ ज़मीन ख़रीदनेकी भी क्रिस्त अदा कर सकें ?
- १०—ज़मीदारी प्रथा हटाई जाय तो ज़मीनपर किसका अधिकार हो ? क्या यह उचित होगा कि ज़मीन राष्ट्रकी रहे या छोटे छोटे किसानोंको दी जाय और उनपर उनका मालिकाना हक़ हो ?
- ११—क्या छोटे ज़मीदार और किसान इस प्रथाको पसन्द करेंगे कि कुल ज़मीन और ज़मीदारी बिना किसी मोआविज़ेके ले ली जाय, और सामूहिक तरीकेसे खेती हो, और जो खेतीसे पैदावार हो उसका लाभ सब हीको दिया जाय ? क्या किसान खेतको अपनी निजी और वैयक्तिक सम्पत्ति बनानेके बजाय इस तरीकेको पसन्द करेंगे ?
- १२—अभी थोड़े दिन हुए यह समाचार आया है कि पञ्जाबके किसी गाँवमें काश्तकारोंने अपनी मेड़ तोड़ दीं और कुल भूमिकी उन्होंने एक साथ खेती की और फिर कुल पैदावार अपनी अपनी भूमिके अनुसार बाँट लिया। क्या अपनी निजी सम्पत्ति अलग अलग रखते हुए भी इस प्रकारकी खेती सम्भव है ?

### खेतके मज़दूर

- १—देहातोंके मज़दूरोंकी संख्या ज़िलेमें कितनी होगी और ज़िलेकी आबादीकी कितनी फ़ी सदी ? मज़दूरोंसे मतलब उनसे है जो मुख्यतः दूसरोंके खेतोंमें, घरोंमें या बाज़ारोंमें काम कर अपना गुज़र-बसर करते हैं।
- २—मज़दूरीका काम करनेवाले किस किस जातिके लोग हैं ?
- ३—मज़दूरी इन लोगोंको क्या दी जाती है ?
- ४—जितनी मज़दूरी इनको मिलती है, उससे क्या वह अपना और अपने आश्रितोंका गुज़ारा सुविधासे कर सकते हैं ?
- ५—उनकी मज़दूरी कमसे कम क्या होनी चाहिये ?
- ६—मज़दूरीके अलावा मज़दूरोंको दूसरी आमदनीके क्या कोई और ज़रिये हैं ?

क्या अधिकतर मज़दूर ऐसे हैं जिनके पास कुछ न कुछ खेत है ? या ऐसे मज़दूर बहुत कम हैं ?

- ७—मज़दूरोंकी मज़दूरी इस समय बढ़ाई जाय तो किसानोंकी कठिनाई क्या बढ़ जायगी ? क्या किसान इसका विरोध करेंगे ?
- ८—इन मज़दूरोंके अलग सङ्गठन बनानेकी क्या कोई आवश्यकता है ? अगर ऐसा सङ्गठन हो तो क्या किसान सङ्गठनसे इसका विरोध होगा । अथवा दोनों सङ्गठन साथ चल सकेंगे ? अथवा क्या आपके विचारमें किसान संघोंमें ही इनको सम्मिलित किया जाय ?
- ९—क्या यह सम्भव नहीं है कि खेतपर मज़दूरीका पेशा ही ख़तम कर दिया जाय और हर किसान अपने खेतपर स्वयं मेहनत करे और हर मज़दूरको इतनी ज़मीन कमसे कम दे दी जाय कि उनका उससे भरण-पोषण हो सके ?
- १०—जो खेतपर मज़दूरी करते हैं क्या उनके स्त्री-बाल बच्चे तथा और कुटुम्बी सब ही मज़दूरी करते हैं ? एक औसत कुटुम्बकी ऐसी हालतमें क्या आमदनी हो जाती है ?

#### चरागाह

- १—चरागाहके लिये क्या ज़मीन कहीं छूटी हुई है ?
- २—चरागाह अगर कहीं है तो वह क्या ज़मींदारकी है ? क्या उसमें जानवरोंको चरानेकी किसी तरह मुमानियत है, या इसके लिये कुछ देना पड़ता है ?
- ३—चरागाहकी ज़मीन क्या ज़मींदारने अपनी जोतमें कहीं मिला ली है ?
- ४—गाय और बैल चरानेके बारेमें क्या प्रबंध है, और क्या सुविधा है ? इस विषय में ज़मींदारका क्या रुज़ है ?
- ५—क्या वह अमूमन किसानोंको तंग करनेके लिये उनके गाय बैल कानीहौसमें भेजवाता है ?

#### चकबन्दी

- १—ज़मीनके जो छोटे-छोटे टुकड़े होते जा रहे हैं, उसके रोकनेका क्या साधन है ? क्या यह सम्भव है कि कोई ऐसा क़ानून बनाया जाय, जिससे एक हदके बाद बँटवारा न हो सके ?
- २—इस समय जो एक ही किसानके अलग-अलग टुकड़े नज़दीक और दूरपर फैले हुए हैं, उनको एक जगह करना क्या किसान अपने लिये लाभदायक समझेंगे ?
- ३—अगर इसके लिये कोई क़ानून बनाया जाय और चकबन्दीके लिये चककी चक ज़मीन एक साथ कर दी जाय तो क्या इसको किसान पसन्द करेंगे ?
- ४—गवर्नमेन्टकी चकबन्दीके सम्बन्धमें क्या नीति होनी चाहिये ? ज़मींदार और किसान क्या इस मामलेमें मिलकर कोई नीति स्थिर कर सकते हैं जो गवर्नमेन्टके सामने रखी जाय ? अगर ज़मींदार न शरीक हों तो क्या किसानोंकी ओरसे ऐसी नीति स्थिर हो सकती है ?

#### मकान बनानेका अधिकार

- १—क्या किसानोंको मकान बनानेकी किसी हदतक स्वतंत्रता है ? क्या-क्या बन्धन हैं ?
- २—अपने मकानोंपर आबादीमें रहनेवालोंके क्या हक़ हैं ?

- ३—क्या इसके सम्बन्धमें कुछ कानूनकी जरूरत है ?  
४—क्या मकानकी शक्तीके सम्बन्धमें यानी यह कि किस तरहका मकान बने या न बने, ज़मीदार कुछ रोक थाम कर सकता है ?  
५—मकान बनानेके लिये भूमि क्या गांवोंमें सुविधासे मिल जाती है ?

दररूत

- १—पेड़ोंके बारेमें किसानोंके क्या अधिकार हैं ? जो पेड़ उनके खेतोंमें लगे हैं, क्या वे उन्हें लकड़ीके लिये आज्ञादीसे काट सकते हैं ?  
२—अपने खेतोंमें किसान बिना ज़मीदारकी इजाज़तके पेड़ लगा सकते हैं या नहीं ?  
३—अपने घर बनानेके लिये किसान लकड़ी कहाँसे लाते हैं ?  
४—जो फल किसानोंके खेतके पेड़ोंमें या किसानके बाग़में लगते हैं उनके बारेमें ज़मीदार किसानोंको कुछ तंग तो नहीं करते ?

हरी-बेगार, नज़राना

- १—क्या ज़िलेमें बेगारकी प्रथा अभी जारी है ?  
२—बेगारकी क्या-क्या क्रिस्में हैं ? अगर ज़मीदार बेगार लेनेके बदलेमें किसी प्रकारका साधारणतः अथवा विशेष अवसरोंपर लाभ पहुँचाता है तो चर्चा कीजियेगा ।  
३—आम तौरपर बेगार किन लोगोंसे ली जाती है ?  
४—बेगारके विरुद्ध क्या कभी किसानोंने आन्दोलन किया है ?  
५—अगर किया है तो किस प्रकारका और कब ? उसका क्या परिणाम हुआ ?  
६—पिछले ५ सालसे अब क्या बेगारमें कुछ कमी है ?  
७—बेगार न देनेपर आम तौरसे किस प्रकारकी सज़ा दी जाती है ?  
८—ज़मीदार और उनके कारकुनानके अलावा गवर्नमेंटके मुलाज़िम भी क्या बेगार लेते हैं ? अगर लेते हैं तो किस शक्तीमें ? इसमें पहलेसे कुछ कमी हुई है या नहीं ?  
९—हरी और इस तरहकी दूसरी क्या क्या चीज़ें रायज हैं ? क्या घोड़ावन, हथिया-वन और मोटरावन आदि भी लिया जाता है ? ज़िलेमें इनमेंसे और इनके अलावा क्या क्या ग़ैरक़ानूनी दबाव प्रचलित है ?  
१०—नज़रानेकी प्रथा किस हदतक जारी है ? नज़राना सीधा ज़मींदार लेते हैं या उनके कारिन्दे भी अपने लिये अलग वसूल करते हैं ? क्या इसके रोकनेका कोई उपाय बतावेंगे ?  
११—नज़रानेसे ज़िलेमें ज़मीदारोंकी क्या आमदनी है ?  
१२—क्या यह उचित नहीं होगा कि नज़रानेका लेना क़ानूनी जुर्म करार दे दिया जाय ?  
ग़ैरक़ानूनी वसूलियाँ तथा दूसरी नजायज़ बातें  
१—क्या ज़मीदार या उनके अहलक़ारान लगानकी वसूलीमें मारपीट और दूसरी तरहकी शारीरिक सज़ायें देते हैं ? लगान वसूल करनेके लिये जिन जिन सज़ायोंको ज़मींदार काममें लाते हैं उनका व्यौरा लिखिये ।  
२—क्या किसानको बरबाद करनेके लिये ज़मींदार झूठा मुक़दमा चलाते हैं ? क्या कोई उदाहरण दिया जा सकता है ?  
३—नदी सूख जानेपर भी क्या डि० बोर्डके ठेकेदार किसानोंसे घाट ख़र्चा लेते हैं ?

- ४—दसहरा, दिवाली और होलीका खर्च क्या किसानोंसे वसूल किया जाता है ? अगर हाँ, तो कितना लिया जाता है ?
- ५—क्या शादी विवाह होनेपर किसानोंसे ज़बरदस्ती मदद ली जाती है ?
- ६—क्या ज़मींदारके काम करनेवाले लगान वसूल करते वक्त तहरीर और तलबाना वगैरह भी लेते हैं ?
- ७—अपनी खेती करनेके लिये क्या ज़मींदार, चपरासी, गुमास्ता वगैरह, अपने मवेशी तथा दूसरे सामान रखते हैं, या वे किसानोंपर निर्भर करते हैं ?
- ८—क्या यह सच है कि मरे हुए जानवरोंकी हड्डी और चमड़ेपर ज़मींदार अपना हक़ बतलाते हैं और चमार जो उन्हें उठा कर ले जाते हैं बेंच नहीं सकते ? क्या मवेशीके चमड़ेके बदले ज़मींदार चमारोंसे कुछ वसूल करते हैं ?
- ९—क्या किसानोंको क्रब्जेमें रखनेके लिये ज़मींदार और उनके आदमी सादे कागज़-पर उनके अंगूठेका निशान या दस्तख़त ले लेते हैं ?
- १०—क्या कागज़ोंमें दर्ज रक़मसे ज़्यादा लगान ज़मींदार या उनके अमले किसानोंसे वसूल करते हैं ?
- ११—क्या हर बार लगान अदा करनेके साथ किसानको रसीद मिल जाती है ?
- १२—रसीद नहीं मिलती तो इसके खिलाफ़ क्या क़ानून बना देना ठीक न होगा ?
- १३—क्या किसान इसे पसन्द करेंगे कि लगान या और किसी मदका रुपया वह ज़मींदार या महाजनके पास मनीआर्डरसे भेजें ?
- १४—इस समय ऐसा करनेपर क्या ज़मींदार आदि इसको लेनेसे इन्कार करते हैं ?
- १५—बापके मर जानेपर बेटेका या वारिसका नाम दर्ज करनेके समय क्या ज़मींदार को नज़राना देना पड़ता है ?
- १७—बाज़ारोंमें ज़मींदार जुदा जुदा लोगोंसे क्या वसूल करते हैं ?
- १८—भाजकल भी जब ज़मींदार लगान नहीं वसूल कर पाते तो क्या पुलिसकी गारद बुलायी जाती है ? इस प्रकारके गारदोंका कैसा बर्ताव रहता है ?
- १९—क्या यह सब सख़्तियाँ छोटी जाति कही जानेवालोंपर होती है, अथवा, ऊँची जातियोंपर भी होती हैं ?

### आबपाशी

- १—नहर ( सरकारी ) के भिन्न भिन्न दर क्या हैं ?
- २—क्या इस दरमें समय समयपर बढ़ती हुई है ?
- ३—क्या वर्तमान दर बहुत ज़्यादा है ?
- ४—इस दरमें कितनी कमी होनी चाहिये ? मौजूदा दर आपके ज़िलेमें आधा कर देना क्या उचित होगा ?
- ५—मोरी खोलाई और अन्य शैरक़ानूनी कामके लिये क्या किसानोंको रिश्त देनी पड़ती है ? देनी पड़ती है तो सालमें कितनी ?
- ६—क्या बगैर इन रिश्तोंके दिये किसानोंको ज़रूरतके मुताबिक़ समयपर पानी नहीं मिल सकता ?
- ७—क्या यह ठीक है कि जबतक किसान नज़र नहीं देते उस समयतक नहरसे

- पानी लेनेकी आज्ञा उनको नहीं मिलती ? क्या बसूलके वक्त भी नहरके मुलाजिम अलावा कानूनी रकमके कुछ रिश्तत घसूल करते हैं ?
- ८—क्या ऐसी ग़ैरकानूनी बातोंको रोकनेके लिये नहरके बड़े अफसरोंकी तरफसे कोई हकावट डाली गयी है या रोकनेकी कोशिश की जाती है ?
- ९—क्या ज़मीदारकी तरफसे आवपाशीका कोई इन्तज़ाम है ? क्या उसके लिये किसानोंको अलगसे कुछ देना पड़ता है ?
- १०—नहरसे पानी देनेका जो वर्तमान तरीक़ा है उसमें क्या सुधार या परिवर्तन ठीक समझते हैं, बताइये ?

### गाँवोंका सुधार

- १—गावोंकी शारीरिक सामाजिक और आर्थिक दशा सुधारनेके लिये क्या किया जा सकता है ? बिना गवर्नमेंटकी सहायताके इसमें क्या किया जा सकता है ?
- २—किसान और उनके कुटुम्बवाले क्यों नहीं ऐसा प्रबन्ध करते कि चर्खा चलाकर अपने लिये कपड़ेका इन्तज़ाम कर लें ?
- ३—क्या इसका एक प्रधान कारण यह है कि बिनाईका कोई प्रबन्ध नहीं है ? या चर्खा चलानेकी ही तरफ़ लोगोंकी प्रेरणा नहीं होती ? या दूसरे काम उनके पास इतने हैं कि चर्खा चलाना आर्थिक रूपसे मूल्य नहीं रखता ?
- ४—ज़िलेमें कितने चर्खें होंगे ? कितने गाँवोंमें चर्खें चलते हैं ? ज़िलेमें कुल कितने गाँव हैं ? बिननेवालोंकी क्या संख्या है ?
- ५—चर्खेंको छोड़कर क्या किसी दूसरी दस्तकारी या कारीगरीमें किसान लगना चाहते हैं जो उन्हें ज़्यादा पैसा दे ?
- ६—ज़िलेमें क्या ऐसी कोई कारीगरी थी जो नष्ट हो गयी ? इसका पूरा ब्यौरा दीजिये । क्या वह कारीगरी फिर जीवित की जा सकती है, और क्या उसकी तरफ़ी और उसकी बिक्रीका क्षेत्र इस समय भी अच्छा है ?
- ७—आपके विचारमें क्या एक या दो नई कारीगरियाँ खोली जा सकती हैं, जिन्हें किसान अपने घरमें कर सकें और जिनके द्वारा अपनी आय बढ़ा सकें ?
- ८—क्या ऐसे नियम बनाना चाहिये कि जिससे विदेशसे आनेवाले शल्लेकी हकावट हो सके ?

### संगठन

- १—आपके ज़िलेमें किसानोंका इस समय किस-किस रूपमें और कहाँ-कहाँ संगठन है ?
- २—किसानोंका संगठन स्थापित करनेके लिये आपके ज़िलेमें किन-किन मागोंका अवलम्बन उचित होगा ?

### फुटकर

जो प्रश्न ऊपर दिये गये हैं उनके उत्तरके अलावा और कोई बात आपको किसानों और ग्रामोंके सम्बन्धमें ऐसी जान पड़े जिसपर ध्यान देनेकी आवश्यकता है तो उसका उल्लेख कीजियेगा ।

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## ERRATA.

Page	Line	For	'18	Read	'18		
"	37	"	6	"	Fiave	"	, have
"	38	"	29		Protection		to be deleted
"	47	At the bottom the total rental figures do not include Siwai demands.					
"	54	Line	7	For	2 lakh	Read	12 lakh
"	54	"	38	"	85 lakhs	"	75 lakhs
"	59	"	19	"	In 1930	"	In 1931
"	69	"	29	"	His time annual income	"	His annual income
"	"	"	30	"	at the of	"	at the time of
"	70	"	35	"	is a mere	"	is a more
"	iii	"	36	"	9·15%	"	9·1%
"	iv	"	31	"	85 lacs	"	75 lacs
"	"	"	32	"	5 crores	"	6 crores
"	vii	"	30	"	at first the model	"	at first the same model
"	viii	"	13	"	67 p. c.	"	64 p. c.
"	xiv	At the end after No. 19, the following two points should be added:—					

20. Peasant Unions should be recognised and encouraged.

21. The principle should be recognised both in the case of industrial and agricultural labour that it is the duty of the State to provide a living wage to all who are willing to work.

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