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AND

BERAR

PART I—REPORT

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

There were no changes during the decade 1911—1921, in the external boundaries of the area administered by the Government of the Central Provinces, which constitutes one territorial unit for the purpose of the census organisation, and except for a rearrangement of the Balaghat, Bhandara and Nagpur districts internal arrangements were little disturbed. This report therefore, as at the census of 1911, deals with the 18 British districts of the Central Provinces, the four districts of Berar, and the 15 Feudatory States.

The decennial census of this Province was taken for the sixth time on the night of the 18th March 1921, and a detailed account of the method of enumeration of the people and of the co-ordination of the figures so obtained will be found in a separate report called the Census Administration Report. In dealing with a population containing over 95 per cent of illiterates, it is impossible to adopt the method, which obtains in many civilised countries, of calling upon the head of each household to fill in a form giving particulars of the inmates of his house on a particular night. Indeed, the first difficulty which confronts the authorities consists in determining what constitutes a house. Even in towns an orderly row of habitations is seldom found, while in the country structures ranging from the superior edifice of the village headman are mingled with ephemeral huts which form the habitation sometimes of cattle and sometimes of human beings. The first step, therefore, is to number the houses, and care has to be taken that new structures, which may spring up like mushrooms in a night, are continually added to the list. About 50 houses are then formed in a block under one enumerator who may even, if no literate resident can be found, live at some little distance, and the blocks again are formed into circles under a Supervisor and the circles into charges under a Charge Superintendent, the scale which experience has found to be most convenient being 12 blocks per circle and 15 circles per charge. In the Central Provinces and Berar, rural areas are, for the purpose of administration, divided into the Revenue Inspectors' Circles for the census, and the Revenue Inspector is invariably the Charge Superintendent and his circle the charge. Below the Revenue Inspector is the *patwari*, who in the Central Provinces is in charge of a circle which makes a convenient census circle, while in Berar, where the *patwari* is generally a hereditary official for a village, which will frequently be too small for a census circle, more or less arbitrary divisions of the census charge have to be made. In both areas the Revenue Inspectors and *patwaris* under the immediate supervision of that useful officer, the Tahsildar, form the backbone of the census organisation, and as many of them have experience of one or more censuses, they form an extremely efficient staff. Above the Revenue Inspectors come the Tahsildar, the Assistant or Extra-Assistant Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner. The last-named official may, if he can spare the time, take the whole of the census arrangements under his personal care, but he usually deposes one of his assistants as District Census Officer. The remaining assistants are responsible for the work in the portion of the district known as a Sub-division which is administered by them, and in addition one or more of them may be put in charge of those portions of the operations, such as the railway census or the enumeration in large cities, fairs or industrial centres, which call for special supervision. Each Sub-division contains according to its size one or more tahsils under a Tahsildar, who, while the census operations are in progress, is continually on the move checking the actual work done, and seeing that the Charge Superintendents keep the lower census officials up to the mark. In addition to this, other touring officials in a district are given a simple set of instructions, and asked to check the enumeration in the places through which they pass. It will thus be seen that the census organisation follows that of the district very closely, and each official of the district staff has to supervise the census work of his immediate official subordinate, and not only is he by this means able to exert sufficient authority to keep his subordinates up to the mark, but practically the whole of the supervision in rural areas is done without any extra cost to Government by the district officials on their ordinary rounds of duty.

In many of the Feudatory States one or two charges sufficed for the whole of the State, but in Bastar there were as many as 20. Where there is a regular land revenue system as in the British districts, the revenue units coincided with those of the census. Elsewhere, arbitrary divisions similar to those of the

preceding census were formed and put under the various State officials. It was here that literate enumerators were sometimes difficult to find, and it was occasionally necessary to combine two blocks under one enumerator.

In urban areas the work is done through the municipal authorities under the supervision of Government officials deputed for the purpose. If the town is large enough, it constitutes a separate charge. The other census divisions have to be made arbitrarily, though it is often possible to make the circle coincide with municipal ward under the ward member. With a larger proportion of literates than in the country, there was not the same difficulty in obtaining sufficient literate enumerators from Government and municipal servants, pensioned officials, and the general public. The total census staff for the Province was 95,830 Enumerators, 8,770 Supervisors and 689 Charge Superintendents, or in all 105,289.

The organisation of census divisions and staff occupied the hot weather and rains of 1920, but it is probable that an unnecessarily long period was allowed for these preparations, which might be curtailed by about three months. Local operations began with the house-numbering at the end of the rains by the supervisors with the assistance of the enumerators. The structural definition of the house was again taken in this Province, and was extended to the five Chhota Nagpur States, which were transferred from Bengal prior to the previous census, at which the *commensal* family was there taken as the unit. The structural definition is generally more suited to the habits of the inhabitants, and there is considerable administrative advantage in retaining the definition familiar to many of the census staff from the preceding census. At the time of house-numbering, the supervisor prepared a house-list for his circle showing every house and head of a family. A copy of this served the enumerator as a block list. The circle register was then prepared, and served as a record for the circle organisation, subsequent changes being entered in it as they occurred. The statistical information contained in the circle register was used to check the issue of forms from Nagpur, which had previously been roughly calculated on the population of the previous census.

With the touring season in the cold weather of 1920-21, the bulk of the work in connection with the census began. House-numbering was first checked, and corrected where necessary; and the numerous staff had to be trained in its various duties. Conferences were called at convenient centres by the district officers, and personal instruction on the spot was continuously given. Special arrangements had to be made for fairs, railways, the more important industrial concerns, and for any places where an unusually large concourse of people might be expected. The operations were further complicated by the famine conditions prevalent over a large part of the Province, which, apart from the extra burden they threw on the district official, caused a considerable portion of the populace to leave their homes in search of employment. After the enumerators had been thoroughly trained, they entered the particulars required to be given in the census schedules, having, in most cases, prepared them beforehand on blank slips of paper. The schedules were ready about a month before the census, and they constituted the preliminary record, which continued to be checked by every official who could be made available until the final night of the census.

The final census was taken between 7 p. m. and midnight of the night of March 18th, which was selected so that the light of the moon would assist enumerators in their movement from house to house. Each house was visited in turn, and the preliminary record was brought up-to-date by striking out absentees and entering the details required for new-comers. The usual halting places were then searched for travellers, and those who could not produce a pass showing they had been enumerated elsewhere were included in the block in which they were found. In spite of the large areas of wild and jungly country contained in the Province, it was nowhere found necessary to omit the final enumeration, though it was taken during the day-time of the 16th, 17th or 18th March in certain tracts.

As soon as the schedules were ready, the enumerators met at appointed places, and prepared statements showing the number of the houses and the population of their blocks. The figures were then compiled by the supervisor into a summary for his circle, and taken to the charge superintendent, who compiled a similar summary for his charge and sent it to the district head-quarters, where the

totals were added together and reported by telegraph. Very elaborate arrangements were made beforehand for the collection of the totals at convenient centres, and they worked with such success that it was possible to issue in the Provincial *Gazette* of March 26th—only eight days after the census—a statement showing the population of the whole of the Central Provinces. The totals of the Sarangarh State were collected so expeditiously that they were despatched at 3.55 a.m., within four hours of the completion of the schedules. Raigarh State was the next to telegraph its figures at 6.30 a.m. Up to midday of March 19th, the totals of the Kawardha, Nandgaon and Sakti States and of the Narsinghpur district had been despatched and the Khairagarh, Makrai and Chhuikhadan States followed suit by the evening. Within four days of the census, the totals of 31 districts and states were received. Raipur and Akola were the last to telegraph their figures on March 25th.

The census staff of the Sarangarh state must be congratulated on the promptness and accuracy of their figures, in that, notwithstanding the expeditiousness with which the figures were telegraphed, there was an insignificant difference of only 22 or '01 per cent in the provisional and final figures. The difference in most of the districts and States did not exceed 2 per cent, but it was most marked in Raipur (1.6 per cent), Chanda (.9 per cent), Khairagarh (.6 per cent) and Nagpur and Yeotmal (.5 per cent). It did not, however, exceed (.02 per cent) for the Province as a whole.

From the preliminary stages of the census up to the taking of the final census the non-cooperation movement gave rise to considerable anxiety. As at the preceding census, enumerators were asked to do their work out of public spirit and without any monetary reward. It was, therefore, not difficult to persuade a number of them that a ready occasion for embarrassing Government had presented itself. It was only towards the close of the operations that the leader of the movement announced that non-cooperation should not interfere with the census, and as Mr. Gandhi actually held a political meeting in Nagpur at the unusual hour of 11 p.m. on the census night, when it was important for the accuracy of the census that the bulk of the population should remain in their houses, it can be imagined that the rank and file of his followers were passively if not actively hostile. Arrangements were made beforehand for approximate figures to be obtained in the event of any organised refusal to give information, but such refusals were little in evidence. The inhabitants of one village in the Bhandara district insisted on describing themselves as non-cooperators in the occupational columns, and a few of the Nagpur Kistis or weavers, who, only a few days after the final day of the census, broke out into open riot, declined to give particulars of themselves and their families. In Kamptee the inhabitants of one *mohalla* during the preliminary enumeration declined to answer questions, but they were ultimately won round by the district officials. The *patwaris* of the Chhindwara and Chanda districts went on strike shortly before the census day, but completed their census work under threat of the penalties of the Census Act. In general, the attitude of the public, in those places where political propaganda hostile to Government were most powerful, was more one of apathy than of actual hostility, and the constant efforts of the district officials were necessary to keep the census staff up to the mark. As the work was voluntary, prosecutions under the Census Act were kept as low as possible and only numbered 31, but the number of people who either declined to act as enumerators, or after agreeing to act gave somewhat transparent excuses for ceasing to do so, was considerable, and it was only by providing a liberal reserve of enumerators that the final enumeration was ultimately carried out successfully. It may, however, be doubted whether this would have been possible if the census had been taken a few months later.

For the abstraction of the information in the schedules, two central offices were constituted—at Jubbulpore for the Hindi schedules and at Nagpur for the Marathi books. The slip system of abstraction, which is undoubtedly superior to the tick system, was again adopted. The only other system, whereby the tabulation is done by means of an ingenious American electrical machine, would undoubtedly be much more costly and less expeditious in India. The information in the schedules has to be transferred to specially prepared cards on which it is represented by a number of holes punched thereon. The punching of the cards alone would probably take as

long as the combined operations of slip copying, sorting and compilation by the present method. Once the cards are punched, the system works with great rapidity, and, where the information given in the schedules is more detailed than is possible in India, the machines will tabulate a large number of tables with expedition. For India, however, where the standard of education is low, and it is necessary to include only the simplest information in the schedules, the slip system is undoubtedly the best as yet invented. It was originally intended to have the slip-copying done locally by the revenue staff, but the outbreak of famine and the consequent pressure of ordinary work on the staff prevented the execution of this plan. Under the slip-system each entry in the census schedules is copied out on to a slip which denotes religion by its colour and bears a symbol for civil condition. With the use of abbreviations to denote terms of common occurrence in the schedules, an efficient copyist can turn out more than 600 slips a day. The copying of the slips occupied three months and a half, and the staff employed at one time reached 597. The next process is that of sorting; each sorter was given two boxes for males and females containing about 400,000 slips, and he sorted the slips out into bundles according to the information required for the table under preparation and entered the results in tickets, which corresponded in form with the Imperial Tables. As soon as the sorting for the earlier tables was complete, compilation of the information in the sorters' tickets began, and proceeded *pari passu* with the sorting. At Jubbulpore the work was retarded by a number of unexpected obstacles. The office was at first situated in the temporary buildings of the War Recruiting Organization which had not been dismantled. The census staff, however, was discontented, largely owing to the distance of the office from the town, and after a good deal of grumbling went on strike during the hot weather. The office was then removed to the town. Unfortunately in the middle of the rains plague broke out in Jubbulpore with almost unprecedented violence, and the temporary staff fled in large numbers. It was impossible to move elsewhere because of the risk of spreading infection, and the work had to proceed as best it could until the disease abated.

The Hindi population is nearly twice as large as the Marathi, and it would therefore be advisable in future to have two Hindi offices and one Marathi. This would undoubtedly curtail the work, and effect some saving in expenditure. As it was, the tabulation of the last Imperial Table was not completed until the close of August 1922. Mr. Abdul Khalique, who held charge of the Nagpur Abstraction Office throughout, devoted unremitting care and attention to the work of preparing the figures for final publication, while Mr. T. G. Matangay, who took charge of the Jubbulpore Office at very short notice owing to the illness of his predecessor, laboured hard to restore discipline among a somewhat unruly staff and to complete the work expeditiously. My administrative office under the Head Clerk, Mr. V. R. Bhagwat, worked hard and efficiently and contributed materially to the success of the operations.

In conclusion, I desire to place on record my sense of obligation to all district officers whose efforts, in spite of the difficulties due to the hostility of political propaganda, and at a time, when famine conditions required their constant care and attention, cheerfully undertook the extra burden of work thrown on their shoulders by the organisation of the census.