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THE REVENUE ADMINISTRATION
OF THE
UNITED PROVINCES.

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OF THE
UNITED PROVINCES.

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PREFACE.

A few words may be said to explain the origin and scope of this book. Before the administration of the United Provinces had reached its present stage of development, the first duty of an officer appointed to assess (or, in technical language, to "settle") the land-revenue of a district was the organisation and supervision of a cadastral survey, carried out primarily to ascertain the area with which he had to deal and the various classes of land which it comprised. The successful management of a survey of this kind requires a certain degree of technical attainment, and, in order to provide this requirement, Government laid down the rule that all junior officers of the Indian Civil Service should undergo training in the methods of survey and of soil-classification, and arranged for training-classes in these subjects to be attached to the survey parties at work in the provinces.

As time went on the value of these classes diminished. In some cases the revenue assessments were carried out without a special cadastral survey, while in others the required survey was made by professional agency or at least under professional supervision; and it was no longer necessary for the settlement officer to be a skilled surveyor, though it was still necessary that he should have a working knowledge of the methods of map-making. In 1904, therefore, it was decided at my suggestion to abandon the separate survey classes and to utilise part of the time so saved by placing junior officers under the orders of the Director of Land Records and Agriculture for training in the elements of survey, land-records, and connected branches of the revenue administration. Junior

officers in most cases experience some difficulty in grasping this—the most important of their functions—as a whole. It is easy to master the law and rules governing the subject, but it is not so easy to see the bearing of all the isolated proceedings that in the aggregate make up the administration; and the drudgery of those portions of the work which alone can be performed by inexperienced officers is apt to produce a distaste for what may be as interesting as it is important. I have therefore included in the classes of the last few years a course of informal lectures on the principles and the development of the revenue administration of the provinces, and these lectures form the basis of the present work.

In the sections that follow, I have made free use of the technical terminology of the subject; many of the things mentioned, and perhaps a few of the fundamental conceptions, have no equivalents in Western systems of administration, and consequently can be expressed in English only by arbitrary names or clumsy periphrases, while the vernacular terms are at any rate concise, and are not likely to be superseded within the next official generation. The glossary of these terms which is appended will, it is hoped, make the notes intelligible to students.

The book has been drawn up primarily for the use of junior officers of the Indian Civil Service, but I venture to hope that it may be found of some service in other branches of the administration. The machinery of Government is increasing in complexity, and there is no reason to suppose that the creation of separate departments for special work will not continue; and it may do something to minimise the vicious tendency to "departmentalism" which seems inseparable from such specialisation, if officers will make themselves acquainted with the history and the working of the oldest branch of the administration. Lastly, I hope the book may be found of some benefit as a first introduction to the subject by the young men

of the educated classes who look forward to taking an increased share in the government of the country.

In the list of references I have indicated the books on which I have drawn most largely. I wish it were possible to indicate in detail my obligations to individual settlement reports ; I have had to read almost the whole series of these at one time or other in the course of my official duties, and much of what I have written has been assimilated in the process, but without preserving notes of the references. Like all other students of the period, I feel very strongly the need for more light on the methods of administration that prevailed in Hindu times. It is hopeless to expect that regular histories of this period will come to light, but probably much could be learned by a detailed study of inscriptions and of grants of land, and there is apparently a wide field for scholarly reseach in this direction.

I have to thank my friend Mr. R. Burn of the Indian Civil Service for much generous assistance in preparing this book. He very kindly read through the entire manuscript and his criticisms and suggestions have been most valuable.

W. H. M.

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A FEW REFERENCES.

Readers who wish to carry their studies further will find the following references useful :—

Muhammadan Period.

ELLIOT'S *History of India as Told by its Own Historians* (Eight vols. of translation of contemporary annals.)

Ain-i-Akbari. (The best translation is that by Blochmann and Jarrett, issued by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.)

British Period.

BRIGGS: *On the Land Tax of India*, 1830. (This is a rare work : second-hand copies are occasionally procurable.)

Selections from Revenue Records, N.-W. P., 1818-20. Calcutta, 1866.

Selections from Revenue Records, N.-W. P., 1822-23. Allahabad, 1872.

Selections from Revenue Records, N.-W. P., Allahabad, 1873. (Part II contains correspondence regarding Permanent Settlement, 1807, and Part III correspondence regarding Tenures, 1808.)

Official Papers regarding the Permanent Settlement of the N.-W. P., Allahabad, 1869.

Memorandum on Revision of Land Revenue Settlements in the N.-W. P., A.D. 1860-72. A. COLVIN, Secretary, Board of Revenue, N.-W. P., Calcutta, 1872.

Permanent and Temporary Settlements, N.-W. P. Allahabad, 1873.

Memorandum on Settlement, by R. M. BIRD.

Memorandum upon Current Land Revenue Settlements, E. STOOK, Calcutta, 1880.

- Selections from Government Records, N.-W. P. and Oudh.*
Papers relating to revision of settlements, etc. Allahabad
1887.
- Settlement Officers' Manual, N.-W. P.*, by V. A. SMITH. Allaha-
bad, 1881.
- Sleeman's Tour in Oudh* (2 vols., 1858 : somewhat rare).
- The Oudh Gazetteer* (original edition, especially the preface).
- The Garden of India*, H. C. IRWIN, 1880.
- The N.-W. P. Rent Act*, edited by H. F. HOUSE, 1893.

The following dates are worth remembering :—

1788. Commencement of British revenue administration
in Benares.
1795. Regulation I made the settlement of Benares
permanent.
1801. The 'ceded provinces' made over to the British.
(These included the Gorakhpur and Rohilkhand
divisions, the lower *duab* and some minor
areas.)
1803. The 'conquered provinces' acquired. (These
included the upper *duab* and parts of Bundel-
khand.)
1816. Kumaun and Dehra Dun acquired by conquest.
1822. Regulation VII provided for an elaborate method
of settlement.
1833. Regulation IX provided for revised methods.
1855. Issue of the Saharanpur settlement rules.
1856. Annexation of Oudh.
1859. Act X : The first regular tenancy law.
1868. Act XIX : The first Oudh Rent Act.
1869. Act I : Oudh Estates Act.
1873. Act XVIII : The N.-W. P. Rent Act.
Act XIX : The N.-W. P. Revenue Act.

GLOSSARY.

- Abadi*—The inhabited site of a village.
- Amin*—An official deputed for special local work : *Partition amin* is the official who carries out a partition : *Kurk amin* the official who sells distrained crops.
- Bagh*—A grove.
- Bahikhata*—Ledger. The account of grain rent kept by the patwari.
- Balpanchit*—Injury to cultivation by flood or deposit of sand. A term used in the Ballia district where tenants have a right to reduction of rent on this ground.
- Banjar*—Culturable land which has not been cultivated.
- Batai*—Division of produce between landholder and tenant.
- Bhaiyachara*—A form of proprietary tenure : see section XVI.
- Bigah*—The common unit of land measurement.
- Biswa*—One-twentieth of a bigah.
- Biswansi*—One-twentieth of a biswa.
- Bila lagan* } Land held by a cultivator on which the
Bila tasfiya lagan } rent payable has not been settled.
- Chakurana*—Land held by a village servant as remuneration for his services.
- Dakhil-kharaj*—Proceedings for the alteration of the khewat.
- Dastak*—A writ of demand, reminding a landholder that revenue is due from him.
- Daur*—One-twentieth of biswa = biswansi.
- Jagir*—A grant of land to an officer of the State.
- Jaltar*—Rights of fishing.
- Jamabandi*—The patwari's record of village accounts.
- Jhil*—A lake or swamp.

- Jinspher*—Cash rents collected for particular crops on land that is ordinarily grain rented.
- Kachchha*—Literally 'raw.' See section IV for its technical meaning in revenue administration.
- Kanungo*—Officials in charge of patwaris.
- Kankut*—Determination of rent by estimation of the produce of the land.
- Karinda*—A landholder's agent.
- Katta (Cottah)*.—One-twentieth of a biswa = biswansi.
- Kham*—See *Kachcha*.
- Kham tahsil*—Annulment of the settlement with a landholder.
- Khasra*—The patwari's field-book.
- Khatauni*—The patwari's record of cultivators' rights.
- Khewat*—The patwari's record of landholder's rights.
- Khudkasht*—Land cultivated by the landholder.
- Kist*.—An instalment of revenue or rent.
- Lambardar*—The representative of the land-holders of a mahal : see section XVII.
- Mahal*—A unit of revenue assessment : see section VI.
- Malikana*—Payments to persons whose claims to a share of the income of a *mahal* has been recognised but who have not been admitted to settlement for it.
- Matahatdar*—Under-proprietors in Oudh : see section XVI.
- Muafi*—Land given free of rent, or revenue.
- Mukaddum*—A representative of the cultivators of a village.
- Nijot*—*Khudkasht*.
- Pakka*—The reverse of *kachchha*, which see.
- Parjot*—Ground rent paid by persons other than cultivators living in a village.
- Parti*—Fallow land : *Parti jadid* is land which has been fallow for not more than three years : after three years it is *parti kadim*.

- Patti*—A division of a *mahal*: *Pattidar* is a landholder having part of a *mahal*: *Pattidari* is the form of tenure in which several landholders have separate possession in a *mahal*.
- Patwari*—The village accountant.
- Pukhta*—See *Pakka*. *Pukhtadar* is a subsettlement-holder in Oudh.
- Samjhauta*—Settlement of accounts among the *pattidars* of a *mahal*.
- Sasawal*—A rent-collector.
- Shahna*—A watcher put over crops distrained on for rent or revenue.
- Shamilat*—Property common to two or more *pattis* of a *mahal*.
- Siaha*—The *patwari*'s cash-account of a *mahal*.
- Sir*—Land held by a landholder with special privileges: see section XVIII.
- Sivai*—Miscellaneous income of a *mahal*.
- Tahsildar*—The officer who collects revenue.
- Takavi*—State loans for agricultural purposes.
- Talukdar*—In Oudh a landholder with special privileges. In Agra usually a superior proprietor, but sometimes an inferior proprietor.
- Taraf*—A division of a *mahal*.
- Tarim jamabandi*—Proceedings for correcting the record of cultivators' rights.
- Thekadar*—A lessee of landholder's rights.
- Thok*—A division of a *mahal*, usually containing two or more *pattis*.
- Usar*—Barren land.
- Wajibulari*—The record of village-customs prepared at the earlier settlements.
- Zabti*—Cash rents taken for particular crops from land that is ordinarily grain rented.

Zamindar—Landholder.

Zamindari—The form of tenure in which a *mahal* is held either by an individual (*zamindari wahid*) or by a group who manage it as an undivided unit (*zamindari bil-ijmal*).

Zer-ab—Land covered by water.

I.—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The revenue administration of an Indian province is distinguished from that of most other countries by its extent and its complexity. In England, for instance, the public functions of the revenue officers are practically limited to (1) the *assessment*, and (2) the *collection*, of those kinds of revenue which they administer; that is to say, when Parliament has laid down the principles on which the revenue is to be collected, the revenue officers have first to ascertain what persons are liable to pay what sums (*assessment*), and second to make those persons pay (*collection*). These functions of assessment and collection are naturally prominent in India also; in the United Provinces the assessment of the land-revenue is called "settlement," and is usually entrusted to a special officer termed the Settlement Officer; while the collection of the revenue is carried out by the tahsildars under the supervision of the chief revenue officer of the district, whose title of Collector emphasises the importance of his duties in this direction. But in addition to these primary functions the revenue officers are found exercising their activity in numerous directions: they maintain records of the rights of landlords and tenants, and decide most of the disputes between these classes which would in other countries come before the civil courts¹; they fix the rents

¹ The distinction between civil and criminal courts will be familiar to all readers. In England these two classes between them deal with practically the whole mass of litigation, but in some parts of India a portion of the civil litigation is excluded by law from the cognisance of the ordinary civil courts and is made over to the revenue officers for disposal. In the United Provinces limitations on the powers of the civil courts are imposed by section 233 of the Land Revenue Act, section 167 of the Agra Tenancy Act, and section 108 of

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