

CENSUS OF INDIA 1951

VOLUME VI

WEST BENGAL, SIKKIM & CHANDERNAGORE

PART IA-REPORT

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of the Indian Civil Service, Superintendent of Census Operations and Joint Development Commissioner, West Bengal

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Few people outside realise that census is an administrative operation of great dimensions and, in addition, it is a scientific process. Indian census, in particular, covers the largest population in the world and it is also one of the most economical administrative operations. Census as an institution goes back to the remote past, but. it is no longer a mere counting of heads: it involves extraction of information which plays a vital role in the determination of many of our administrative policies. The facts elicited during the course of this operation yield valuable scientific data of sociological importance. In many matters it provides a useful guide for the effectiveness or otherwise of our economic policies. The theory of population is in itself an interesting part of economics. The census helps us to test and adapt that theory to facts. There is also another significant advantage which I should like to stress. Census affords an opportunity for Government to reach every home throughout the length and breadth of this country; little hamlets in far off jungles or perched on mountain tops alike feel with prosperous and easily accessible townships the beat and throb of a pulsating administration. It is also one of the greatest achievements of honorary endeayour; for instance, the process of enumeration would involve visits by over a million honorary enumerators to about 64 million homes inhabiting 350 million citizens.

The forthcoming census is the first census of a Free Republican India. It is also the first census of partitioned India. The enumerators will, therefore, visit homes of India's millions of citizens as representatives of a new institution and we shall have to adapt ourselves to a new basis of comparison and tabulation. The Constitution, for the first time, recognises the important role of census. It has been specifically provided that the data collected at successive censuses should form the basis for the delimitation of territorial constituencies. There is also another departure from past practice. Formerly there used to be elaborate caste tables which were required in India partly to satisfy the theory that it was a casteridden country and partly to meet the needs of administrative measures dependent on caste divisions. In the forthcoming census this will no longer be a prominent feature and we can devote our energies and attention to the collection and formulation of basic economic data relating to the means of livelihood of the people and other economic activities of the individual and the State.

Hitherto, the census used to be looked upon as a decennial operation for which haphazard temporary arrangements used to be made. I have already stated that there is now a permanent Census Act on the Statute Book and Government have already a permanent office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner. It is our intention through this unified organisation to effect continuous improvement over the whole field of population data including the census and vital statistics and to conduct experiments in sampling which would reduce not only the elaboration of these operations but also the cost. I hope, in your deliberations, you will take note of the changes which have now taken place in the character of the census operations and you will go back to your States fully familiar with the trends of ideas here in order to implement them on the actual field. I wish your deliberations all success.

From the speech of SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL, Deputy Prime Minister of India, inaugurating the first conference of Census Superintendents in February 1950.

THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

AT THE OUTSET it requires to be stated that the statements made and conclusions drawn in this Report are wholly the responsibility of the author alone in his personal capacity and do not necessarily represent the views of Government.

The following are the Registrar General's instructions on the scope and purpose of the Report.

I propose to define and limit the scope and purpose of the 1951 Census Report to the provision of the following, viz:—

(i) a narrative review of data relating to the numbers, life and livelihood of the people; (such data will be deemed to consist of (a) replies to questions I, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, II and I4 at the 1951 Census; (b) corresponding data of past censuses; and (c) authoritative non-census data, if any, which may be readily available and relatable to such census data).

(ii) narrative exposition of significant . changes from census to census or bedifferent territorial tween units brought to light by the foregoing review-(For purposes of such exposition, the natural divisions and districts will be the territorial units in the State reports; and the States and natural divisions will be the territorial units in the All-India Report) and

(iii) a narrative explanation of the significant changes referred to above, in so far as such explanation can be readily furnished on the basis of local knowledge and experience of the writers of the Reports, or of District Officers and heads of departments who may be consulted by them.

[Note.—This limitation involves the consequence that the "Reports" will exclude detailed treatment of the data relating to a number of subjects, *e.g.*, "Displaced Persons", "Backward Classes", "Language", "Religion", "Literary and Education", etc. Where the Ministries concerned so desire, a separate series of publications called "1951 Census Brochures" will be prepared—one for each subject.]

Six Chapters.—Apart from an introduction and (if necessary) some appendices, the subject matter of the 1951 Census Report will be arranged in six chapters as below:—

Chapter I—General Population Chapter II—Rural Population Chapter III—Urban Population Chapter IV—Agricultural Classes Chapter V—Non-Agricultural Classes Chapter VI—Families, Sexes and Principal Age Groups Sections and Subsidiary Tables.—Each chapter will be divided into a number of sections, and at the end of each chapter there will be a set of Subsidiary Tables which will form the statistical basis of the narrative review and exposition contained in the Chapter.

Comments on first sections.—The first section of each chapter is headed "Preliminary Remarks". This section should contain explanatory comments on all the statistical data reviewed in the chapter, to the extent necessary for proper understanding of their meaning, degree of reliability and comparability with corresponding data of prior censuses. Further, comments of an introductory character relevant to the subject matter of the whole chapter, and not conveniently assigned to any subsequent section should be indicated in this section.

Comments on other sections (except the last).— The subject matter of each section is indicated by the section-heading as well as form-heading of related Subsidiary Tables. The figures in each of the relevant Subsidiary Tables should be reviewed, both horizontally and vertically. Significant similarities and dissimilarities will emerge from this review.

All features which are apparently significant should be referred to in the narrative exposition. It is not necessary that detailed research should be underatken in order to explain all of them. But as much explanation as possible should be furnished of significant trends regarding growth of population. Every effort should be made to analyse such trends into two parts viz., the part accountable by movement of population and the part accountable by natural increase (excess of births over deaths); and the fullest possible information (based on local knowledge of movement of population into tracts presenting unusually rapid growth and out of tracts presenting unusually slow growth) should be obtained from District Officers and made use of in appropriate sections. Whenever any feature of apparent significance is commented upon, the corresponding chapter of the 1931 Census Report should be consulted for prior comments, if any, on the same feature.

Comments on last Sections.—The last section of each chapter is headed "Concluding Remarks". It is intended to contain a very concise summary of the main conclusions reached in earlier sections about significant features brought to light by the review of statistical data, and their explanation, if any.

Further, the last sections of all the six chapters should be organically linked to one another successively in the following manner. The last section of the first chapter should contain, on the basis of all the material contained in that chapter, a preliminary forecast of the probable growth of general population during the decade (1951-60)—in each of the natural divisions of the territory dealt with in the Report. The last sections of the second and third chapters should contain a similar preliminary forecast in respect of the rural population and urban population separately.

The last section of the fourth chapter should draw attention to the extent to which increase of livelihood derived from cultivation has (in the past) outstripped, kept pace with, or fallen short of the increase of population in each of the natural divisions of the area dealt with; and indicate the likely prospect for the decade (1951-60).

The last section of the fifth chapter should draw attention to the extent to which increase of employment in industries and services has (in the past) outstripped, kept pace with, or fallen short of the increase of population. Considering this result together with that recorded at the end of the fourth chapter, has the aggregate livelihood of the people kept pace with the growth of population? This should be indicated as also the prospect for the decade (1951-60).

The last section of the sixth chapter should end with a statement of opinion on whether the facts relating to family size and component, . Sex ratios and Age structure afford any indication regarding probable trend of population changes beyond the decude (1951-60).]

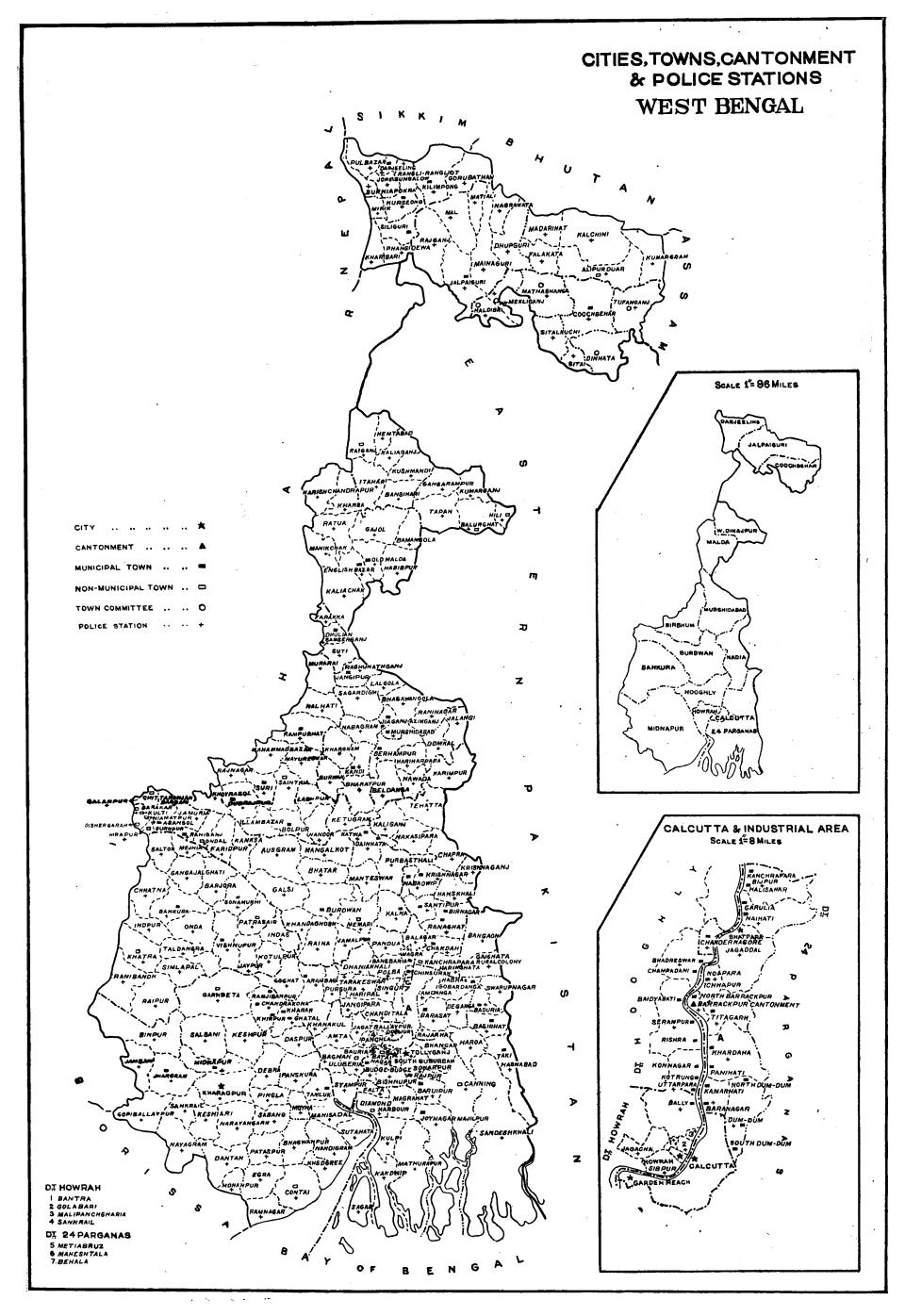
General Comments.-It does not matter if available material does not permit of analysis sufficiently definite for reaching conclusions on the lines described above. It does not also matter if the time available to reporting officers is insufficient for carrying out even such analysis as may be permitted by the material. What is essential is that the prescribed Subsidiary Tables should be correctly prepared and the reporting officers should apply their mind to these tables and attempt a review on the lines indicated. It is unnecessary to spend time on the perfection of phrase and style. The quality of the Report will depend on its lucidity, precision and (consistently with these requirements) conciseness. The reports thus prepared will be of value mainly as the starting point of more detailed studies, (to be undertaken subsequently) of the inter-relationship of population changes and economic changes in the country as a whole, as well as in the different States and natural divisions of the country. If this purpose is served, Reporting Officers will have discharged their duty.

THE CENSUS PUBLICATIONS

The Census Publications for West Bengal, Sikkim and Chandernagore will consist of the following volumes. All volumes will be of uniform size, demy quarto $8\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{4}{7}$:

Part IA-General Report by A. Mitra (the present volume).

- Part IB—Vital Statistics. West Bengal, 1941—50 by A. Mitra and P. G. Choudhury, containing a Preface, 60 tables, and several appendices. 75 pages. Published in December 1952.
- Part IC—General Report by A. Mitra, containing the Subsidiary Tables of 1951 and the sixth chapter of the Report and a note on a Fertility Inquiry conducted in 1950. Several Appendices. A report on the natural resources, trades and industries of the State with two bibliographies by Chanchal Kumar Chatterjee and Kamal Majumdar. About 450 pages. Ready in May 1953.
- Part II—Union and State Census Tables of West Bengal, Sikkim and Chandernagore by A. Mitra. 540 pages. Published in February 1953.
- Parts III & IV—Report with Census Tables on Calcutta City and Calcutta Industrial area by A. Mitra. About 250 pages. Ready in May 1953.
- Part V—Administrative Report of the Census Operations of West Bengal, Sikkim, Chandernagore and Calcutta City: Enumeration: by A. Mitra. 96 pages. Published in November 1952.
- The Castes and Tribes of West Bengal—edited by A. Mitra, containing 1951 tables of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal. A monograph on the Origin of Caste by Sailendranath Sengupta, a monograph on several artisan castes and tribes by Sudhangsu Kumar Roy; articles by Professor Kshitishprasad Chattopadhyay, and Sri Sailendranath Sengupta on the racial composition of Bengalees, with anthropometric tables; an article on Dharmapuja by Sri Asutosh Bhattacharyya. Selections from old authorities like Sherring, Dalton, Risley, Gait and O'Malley. An introduction. 18 plates. About 400 pages. Published in May 1953.
- An Account of Land Management in West Bengal, 1872-1952 by A. Mitra, containing extracts, accounts and statistics over 80-year period and agricultural statistics compiled at the Census of 1951, with an introduction. About 250 pages. Ready in June 1953.
- Fairs and Festivals in West Bengal by A. Mitra, containing an account of fairs and festivals classified by villages, unions, thanas and districts. With a foreward and extracts from the laws on the regulation of fairs and festivals. About 45 pages. Published in April 1953.
- District Handbooks for each West Bengal District by A. Mitra. Each volume contains an Introductory essay, several important appendices, and about 82 tables, together with a list of ancient monuments in each district. Contains also a village directory where the J. L. No. of every village, its name, area, total population, number of houses, number of literates, and the population of the village classified into eight livelihood classes are tabulated. The Handbooks for Hooghly and Burdwan were published in May 1952 and March 1953 respectively. The Handbooks for Malda Howrah, West Dinajpur and Murshidabad are in the Press. The whole series is expected to be completed by 1954. Each volume will contain about 300 pages.
- A catalogue of the better known ancient monuments of West Bengal by A. Mitra. Will contain brief descriptions of extant ancient monuments in each district of the State, dating up to 1800, with exact location and present state. With many plates. About 600 pages.



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(Prepared by SRI BIMAL KUMAR MITRA AND SRI SACHINDRANATH MUKHERJEE)

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(Prepared by SRI UPENDRACHANDRA DEY)

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The ninth census of West Bengal was taken between the 9th February and 3rd March of 1951 with sunrise of the 1st March as the Reference Day.

Before proceeding to an account of

how the census was taken and tabulated, it may be interesting to note how the Census Superintendent's area of operation has changed since 1872. The following statement provides the outline.

Year	Provinces	Number of Ad- minis- trative Divisions	Area in square miles	No. of towns & villages	Persons	Males	Females
1872	West Bengal, East Bengal Bihar, Orissa, Chhota Nagpur, Assam.		248,231	201,096	66,856,859	*33,398,605	*33,274,074
1881	West Bengal, East Bengal Bihar, Orissa, Chhota Nagpur, Feudatory States of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.	. 7.	187,222	264,765	69,536,861	34,625,591	34,911,270
1891	West Bengal, East Bengal Bihar, Orissa, Chhota Nagpur, Tributary States, Santal Parganas) 7	187,336	244,472	74,643,366	37,236,485	37,406,881
1901	West Bengal, East Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chhote Nagpur, Feudatory States of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Tippera, Sikkim,	, 14 , , ,	189,837	222,855	78,493,410	39,278,186	39,215,224
1911	West Bengal, East Bengal, Cooch Behar, Tippera, Sikkim.		84,092	123,369	46,305,642	23,803,593	22,502, 049
1921	Same as 1911	8	82.277	89,660	47,592,462	24,628,365	22,964,097
1931	Same as 1911	•	82,955	91,343	51.087.338	26,557,860	24,529,478
1941	Same as 1911	8	82,876	90,156	61.460.377	32,360,401	29,099,976
1951	West Bengal, Chander nagore, Sikkim,		33,524	35,278	24,997,942	13,445,871	11,552,071

* Excludes 148,918 Garos and Nagas of Assam and 35,262 persons in respect of Hill Tippera.

The reduced area of operation in 1881 contributed to improvement in the census organisation, and the better control thus secured was turned to good use in 1891 and 1901. A further reduction in area in 1911 must have brought about a greater measure of control and supervision maintained and improved up to 1941. Census Superintendents were henceforth enabled to pay at least one visit to all district headquarters and some subdivisional headquarters and not obliged to leave their work entirely to that overworked incumbent, the District Magistrate. In 1950-51 the Superintendent was able to pay two visits to each district headquarters before the enumeration was undertaken in February 1951. The census in India

is pre-eminently an administrative undertaking, and like all other work of this nature, its success and accuracy depend largely on the amount of personal and local supervision a regional superintendent is able to bestow on the ground staff. Thus although the area has progressively shrunk from decade to decade reducing his area of survey, the smaller area has given the Superintendent at least the satisfaction of closer supervision, more necessary now than ever before when District Magistrates can no longer be expected to trouble themselves with the minutiae of this work, for even as long ago as in 1901 Gait had observed that "fully occupied, as they already were, with their ordinary duties, the

3 CENSUS

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census must have been a heavy additional burden, and cannot well have been regarded otherwise than as an unmitigated nuisance!"

The arrangements for the census followed generally the lines laid down in 1941 but made important departures. Three important innovations had been introduced in 1941. Instead of a synchronous census on one night, the taking of the census was spread over a full week, followed by a revisionary period of three days, with the night of the seventh day as the reference night against which all entries were to be checked for the final record. Secondly, the family schedule for recording census information was abandoned in favour of the individual slip, which, apart from dispensing with slip copying in the tabulation stage, brought about almost a revolution in procedure. The enumerator was now fairly and squarely saddled with the responsibility of producing a correct record himself, the literate head of a household being no longer expected to fill in the schedule for his own family. Attention settled finally on the individual and not the family, and the mere act of making out a slip for every person probably ensured a greater measure of accuracy, the enumerator no longer needing to remain content with the household as a unit. Finally, the enumerator was required to fill in enumeration slips with the use of contractions, numerals and symbols which were expected to lessen his burden and facilitate tabulation. In 1951 all these innovations were retained and improved upon. The individual slip and the use of contractions, numerals and symbols came to stay, while the period of enumeration was increased to twentythree days: twenty days from the 9th February to midnight of the 28th being devoted to the count; the sunrise of the 1st of March being regarded as the reference date against which all entries and omissions were to be finally checked; to be followed by three days, from the 1st to the 3rd

March, for the revisionary round. Along with the recording of the count on slips, the National Register of Citizens was required to be filled up by every enumerator in respect of his area. This National Register was devised as a register or schedule for the village; and instead of the family schedule used up to 1931 the enumerator was to transcribe a schedule for the village, entering the households in the order in which they were numbered, and under each household all its inmates. For each inmate almost all the items of information recorded on the census slip were to be copied, and a careful tally made for births, deaths, arrivals and final tallies before the Register was handed over to Authority on the 4th of The enumerator was thus March. expected to perform two separate and distinct functions: the function of slip copying which, up to 1931, had been done by paid employees in central tabulation offices after the count had been taken; and the making of the village schedules, which were slightly more complicated than the family schedules and more onerous because the enumerator was expected to do all of it himself without the head of the household doing part of the writing for him.

The operations were initiated in December 1949, before the Superintendent joined in January 1950, by circulars of a general nature from the Census Commissioner. The Indian Census Act of 1948 (XXXVII of 1948) created for the first time a permanent Census Department at the Centre and provided the legal basis. Preliminary arrangements were initiated as early as the 28th March, 1950, with a summary of census opérations and orders under which a "census mauza register" was prepared to account for the whole area in each district and a preliminary estimate was made of the number of houses in each mauza with names of the individuals likely to constitute a satisfactory census agency. The first step was thus to obtain an accurate and up-to-date record of all inhabited and uninhabited areas, *i.e.*, to prepare a register in which every village was entered with suitable remarks. This was to ensure first, that no village or hamlet was overlooked or entered more than once; secondly, that no house in a village or hamlet escaped enumeration; and thirdly, which came later, that every person living in a house was accounted for.

This is not altogether an easy task as it involves collation and correction of one inch. and, in not a few cases, of 16''=1 mile maps of the entire State to account for all notified changes of jurisdiction, uninhabited mauzas, and water areas. The mauza register having been compiled for all rural and urban areas, and all differences over area and jurisdiction having been reconciled, each district was parcelled out into census divisions. Up to 1941 the primary census unit was the enumerator's block, or a group of about 40 houses for which an enumerator was responsible. But the main plank in the tabulation programme of 1951 was the preparation of a primary census abstract for every village or mauza, or an account of the population of every ultimate geographical unit in terms of its number of houses, households, literates, males and females, divided into General, Sample and Displaced Persons, each category in its turn classified into eight main census livelihood classes. The preparation of a Village Directory, or a full occupational account of the population of every mauza, was a unique and . quite the most important feature of this census and it was necessary to provide for its compilation from the very beginning. It was therefore imperative to keep the mauza as the ultimate unit which was thus identified with the enumerator's block. An enumerator's area was enlarged, in the expectation that he would be paid an honorarium for his labours, and except in large and populous mauzas, it became conterminous with the mauza. When a large and

populous mauza had to be parcelled out to more than one enumerator, each portion was called a sub-block, the idea being that all returns were to be submitted for the mauza as a whole by combining the sub-blocks. The mauza was thus held together and the enumerator's area enlarged to an average of 146 census houses. The blocks or mauzas were grouped together by circles, or fractions of unions, each of which was under a supervisor, the average circle in the State containing about 4.2 inhabited mauzas and 635-6 houses. The circles again were grouped together by charges, which, as a rule, correspond to selfgoverning unions, and were under superintendents. The enumerator was ordinarily the village primary school teacher, the supervisor a member of the Union Board, and the superintendent, the President or Vice-President of the Union Board. The Charge Superintendents, who were responsible for the operations throughout each charge. were themselves subordinate to the Circle Officers, who were gazetted officers of the Government in charge of several police stations each, and the latter to the Subdivisional Officers and to the District Census Officers, who were appointed for each district.

The actual enumeration was conducted by an improvised agency of superintendents, supervisors, and enumerators, all unpaid, except for the rate of Rs. 2 per one hundred persons counted given to enumerators in outlying districts and of Rs. 3-2-0 per one hundred persons counted in Calcutta (enumerators from the ranks of the Calcutta Police declining to accept it out of sentiments of national service, and the Municipal authorities of Howrah paying the difference of Rs. 3-2-0, the Calcutta rate, and Rs. 2 allowed by the Government). Enumeration was therefore in the main honorary and in West Bengal, Chandernagore and Sikkim as many as 37,004 enumerators, 8,463 circle supervisors and 2,458 charge superintendents were employed with a liberal reserve for each category. In many localities, especially in Birbhum, Bankura, Malda, West Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Sikkim it was no easy matter to obtain a sufficient supply of literate and intelligent enumerators, and a long training was necessary before they could understand the duties required of them. Even where suitable men were available, their natural reluctance to serve without pay had to be overcome, and the lesson brought home to them that the census was conducted by, through, and for the people, and that, perhaps for the first time in their lives, they would be actively discharging a public duty. It was fortunate that the Press and the general popular mood were helpful and sympathetic, and the name National Register of Citizens caught the fancy of the general public. The appreciation that a sober, unbiassed census was at the root of all public plans and aspirations generated a friendly disposition in its favour, absent in 1941 and 1931, and facilitated the operations.

The vast majority of the population of the State does not live in towns, and in rural areas the type of village generally found in other parts of India hardly exists. Still less does the aspect of the countryside resemble that met with in Europe. Instead of orderly rows of fairly substantial houses ranged along some well laid thoroughfare, one finds straggling homesteads over the whole countryside, each consisting of mud or matwalled huts ranged round a courtyard and buried under a thick growth of shady trees. At first glance it would seem fairly impossible to account for every homestead, much less to complete a census of all the inhabitants. The task is, however, not as impossible as it appears, and the solution of the difficulty lies in the employment of local men, to whom the task of dealing with circumscribed areas, familiar to them from their childhood, is a problem unlike that to a stranger.

The first work of the supervisors and enumerators was to number every house or part of a house, that was inhabited or likely to be inhabited by a family, using tar or some other suitable material for marking it, and to write up for each mauza complete lists of houses with descriptions of their structure and use and the number of persons in each. Each mauza had to have one serial throughout its boundary as a safeguard against being mixed up with the next. A house was defined as the residence of a commensal family but the application of this definition gave rise to numerous knotty questions, especially in Calcutta and surrounding areas and in those settlements where Displaced Persons from Pakistan had foregathered. How, for instance, was an enumerator to mark a house which contained nine living rooms, two kitchens, one bathhouse, and eight families, two of whom possessed two living rooms each, three had one living room each, and four shared the remaining two living rooms? Again, how were the numbers to be affixed? The Toto huts in the Bhutan border of Jalpaiguri, for instance, are mere bamboo shacks on raised platforms, and no number could be painted on them. So, the number had to be painted on slabs of wood, which were either stuck on the walls or hung from the eaves. The Totos did not leave them there, but carefully wrapped them up in rags and leaves and put them away in bamboo baskets which form their strong boxes.

Between October and December, after they had completed the numbering of houses, and furnished a close preliminary estimate of the State's population, enumerators were methodically trained and persuaded to take a sample training census to test for themselves and for the satisfaction of the supervisory agency the knowledge and skill they had acquired in recording slips. The record thus prepared was systematically discussed and checked in

training classes, while, in the meantime, they were provided with pads of enumeration slips and forms of the National Register of Citizens. The final census commenced on the morning of the 9th February 1951, the enumerators beginning their count with the lowest serial in their lists. The first round of enumeration was completed on the evening of the 28th February; the night of the 28th and the morning of the 1st March were devoted to the counting of the homeless population The on the streets and open spaces. first three days of March were employed in a revisionary round when each enumerator went round his area, checked the entries in his preliminary record, made careful tallies of all entries. and those who added details of had subsequently arrived or been born. Preliminary totals were begun on the 4th March in each district, and were telephoned from Calcutta as early as 8-45 P.M. on the 5th March. Birbhum and Cooch Behar telegraphed their totals on the 8th and figures for the State, except West Dinajpur, where an assembly bye-election drew off all officers till the 30th March and cramped their style, were ready on the 16th of March. Figures for the State were published on the 31st March and the difference between these totals (24,786,683) and the figures on final counting (24,810,308) amounted for the whole State to 23,625 or 1 per thousand of population. In some districts, however, the approach to the final figures was very close. In Calcutta, for instance, figures for which were communicated within 2 days of the final census by Sri Khagendranath Mitra, the discrepancy was only 4 per thousand; Darjeeling, for which figures were telegraphed within 7 days by Sri S. C. Roy, was out by $\cdot 2$ per thousand; and Bankura, for which figures were telegraphed by Sri Harisadhan Mukherjee within 7 days, was out by only 1 per thousand. To one conversant with the condition of village roads in the State.

the efficiency of the telegraph system, the inaccessibility and snowbound tracks of certain parts of Darjeeling and Sikkim, this promptness will provide no little wonder.

The final results were obtained by sorting, compilation and tabulation, of which there were, as the terms imply, three stages.

Quite some time before the census count, arrangements were completed for the reception of the census records at four regional offices in the State. To the central office at Calcutta were allotted the districts of Hooghly, Howrah, 24-Parganas, Calcutta and Nadia: to the central office at Midnapur the districts of Burdwan, Bankura and Midnapur; to the central office at Berhampur the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad, Malda, West Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar; and to the central office at Darjeeling the district of Darjeeling and the State of Sikkim. Work started in Calcutta in the middle of March 1951; in Midnapur and Berhampur towards the end of that month, after the core of the staff of those offices had fully trained and acquired an amount of skill in the Calcutta Office; and in May in Darjeeling. In the last week of the month of July 1951, the records of West Dinajpur. Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar were transferred from Berhampur to be sorted and compiled in Calcutta. The Midnapur and Berhampur offices were wound up in the first week of September and the third week of October of 1951 respectively, on the conclusion of sorting and compilation, while the Darjeeling office was wound up on the 29th of August 1951. Thereafter, the records of all the three outlying offices were brought over to Calcutta, together with their best. residual staff to complete the final stage of the operations: tabulation of the results and the publication of the final tables.

Sorting is the process of arranging the slips of individuals under the heads required for the various final tables,

counting the slips thus arranged, and entering the number on forms provided for the purpose, which are called sorter's tickets. It was performed manually with the help of pigeonholes, similar to those for sorting mail in post offices, no punching or sorting machine having been employed. Each sorter dealt with some 30,000 slips. As soon as information for the Village Directory was extracted from the slips of each village and town, the records were grouped by larger units of roughly 180,000 slips each by combining in some cases two or more police stations. But nowhere did this grouping transgress the bounds of an administrative district. whereas the main population tables for police stations had already been built up from the Village Directories. While sorting was in progress, inquiry was made of district officers into doubtful entries, and various nice points of classification were settled by discussion with colleagues in other States and the Registrar General.

When sorting had advanced a little the central offices undertook compilation of the results entered in sorter's tickets. Compilation is the intermediate stage between the final table form and the raw material of the sorter's tickets. in which matter is rearranged, reconciled and put into shape for police stations, towns and districts for transcription on to the final table forms. The process started almost simultaneously with sorting, but as compilers were also expected to supervise the work of sorters, there was an inevitable time lag, which was perhaps all for the best, because it gave them time so necessary to allow complicated operations to settle well into their minds.

Compilation was carried out in the central offices,—here again without the help of machines, except for a comptometer at each office to help verify the final totals,—as far as to obtain the district totals, and the compilation registers with the sorter's tickets, together with all other records, slips, and the National Register, were then forwarded to the Deputy Superintendent of the Central Office in Calcutta, where the compilations were finally checked and the final tables prepared. This final stage of tabulation was the lengthiest and most harrassing stage, where every little doubt or discrepancy had to be verified again with compilation registers, sorter's tickets, and in several cases, by a fresh sorting of the slips of the population in doubt. Each final table was sent to the office of the Registrar General in New Delhi for a final check before publication.

It is a matter of regret that, apart from a number of information on the Census slip which were never extracted or tabulated for reasons of economy. certain other information, which were extracted, compiled or even finalised in the Central Tabulation Offices are not going to be published, again for reasons of public economy and policy. Neither the Report nor the Tables render an adequate account of the labours performed by the Census Department, an approximate idea of which it will, however, be possible to form when all the twenty and odd reports, including special reports and District Handbooks, which are expected to replace the District Gazetteers, are published in the course of 1953. Nevertheless. the necessity for stringent economy has made it impossible to make use of some part of the information recorded in the slips.

It is difficult to make with confidence an estimate of the accuracy of the results. At every stage error can be introduced by inadvertence or ignorance and a band of about 1,400 inexperienced persons, temporarily employed between three and five months on a consolidated average pay of about Rs. 85/- per month, certainly do not create ideal conditions for patient statistical work or guarantee absolute accuracy. All census reports so far published carry, in varying degrees, traces of hurried work and improbable data, and it is not pretended that the present report has been rid of obvicus and bad blemishes. They are spots which an Indian census cannot change. The superintendents, supervisors and enumerators numbering 47,925 in all were a voluntary agency, and, if as long ago as 1872 the first census superintendent had occasion to regret that 'it is also true that some officers have pointed out the unpopularity of the work, and the dissatisfaction of those whose gratuitous services were employed', it requires no great imagination to appreciate the extent of reluctance met with in 1950. Happily, a number of circumstances were in favour of gratuitous service: a genuine desire to discharge a public duty honourably and well in the inviting air of independence; a realisation which, it should be gratefully acknowledged, all sections of the Press did their best to publicise and encourage, that a good and correct census, not secured since 1921 owing to communal rivalry, is essential in 1951 to provide the country the basic human data so necessary for all planning and development: the end of communal rivalry and a general willingness to wish the census a complete success; and, finally, the popularity of the idea of a National Register of Citizens, although ideas were vague about its possible uses consistent with the secrecy of a personal census document. It was the abundance of this good will, which replaced communal rivalry of recent censuses and apathy of earlier ones, which made it possible to take a census in 1951 on a voluntary and gratuitous basis, and ensure a high degree of accuracy. After the conclusion of the census in March 1951, many State Governments, at the request of the Registrar General, arranged for а sample check through their officers of the quality of the census, West Bengal being one of the very few or perhaps alone in declining to do it. Those States which took a sample verification of the results of the census

reported that the difference between the results of the verification and the census count was a small underenumeration, 0.9 per cent in Bombay and a little over 1 per cent in Mysore. It should be borne in mind that West paid small honoraria to Bengal enumerators which might have put them in a better humour than their opposite numbers in other States. In 1941 the Superintendent observed that a census was as good or as bad as the moral attitude of the people towards it, and both in 1921 and 1931 the Superintendents reported that they had had to experience difficulties born of communal rivalry and civil disobedience movements. Conditions in 1951, however, were more favourable to the taking of a correct census than ever before in the history of this country, and experience of past censuses, the advantages of a diminished area rendering closer personal supervision possible, the correct measure of enlightened enthusiasm free from communal bias and rivalry, a favourable Press, must all have contributed a great deal to the thoroughness and accuracy of the count. The paucity, in fact, absence of complaints against having been left out of the count, in spite of repeated notices in the Press inviting them, is a testimony to the thoroughness with which the task may be believed to have been completed, and if in 1921 and 1931 the Superintendents, in spite of unfavourable circumstances, had thought it fit to claim an accuracy of as much as within one per thousand (although the basis of this assertion is nowhere discussed in the reports) for their counts, it may not be unreasonable to claim a greater, if not like, accuracy for this count also. Α provisional count taken during the house-numbering stage in November-December 1950 put the estimate for the State at 25,512,714. The final count turned out to be 24,810,308, revealing a deficit of 2.8 per cent from the houselist population. The deficits were most marked in the following districts for

which plausible explanations can be readily offered, without laying oneself open to the charge of sophistry: which is, that of these districts Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur and Murshidabad import large numbers of harvesters, men, women and children, from Bihar and Orissa States in the harvesting season of November-December, who return to their homes in February-March: while in the industrial districts of Howrah and 24-Parganas February and March are the slack months for Jute Mills when the latter declare a holiday to enable Bihar and up-country labour to return to their home in time for the rabi harvest. About November-December 1950 Nadia had the largest concentration of Displaced Persons from East Bengal, many of whom, owing to an easing of tension as a result of the Delhi Pact of 1950, the necessity of gathering in the harvest in their villages in East Bengal, and also out of a desire to be counted in Pakistan because a rumour was afoot that anyone who was left out of the census count in Pakistan would be dispossessed of his property, had left

Nadia in February-March 1951, still others having been dispersed during January and February 1951 from its large Transit Camps to all parts of the State and even outside the State. Besides, the houselist population was computed with much less care than the final count, there was a tendency on the part of the enumerator to make a liberal estimate at the former stage so that he might not be found wanting in sending his requisition for enumeration slips which was based on that count, and there was a greater tendency on the part of the householder. where modified rationing prevailed, during the houselist count to declare the same strength for his household as he held ration cards for. This last tendency was combated and eliminated by three months of incessant publicity that the census record was a confidential document which could not be made use of by the Rationing Department. To return from the digression, the following were the districts where the discrepancies between the houselist population and the final estimate were the widest as the statement will show :

District								Houselist Estimate	Final Estimate	Variation Increase+ Decrease
Burdwan .							•	2,228,467	2,191,667	36,800
Birbhum .								1,102,735	1,066,889	- 35.846
Bankura .	•		•					1.370.732	1,319,259	- 51.473
Midnapur								3,452,154	3,359,022	- 93.132
Howrah .								1.688.641	1,611,373	77.268
24-Parganas					•			4.848.497	4,609,309	-239,188
Nadia .	•							1,232,718	1,144,924	- 87.794
Murshidabad	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1,770,674	1,715,759	- 54,915
					Total			17,694,618	17,018,202	-676,416

It is significant that all the above districts record a decrease in the final count. Calcutta recorded a slight increase from 2,540,357 of the houselist population to 2,548,677, explained partly by the fact that the houselist population did not include that which sleep on Calcutta pavements, open spaces, and markets counted on the reference night of the 28th February 1951. Hooghly records a small increase

tively perhaps due to the return of harvesters to Pakistan and Bihar; Jalpaiguri an increase from 898,731 to 914,538 perhaps owing to influx of more Displaced Persons; Darjeeling a decrease from 459,024 to 445,260 per-

from 1,551,798 to 1,554,320 perhaps on

account of the influx of Displaced

Persons; Malda and West Dinajpur a

negligible decrease from 955,520 and

738,227 to 937,580 and 720,573 respec-

haps due to people moving to the plains and Nepal in the winter months of February and March; and Cooch Behar records a small decrease from 674,439 to 671,158 perhaps due to too generous an estimate of the population of Chhitmahals or the district's enclaves in Pakistan during the houselist stage. It may be mentioned in passing that enumeration of the Chhitmahals was the least satisfactory performance of this census, not only because of the inaccessibility of these enclaves and the difficulties put by the Pakistan border police in the way of our enumerators, but also because many residents of these enclaves considered it a safer course to be counted in the Pakistan census which was being simultaneously held at this time. If we leave out of account the differences in the districts of Burdwan, Birbhum, 24 -Bankura, Midnapur, Howrah. Parganas and Hooghly, the difference between the houselist population so adjusted and the final count narrows down to only 25,990 (702,406-676,416) or a deficit of only one per thousand of the final population. This is a good enough tally obtained from two independent counts taken three months apart in which the estimated natural increase during the period can just fit in. This looks like a casual treatment of such a weighty subject as population statistics, but, indeed, it is no part of the author's intention to make light of figures which about 50,000 persons have sacrificed their leisure and business gratuitously ungrudgingly and to collect conscientiously and patiently, willingly submitting themselves to months of irksome discipline. But the point which the writer wishes to make out is that the census being a phoenix, rising out of its ashes every ten years, and a person who is primarily an administrator and not a statistician being called upon to conduct a census with the help of a department which he starts from scratch with no preterite tradition to help and guide him except

what is left in the administrative reports of his predecessors, such a census is not expected to satisfy all the tests of a scientific inquiry. In making this admission he is claiming no more nor less than what his predecessors claimed for their performances, mindful of the happy possibility that each successive census is by an accumulation of experience and improvement in administrative machinery better and more correct than the preceding one; even as the census of 1961 may be expected to be better than this one. But while this is so, it is well to remember the many shortcomings of the census organisation and its chronic impecuniosity, which prevents a great many improvements from being given effect to. For instance, it is sad to reflect that a superintendent still has to be a geographer, cartographer, administrator, coordinator of co-ordinators, a theoretician and a master interpreter all rolled in one, or, for that matter, that we still have to be content with manual tabulation with the help of pigeonholes, squatting cross-legged on the floor seven hours a day, the physical exhaustion of which must ultimately affect the quality of the day's work. And this is a reason why complicated correlations or polynomials have been discarded. In spite of the great improvements introduced from time to first time since the census was undertaken in 1872, the following remarks of the first Census Superintendent in 1872 largely hold good even to this day:

"A census, to be strictly accurate, should be an enumeration of every person in the country at a particular moment of time. If the enumeration is not simultaneous, or, in other words, if the returns do not have reference to some particular period, an element of error is introduced in the possible omission or double entry of persons who have moved from one part of the country to another. The longer the period over which the enumeration extends, the greater of course is the chance of error. Human beings are born and die every moment and therefore from a scientific point of view an enumeration which extends over two or three weeks, or even two or three days, is so far imperfect. For practical purposes, however, such an enumeration is probably quite as useful as any other. In any examination therefore into the results of the late census, it must be understood that no claim is made to scientific accuracy for the work as a whole. If it fairly represents the total number of persons in any particular part of the country at the time that part of the country was censused, the object aimed at may be considered to have been achieved. Where the returns do err, the population no doubt is understated" (Report on the Census of Bengal, 1872, pp. 62-68).

It is only fair that the writer himself should take the opportunity of presenting the worst features of his case, before others happen to pick holes in the fabric. From the experience of other States, and from what has been explained above it seems possible that the population is slightly understated. The outermost limit of this underestimate is stated with great accuracy but is likely to be one per thousand of the final count, and from all internal evidence it is unlikely that the deficit, if any, indeed, should have exceeded it. The innermost limit cannot be stated either beyond the general remark that the population may be slightly understated.

This Report is being presented with no little feeling of hesitancy. In the very nature of his assignment it is difficult for a Census Superintendent to impart that roundedness or finality to his effort which can defy scrutiny. As the arrangement of the Census Reports and publications set out in an earlier page will show, the present incumbent has had on his hands the building up, editing, printing and publishing of more than two dozen volumes, of an average of 300 closely printed pages of uniform size each, with no 'background' of previous experience, of office, or even trained assistants, officers or scholars to help him. His hour-glass was only three years, the first of which was spent largely in training, holding together, and putting into work, a band of about 50,000 honorary workers; the second, spent on working five offices manned by about 1,500 very poorly paid extratemporary assistants who had to be trained from scratch before being put in charge of work; and the latter eight months of the third under the burden of part-time, and sometimes full time, work in the Development Department of the State Government. Throughout this tenure there was much administrative work to discharge, touring and local investigation to do, the boredom, waste of time, and inconvenience in travelling close on fifty thousand miles in three years being enlivened only by the hobby of making up a catalogue and a fat album of photographs of ancient monuments in the State. Every employee in the several offices was a novice and had to be trained patiently first to be able to undertake his task. The luxury of the assistance or services of scholars was severely denied. Here must be mentioned a circumstance in explanation, if not in extenuation, of the meagre fare provided in many places; for example, in the sections dealing with the natural resources of the State in the Introductory chapter of the present volume. The State having been badly cut up by the Partition of 1947, I felt, soon after assuming charge, that I could not make much of the classic subject of a census report: the rate of change of population and the rate of the rate of change. As alternative fare I thought to give an account of various aspects of the State and accordingly addressed as early as September and October 1950 personal letters to the Directors of the Meteorological Survey of India, the Zoological Survey of India, the Geological Survey

of India, the Botanical Survey of India, the Anthropological Survey of India and to several renowned scholars them to contribute short inviting covering West Bengal on surveys the subjects of which they were authorities. The requests were graciaccepted with promises ously of help. But I regret to have to record that although I did not fail in my duty to send periodic reminders which were acknowledged with assurances of prompt compliance I did not have the good fortune of eliciting any survey from any of these institutions and scholars, except from the Meteorological Survey of India through the Registrar General. Under the circumstances, a lavman had to make shift as best as he could.

I cannot acknowledge too fully the services of the great body of private individuals and Government officials who conducted the census and brought it to a satisfactory conclusion. I wish to pay grateful tributes to all voluntary and honorary workers who worked ungrudgingly for a number of months to the detriment of their own convenience and profit. I wish to express my obligations to the Governor for his messages and radio broadcasts, to the Chief Minister, Dr. B. C. Roy, and other Ministers who made references to the necessity of a correct census during their tours, issued messages and gave radio talks, to Sri S. N. Ray, Chief Secretary, whom I bothered in and out of time, to Sri M. M. Basu, Joint Secretary, Home (Constitution and Election) Department, without whose constant advice I do not see how the operations could have gone on so smoothly, to the Divisional Commissioners who obliged me by keeping every request, to the Refugee Rehabilitation, Food, Labour and Development Commissioners, to all Secretaries and Directors of Departments, to their Deputy and Assistant Secretaries, and offices. I wish to thank various nonofficial organisations like the Chambers

of Commerce and editors of journals for having so kindly supplied information always at short notice, to Companies like the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation and the Tramways Company. I feel that I have omitted to mention a large number of names. both individual and otherwise, to whom I am indebted for assistance and information. The amount of ungrudging help that has been received is overwhelming. Among officers who worked with me. I wish to thank Sri Gaur Chandra Mallik, sometime my Assistant Superintendent, and mv Personal Assistant, Sri Binay Bhushan Sengupta, who largely relieved me of routine work towards the concluding stages. I am under a special obligation to Sri Khagendranath Mitra, first Special Officer of Calcutta and later Deputy Superintendent in charge of compilation in the Calcutta Office and all tabulation work, to Sri Pravash Kumar Bose in charge of the Tabulation Office in Midnapur, Sri Sushil Chandra Neyogi, Assistant Superintendent of Census Operations in the Calcutta Office, and Sri Sukman Singh Gajameer in charge of the Tabulation Office in Darjeeling. To them and to all District Census Officers the census owes a great deal of the efficiency and smoothness with which it went, and it is a matter of no small satisfaction that four of them were promoted to the West Bengal Civil Service on the conclusion of the census: Srijuts Bhabatosh Chakravorti Nadia, Samartosh Banerji of of Hooghly, Pravash Kumar Bose of Calcutta, and Kandarpamohan Roy of Chandernagore. I must also express my obligations to all District and Subdivisional Officers who answered my queries patiently for over two years, and, when I was on tour, looked after me in every way. These acknowledgements fail to include a large number of private individuals, institutions and officials as well as members of the Census Department to whom I

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Kumar Chakravorti. Librarian of the West Bengal Secretariat Library, interest, whose promptness. and resourcefulness enabled me to consult a large number of books, which could hardly otherwise have been located, and who was good enough to prepare a bibliography of books actually used in the preparation of the Report, the Special publications, and District Handbooks.

To the Manager of the Government of India Press in Calcutta, Sri B. K. Roy, I must offer my sincerest thanks for the consideration, courtesy, and utmost despatch with which he has treated all census script. During the Enumeration period his promptness had made it unnecessary to go to other presses for supplementary work and his advice was always available as to the best, most attractive, and cheapest way of printing a book bristling with long and apparently intractable tables. But for him the publication of the Report would indeed have been a very distressing proposition.

The most important event that has occurred since the last census of 1941 is the partition in August 1947 of what history has so long known as Banga or Bangla or Bengal into two portions, roughly in the proportion of three to five, and the apportionment of the two parts to two entirely separate sovereign States, India and Pakistan. A country which since the beginning of recorded history was regarded as one geographical unit with a peculiar ethnic and cultural homogeneity,-a man from Bengal was a man from Bengal and not from any particular region or district in it, in contrast with a man from Lucknow or a man from Jaunpur or a man from Allahabad, who seldom called himself a man from the Uttar Pradesh-was severed in two in the course of a day. The circumstances that led to the severance and the wounds that are yet unhealed and still bleed from time to time fall in the historic period covered by the late census, and this report will necessarily return again and again to the movement of population preceding and following the Partition. The Partition has changed the face of the State on the map and it is necessary to precede an account of the State's population with brief notes on the shape of the new State, its geographical and geological features, its climate, the ethnic texture of its population, its distribution of agriculture and industry, and the material condition of the people.

General Description

2. The State of West Bengal now comprises two administrative Commissioners' Divisions and fifteen administrative districts. The Burdwan Division consists of the districts of Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur, Hooghly and Howrah, all of which lie west of the Bhagirathi or Hooghly river. The Presidency Division consists of the districts of 24-Parganas (including the Sundarbans), Calcutta, Nadia, Murshidabad, all of which lie south of the river Ganges or Padma and east of the or Hooghly except Bhagirathi the western half of Murshidabad; the districts of Malda and West Dinajpur, north of the Ganges; and, farther north, the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. To the district of 24-Parganas has been added an area of 319.8 sq. miles comprising the police stations of Bangaon and Gaighata, formerly of Jessore. From the old district of Nadia have gone to East Bengal the police stations of Gangani. Meherpur, Damurhuda, Alamdanga, Jibannagar, Chuadanga, Kumarkhali, Meherpur, Mirpur, Daulatpur, Bhairamara, Kushtia and Khoksa. This has reduced the area of the district from 2,879 sq. miles before the Partition to 1,527, sq. miles. Although Murshidabad has not lost to East Bengal any entire police station, yet several mauzas of a number of bordering police stations are either in dispute or in de facto possession of East Bengal. Five police stations of the old Malda district have gone to East Bengal: they are Sibganj, Nawabganj, Gomastapur, Nachol and Bholahat, which have reduced the area of the district from 2,004 sq. miles before Partition to 1,408 sq. miles of the present day. The old district of Jalpaiguri has been deprived of five thanas which have gone in favour of East Bengal: Tetulia, Pachagar, Boda, Debiganj and Pathgram: the area of the district having been reduced from 3,050 sq. miles to 2,378 sq. miles. In January 1950 the State of Cooch Behar merged into the State of West Bengal and became one _ of its administrative districts but several of its enclaves, numbering fiftysix, are so locked inside East Bengal territory that it was not possible to take a proper

census of them. The principal of these tracts are—

(1) The Baishchala tracts, comprised within three Taluks named Magurmari, Gosaihat, and Gadong, in Pargana Maraghat of the Jalpaiguri District, lying at a distance varying from six to eight miles from the northern frontier near Moranga and Ksheti;

(2) Teldhar, formerly known as Gerd Teldhar, forming twelve Taluks, and the Kotbhajni chhits, comprising six taluks, within Chakla Boda, in the district of Jalpaiguri, lying west and southwest of Pargana Mekliganj, at a distance varying from five to twelve miles from the western frontier near Haldibari;

(3) The Patgram chhits, belonging to Pargana Mekliganj, situated in Pargana Patgram in the Jalpaiguri district;

(4) Banshkata chhits, within Pargana Patgram lying very close to the south-west borders of Pargana Mathabhanga;

(5) The chhits in Pargana Purvabhag in the district of Rangpur, very close to the south-east borders of Dinhata, the chief of which are Bashpechai, Dakurhat and Dasiarchhara;

(6) The chhits in Pargana Bhitarband in the same district, lying near the eastern borders of Dinhata, and comprising the taluks Maidam, Gaochulka, and Baghbunder; and

(7) Chhit Bara Laukuthi, a Cooch Behar Taluk, lying within the Guma Duars in the district of Goalpara in Assam, within two miles from the Baxigunj Bunder near the eastern frontier.

Their administration is still a matter of contention between India and Pakistan, into the substance of which it is no call of this Report to enter, but suffice it to say that if anywhere the late Census was at all unsatisfactory it was in these Chhitmahals or enclaves involving a population of several thousands. A census of the town of Chandernagore and the enclave of Ghiretty or Gaurhati, formerly French possessions on the river Hooghly within the, district of Hooghly, was taken for the first time by the Government of India and is included in this Report because Chandernagore was transferred to India in 1949-50.

3. To the north of the State lies the State of Sikkim with an area of 2,745 sq. miles, the census of which has been taken along with that of Bengal ever since 1891.

Area

4. The area of the State has not been conclusively ascertained. A detailed discussion on the subject will be found in the title pages of Union Table A I of the Tables Volume and it is unnecessary to reproduce all of it here. It is doubtful that areas given since 1872 will bear close examination even when they are carefully reduced to the present boundaries of the State. For the census of 1951 the Registrar General laid down that the area figures were to be supplied by the Surveyor General of India. The decision, a great step taken in the direction of uniformity and reconciliation of differences, has brought out clearly the anomalies that have so far existed and for which no detailed explanation is yet forthcoming. The point will best be illustrated by a statement of areas of West Bengal districts given for 1951 by the Surveyor General of India and the Director of West Land Records and Surveys. Bengal, and in successive census reports from 1901 to 1941. It so happens that districts great rivers, wide with stretches of water and arms of the sea have mostly gone to East Bengal and cases of wide differences are therefore lost to this comparison.

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