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REPORT

OF THE

INDIAN FAMINE COMMISSION,

1901.

CALCUTTA:

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF GOVERNMENT PRINTING, INDIA.

1901.
PART I.
PRELIMINARY.

1. The territorial rule in India of the East India Company extended in point of time from the Administration of Mr. Hastings, the first Governor-General, to the Administration of Lord Canning, the first Viceroy. During this period of about ninety years the Indian Peninsula suffered, in one part or another, from twelve famines and four severe scarcities: but no attempt was made in those early years of our dominion to grapple with the famine question, or to construct any system of famine relief. When a famine occurred, the efforts made to relieve distress were usually on a small scale, disconnected and spasmodic. A little employment was offered to the able-bodied, and a little gratuitous relief was distributed to the helpless from scanty funds collected from the charitably disposed. But there was no systematized and sustained action, and but little expenditure of public money. Amid the wars and distractions and financial difficulties that attended the building up of an Empire, the claims of famine relief attracted small attention.

2. Since the transfer of the government from the East India Company to the Crown, there have been seven famines and one severe scarcity in various provinces of British India. The first of these was caused by the failure of the spring crops of 1861; but it affected a comparatively small tract of country; and it rests in official memory—it has faded out of the people's minds—only because poor-houses were then first used as a means of relief, and because it was made the occasion of the first famine enquiry instituted by any Government in India.

3. That enquiry had but little educative effect on the public mind; for, when the great famine of 1866, commonly known as the Orissa famine,* supervened, the principles and methods of relief administration were still unsettled and unformed.

The Orissa famine may be regarded as the turning point in the history of Indian famines; for, in the course of the enquiry conducted into it by the Commission presided over by the late Sir George Campbell, the foundations were laid of the humane policy, which the Government of India have now adopted. The Report of that Commission was not immediately fruitful, so far as the formulation of a system of relief was concerned; but it effectually called attention to the responsibilities which rested on the Government in famine years.

4. Accordingly, when the failure of the rains of 1868 caused intense famine in Rajputana, and severe scarcity with local famine in parts of the North-Western Provinces, the Punjab and other regions, unprecedented action was taken by the Government to relieve distress. The humane principle of saving every life was now first enunciated, and a departure was made from the hitherto accepted policy of leaving to public charity the duty of providing funds for gratuitous relief. The total expenditure of Government money on relief in 1869 (46 lakhs) may not appear large in the light of later experience; but a distinct advance was made in both the principles and practice of famine relief.

* It affected parts of Madras, Bengal and Northern India.
5. When the monsoon rains of 1873 failed over a great part of North Behar, and to a less extent in other regions, the Government at once took note of the situation. The situation, however, was not really so alarming as it at first appeared; the failure of the crops was complete only over a small area. But the dangers of the time were exaggerated, as much by public apprehension lest the Orissa misfortunes should be repeated, as by official ignorance of the precise statistical facts. In the end provision in excess of the need* was made to meet the emergency, but a great principle was finally asserted; and methods of relief administration were devised during the Behar famine, upon which subsequent experience has only improved.

6. If, in the matter of expenditure, the pendulum swung its full arc in the Behar famine, the inevitable reaction followed when the really great famine of 1876-78 burst upon Madras and Bombay; and later upon the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, and the Punjab. In this famine relief was a large extent insufficient, and to a large extent imperfectly organized; the insufficiency being largely due to the inability of private trade, hampered by want of railways and communications, to supply the demand for food. The mortality was, in consequence, extremely great. A recognition of all these facts led to the appointment of General Strachey's Famine Commission, whose enquiries for the first time reduced to system the administration of famine relief, and whose report has powerfully influenced for good agrarian and administrative reform in India during the last twenty years.

7. The labours of the Commission of 1880 were of two kinds: on the one hand, they formulated general principles for the proper treatment of famines; and, on the other, they suggested particular measures of a preventive or protective character. In regard to the general principles, with which we are immediately concerned, the Commission of 1880 recognized to the full the obligation imposed on the State to offer to the necessitous the means of relief in times of famine. But it was the cardinal principle of their policy that this relief should be so administered, as not to check the growth of thrift and self-reliance among the people, or to impair the structure of society, which, resting as it does in India upon the moral obligation of mutual assistance, is admirably adapted for common effort against a common misfortune. "The great object," they said, "of saving life and giving protection from extreme suffering may not only be as well secured, but in fact will be far better secured, if proper care be taken to prevent the abuse and demoralization which all experience shows to be the consequence of ill-directed and excessive distribution of charitable relief."†

8. In this spirit the Provisional Famine Code was framed, and the modern policy of famine relief administration was determined. That policy was first brought to a crucial test in the famine of 1896-97, and the very elaborate enquiry into its results conducted by the Commission of 1898 completely vindicated the principles laid down in 1880, and demonstrated the success which a system of relief based upon them could achieve. Wherever there was failure, it was due not so much to defects in the system of relief as to defects in the administration of it.

9. But, while confirming the principles enunciated by the Commission of 1880, the Commission of 1898 departed from them in recommending a more liberal wage and a freer extension of gratuitous relief. Moreover, their repeated warnings against any measures of relief involving an element of risk were, in effect, an invitation to recede from the strictness, or, as we prefer to call it, the prudent boldness, of the former policy.

10. Before these recommendations had been fully considered and incorporated into the Provincial Famine Codes, the drought of 1899 occurred; and Local Governments were compelled to face another great famine, without a settled policy, and in nearly all cases with their Famine Codes still unrevise. This led to uncertainty and oscillation in the application and guidance of measures of relief; and into the results of this uncertainty, as well as into the whole question of famine administration, we have now been instructed to enquire.

11. We are directed to examine, in the light of the fresh experience now gained, the administration of relief in all its branches, the cost of the recent operations, and the extent of the mortality; to consider what new problems have arisen, and how far events confirm the wisdom, or suggest the amendment, of the recommendations made by the last Commission. Our mandate also requires us to deal, in their broad aspects, with the questions of the collection of the land revenue and the grant of advances to agriculturists; to investigate the existing practice with regard to loans to cultivators in the several provinces; and to advise as to the necessity for revised instructions on these important subjects. Finally, we are permitted to record any recommendations or opinions, which may be of use in the anticipation or treatment of future famines.

12. Our mandate, though wide, is, however, limited by two important reservations. In the first place, all questions of a technical character concerning the programmes of public works, which existed in the several provinces at the outbreak of the famine, as well as concerning the utility of the works constructed, are excluded from our investigation: these questions have been reserved for separate enquiry. In the second place, we are prevented from making any enquiry into relief administration in Native States, although we are instructed to report on "the extent, nature, and general causes of immigration from Native States into British districts; its effect upon relief measures in them; how it was dealt with; and what better arrangements for concerted action between British and Native authorities can be devised." The prohibition against making enquiries into the relief administration in Native States has disabled us from dealing thoroughly with the question of immigration into British districts. On such a difficult and complex question it is impossible to give full advice without knowing all the facts and hearing both sides of the case.

13. Our instructions permitted us to deal with the famine administration in every part of British India. But relief was conducted on so small a scale in Madras, Bengal and the North-Western Provinces, that the lessons to be learned in those provinces were few and not significant. The points involved could be studied on a larger scale.
elsewhere. Besides, our Commission includes members who had, each in his own province, either actually directed, or become acquainted with the direction of, the relief operations in question. We therefore did not think it necessary to visit these provinces, or to summon from them any witnesses for oral examination, but we have issued interrogatories, and we have examined the official reports and opinions, which have been placed at our disposal. Our local enquiries have, thus, been confined to the Central Provinces, Berar, Bombay, Ajmer and the Delhi Division of the Punjab, in which tracts alone the famine was extensive or severe; and to the experience gained in these tracts we shall principally refer in the course of our report.

14. The area affected by the recent famine, at the time of maximum pressure, in the five British provinces, to which our enquiries extended, was roughly 175,000 square miles, and the population of that area was 25 millions according to the census of 1891. Including the less afflicted parts of British India, the area and the population affected were, in round numbers, 189,000 square miles and 28 millions respectively.

15. The circumstances of the famine of 1899-1900 are in many ways peculiar. Both in its material manifestations and in the attitude of the people, it differs from preceding famines. Nor was its intensity uniform over the whole tract affected. Over large areas the conditions were rather those of scarcity than of famine; but in both scarcity and famine areas the difficulties were aggravated by the fact that the failure of the crops was attended, in many parts of the affected provinces, by a failure of the water-supply, and also by a failure of fodder, which in parts of Bombay was practically complete. This shortage of the water-supply and dearth of fodder told heavily on men and cattle, and enormously increased the difficulties of administration. Moreover, in the districts bordering on Native States immigration added very greatly to the anxiety of the local officers.

16. But the most distinctive feature of the recent famine from the administrative point of view was the numbers of persons who came on State relief. These far exceeded the numbers of any previous famine. We compare in the following table the population affected and the number of units relieved during the two recent famines in the provinces specified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Population of affected tract</th>
<th>Millions of units relieved</th>
<th>Population of affected tract</th>
<th>Millions of units relieved</th>
<th>Variation of population per cent. in 1899-1900</th>
<th>Variation of units per cent. in 1899-1900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>6,467,000</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>10,445,450</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>+61</td>
<td>+262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berar</td>
<td>2,185,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,297,040</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>+146</td>
<td>+2,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>6,026,000</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>19,176,605</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>+43</td>
<td>+224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajmer</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>5,489,590</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>3,167,000</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>21,464,921</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-53</td>
<td>+112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These figures are taken from the table on page 205 of the Report of the Famine Commission of 1896. *
* These are the figures given by the Bombay Government. The census figures for 1891 of the whole district are, however, only 123 millions. *

The increase in units relieved was, thus, out of all proportion to the increase in numbers inhabiting affected tracts. In certain regions an increase of relief last year, as compared with 1897, was not to be expected, seeing that the later famine followed so soon after the earlier one, and that both had been preceded in most provinces by a series of bad years. But, allowing for these considerations, we still regard the increase shown as very remarkable and beyond probable expectation. We are by no means prepared to accept the view that the number of persons relieved is the only or proper measure of the pressure of a famine; because it is obvious that these numbers may be affected by many considerations, such as the attitude of the people, or the laxity or stringency of the terms on which relief is administered.

17. On a review of the evidence then in existence the Famine Commission of 1880 estimated that 15 per cent. of the population affected was the maximum number likely to be in receipt of relief in the worst months; and that about 7 or 8 per cent. was the average number likely to require relief continuously for the space of a year. The Commission of 1898 pointed out that these proportions had been largely exceeded in certain areas in 1897. But a much greater excess has been recorded over larger areas, and for longer periods, in the recent famine, particularly in the Central Provinces. The following table shows the proportion of the population seeking relief at different periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>End of December 1899</th>
<th>End of March 1900</th>
<th>End of May 1900</th>
<th>Beginning of August 1900</th>
<th>Beginning of September 1900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>19.70</td>
<td>23.23</td>
<td>29.29</td>
<td>17.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berar</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>13.29</td>
<td>18.28</td>
<td>18.64</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajmer</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>7.27</td>
<td>18.20</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. In the Betul district of the Central Provinces the astonishing proportion of 20-35 per cent. of the total district population were in receipt of relief from the end of October 1899; that is, from a time when, in other famines, only paupers set free by the contraction, of private charity had to be dealt with. From the middle of November 1899 to the middle of September 1900 the percentage never fell below 34-36; for many weeks it was over 30, and for two months it was over 40, per cent. The figures for the Raipur district give even more astounding results; in the end of July 1900 the enormous proportion of 44-61 per cent. of the population were on relief; while a few days later the number of kitchens in this district was 2,718, at which daily meals were given to 663,558 persons, or 42 per cent. of the total population. Simultaneously, in the adjacent district of Bilaspur, in which the crop failure is shown to
have been practically the same as in Raipur, only 173 per cent. of the population affected were in receipt of relief. Facts like these impress us with the importance of the personal equation in famine administration.

19. High percentages—though not so high as those of the Central Provinces—were shown elsewhere. In the Buldana district of Berar for over six months about 25 per cent. of the population were in receipt of relief; but during a considerable part of the time the numbers were influenced by immigration from Hyderabad. In Bombay the percentages reached these high figures only in Gujarat during the rains, and in Ahmednagar and Solapur, where the numbers were largely swollen by immigrants. In Ajmer the figures were high, but it was the second year of continuous distress, and there was undoubtedly much immigration. In the Hissar district of the Punjab the figures were high for six months, but the district had suffered from a series of bad years.

20. Another distinctive feature of the recent famine is the steady and unbroken rise in most provinces in the numbers relieved. In other famines the harvesting of the spring crops has led to the permanent or temporary departure of large numbers from the works; but in the recent famine the harvest had no effect whatever, except in the Punjab, on the numbers on relief, which continued steadily to rise. Again, in other famines, on the break of the rains, the people were quick to resume their ordinary avocations; but in the recent famine the numbers relieved, particularly in the Central Provinces, instead of falling, on the break of the monsoon, continued to rise, and reached their maximum during the rains, after the demand for agricultural labour had set in.

Statement showing the total number of persons relieved at different periods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Central Provinces</th>
<th>Berar</th>
<th>Bombay</th>
<th>Ajmer</th>
<th>Punjab</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28th October 1899</td>
<td>86,281</td>
<td>23,240</td>
<td>11,315</td>
<td>60,347</td>
<td>23,148</td>
<td>504,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th November 1899</td>
<td>705,568</td>
<td>77,720</td>
<td>264,030</td>
<td>85,937</td>
<td>21,019</td>
<td>1,387,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th December 1899</td>
<td>1,087,710</td>
<td>230,078</td>
<td>583,982</td>
<td>135,201</td>
<td>93,838</td>
<td>3,157,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31st January 1899</td>
<td>1,400,905</td>
<td>800,560</td>
<td>768,984</td>
<td>91,513</td>
<td>241,424</td>
<td>5,109,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st February 1899</td>
<td>1,437,022</td>
<td>517,717</td>
<td>1,087,845</td>
<td>103,216</td>
<td>217,620</td>
<td>4,454,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st March 1899</td>
<td>1,571,689</td>
<td>889,541</td>
<td>1,350,913</td>
<td>100,159</td>
<td>197,280</td>
<td>5,869,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th April 1899</td>
<td>1,726,048</td>
<td>926,468</td>
<td>1,304,442</td>
<td>134,785</td>
<td>170,764</td>
<td>6,789,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th May 1899</td>
<td>1,966,269</td>
<td>1,186,917</td>
<td>1,188,019</td>
<td>185,751</td>
<td>192,385</td>
<td>9,857,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th June 1899</td>
<td>2,034,175</td>
<td>1,157,542</td>
<td>1,325,940</td>
<td>151,609</td>
<td>171,769</td>
<td>10,045,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th July 1899</td>
<td>2,293,140</td>
<td>1,157,586</td>
<td>1,486,069</td>
<td>104,749</td>
<td>160,992</td>
<td>11,050,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th August 1899</td>
<td>2,341,765</td>
<td>284,201</td>
<td>1,325,940</td>
<td>204,845</td>
<td>90,804</td>
<td>3,865,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th September 1899</td>
<td>2,389,140</td>
<td>199,337</td>
<td>927,051</td>
<td>26,017</td>
<td>15,468</td>
<td>5,181,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th October 1899</td>
<td>2,023,083</td>
<td>101,269</td>
<td>4,014,021</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>5,140,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st November 1899</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>12,152</td>
<td>21,335</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>222,092</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. We have carefully considered these figures in conjunction with the recent agrarian history of the districts, and the incident of immigration; and we are of opinion that they cannot be taken as a measure of the distress without very great reservations. In certain districts, as we shall have occasion to point out, people in sore need of relief were denied it in the early stages of the famine, owing to defective administration; but in the main, and taking the famine period as a whole, the relief distributed was excessive. We have no doubt that the excess is to be accounted for by an imperfect enforcement of tests on relief works, by a too ready admission to gratuitous relief, and by a greater readiness on the people's part to accept relief owing to the demoralizing influences of the preceding famine. The general position in the Central Provinces was described by the Chief Commissioner in February 1899 as follows: "Touched by their recent experience in 1896-97 the people looked from the first at too willingly to Government for relief, and the officers were urgent to anticipate distress." The same readiness to take relief was evident elsewhere. The failure of the rabi and mulah crops, which in some localities was complete, no doubt accounts to some extent for the numbers on the works from March onwards in most provinces; but the main cause was the rush for charity, which unbridled the administration, resulting in a laxity of tests, that made the charity still more attractive and the cause of much demoralization.

22. Reserving the question of mortality during the famine for full treatment in the second part of the report, we desire here to notice the cost of the operations. We find that in the provinces which we visited (the expenditure in the other three provinces was small, being less than five lakhs of rupees) the following expenditure has been incurred:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Expenditure incurred in works</th>
<th>Incidence per unit relieved in works</th>
<th>Expenditure incurred on relief works</th>
<th>Incidence per unit relieved</th>
<th>Incidence per unit relieved in works</th>
<th>Total expenditure</th>
<th>Incidence per unit relieved in works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>2,62,92,850</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1,27,65,624</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4,27,04,715</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berar</td>
<td>9,10,7,599</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22,96,961</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,25,84,822</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>2,77,02,076</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58,55,028</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>75,75,763</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajmer</td>
<td>28,76,330</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58,55,028</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80,66,501</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>1,21,260</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>58,55,028</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80,66,501</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,50,06,068</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58,55,028</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,10,59,577</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We fear that even these high figures will be found to have understated the actual expenditure. Advances have been made to the extent of more than one and three-quarter crores of rupees, a large proportion of which will be irrecoverable; and suspensions of revenue have been made to the amount of two crores of rupees, a large portion of which will have to be remitted. Making allowances for losses of revenue in other departments, we think that this famine will in the end have
cost the State not less than fifteen crores of rupees or ten million pounds sterling. This expenditure far exceeds that incurred in any previous famine. We do not for a moment advocate a departure from the humane policy of famine relief laid down by the Government of India; but experience has shown that the object in view can be attained at a moderate cost and with little demoralization, if prudence and foresight be duly exercised, and if means be properly adjusted to ends.

23. Such, then, in broad outline are the circumstances with which we have to deal. In examining them we shall look to the past mainly with the object of extracting from it lessons for guidance in future struggles. Our aim will be to restate the principles by which alone famine relief on a great scale can be successfully administered. In so doing we shall not ignore the peculiarities of local circumstances, or attempt to fetter the discretion, which Local Governments should always exercise within the limitations of accepted principle. In this spirit we now proceed to trace the course of a famine from its start; to indicate the dispositions by which it should be faced, the measures by which it should be met, and the tactical errors which should be avoided in combating it. We shall illustrate our advice or warnings by examples drawn from the experience of last year; and we shall close our report by discussing certain questions and making recommendations, which bear upon the prevention of famine in the future.

24. Recent experience has shown that no part of India, if unprotected by irrigation, can be considered free from the danger of a deficient rainfall, and the consequent failure in the harvest, which a short rainfall entails. A large part of the Central Provinces was not long ago regarded as immune from famine, and the possibility that Gujarat would be desolated by drought and hunger was not foreseen. Nor was the occurrence of two great famines within so short a period anticipated in any quarter. The unexpected, however, happened, and found the arrangements in most provinces incomplete. The first danger, then, of a practical kind to which the experience of the late famine points is the danger of unpreparedness. Against this danger the safeguards are—

1. an efficient system of intelligence;
2. effective programmes of relief works;
3. reserves of establishment;
4. reserves of tools and plant.

25. Systems of intelligence.—The Famine Commission of 1880 commented unfavourably on the character of the information regarding agricultural matters, and the means of collecting it, which were at the time available to Local Governments. Since then matters have greatly improved both in regard to the quality and quantity of statistical information collected and the agencies employed in collecting and recording it. In consequence of this improvement early estimates of the degree of anticipated crop failure were got out in 1899, and the various Administrations were warned in time of the coming pressure.

26. So far as the subordinate grades of the Intelligence Department are concerned, we have few recommendations to make. We consider it of urgent importance in Bombay that the village accountant should be placed under the supervision of the Circle Inspector, who in his turn should be brought more immediately under the control of the district authorities, and we would add that all statistical information regarding the district should go through the Collector's office and be compiled and collated there under the Collector's supervision. For example, the mortality statistics in Bombay are now sent direct from the admiral to the sanitary authorities, without passing through the Collector's hands. The mortality statistics are the gauge of distress as well as of disease, and the present Bombay system thus keeps the gauge out of the hands of the Collector. We also take this opportunity of insisting on the advantages, already recognised in the rules of most provinces, of co-ordinating the information received and of constantly revising it to meet the requirements of practical administration. In order that this important work may be duly done, we consider that it is necessary to strengthen district establishments, both in actual numbers and by
In the Punjāb rather more than half the advances were distributed in the Hissar district. The amount advanced under Act XIX of 1883 was small in amount, considering the distress. With a view to secure the rob of 1000, efforts were made to stimulate the sinking of wells in Hissar, but without great results. Generally the loans were issued rather late.

While, therefore, there can be no doubt that these liberal advances did immense good to the distressed tracts, we think that, owing to untimely distribution, a considerable proportion of the money advanced was not agriculturally effective. We do not, however, share the view that these advances are misused and misappropriated to any large extent. Individual cases of the kind may easily be discovered, but “it is the general belief,” says the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, “that the proportion wasted in these ways was very small.” In all branches of famine administration some risk must be run, and it is by their broad effects that measures must be judged. Judged by this test, the system of advances, when administered prudently and with forethought, is a most efficient instrument of relief, and one which can be to a very great extent freed from the pauperising influences of State charity.

But this latter characteristic will be lost if lax notions of obligation are allowed to affect the question of the recovery of the advances. Due regard should, of course, be paid to the nature of the subsequent seasons and the circumstances of the recipients, but otherwise the repayment of advances should be strictly enforced. We consider it of even more importance, when the preservation of the self-reliance and honesty of the people is in question, to insist on the repayment of taka'ī loans than to insist on the payment of arrears of land revenue. To rescind a special contract has a more demoralising effect upon the popular mind than to relax for once the demand of the State, to which the people are accustomed and the obligation of which is undeniable. In the interests, therefore, of the public faith, which depends largely on the recognition of the obligation attaching to contracts, as well as with the object of maintaining and strengthening a spirit of independence among the people, we think that the recovery of advances should take precedence of the recovery of arrears of land revenue in the settlement of liabilities which follows a famine.

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The preceding part of this report we have, in compliance with our instructions, dealt, so far as the incidents of the famine administration of last year were concerned, with “the collection of the land revenue” and the extent to which relief was granted to distressed owners and occupiers of land by revenue suspensions or remissions,” and with “the use made of the loan system (taka’ī)” of other advances in the various provinces. But we have also been asked to make suggestions for improvement, should we think that existing arrangements in regard to suspensions and remissions of revenue or in regard to taka’ī loans press with undue severity on the owners or occupiers of land, or fail to give them the full relief that is intended.

In dealing with the collection of the land revenue, as committed to us in its broad aspects, we were at once confronted with two questions; first, whether the land revenue demand in the various provinces was fair in amount; and, secondly, whether it was sufficiently elastic to be payable year by year without risk of causing indebtedness. It is necessary to treat these two questions separately.

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261. In the Central Provinces the average yield per acre of staple food crops is shown as 595 lbs., and the average value as Rs. 13-5-0. As in the Central Provinces, the incidence of land revenue per cultivated acre is 83 annas, it follows that the land revenue is less than 1 per cent. of the average value of the outturn. The incidence of the land revenue on the gross produce does not reach 7 per cent. in any district of the Central Provinces, while in only two districts does it exceed 5 per cent. Even if the variable factors in the preceding calculation, namely, the rates of crop yield and the money commutation rates, are reduced by 25 per cent., i.e., to 447 lbs. and Rs. 11-5-0, respectively, the incidence of the land revenue on the produce will still fall under 5 per cent., or, if cesses be added, slightly over 5 per cent. Upon the basis of these figures it is clear that the incidence on the produce of the land revenue assessed in the Central Provinces is extremely moderate.

263. This conclusion is confirmed by the evidence of independent non-official witnesses whom we have examined, and by a representation which the Nagpur Māligārā Association has addressed to us. In this representation the landlords do not so much find fault with the scales of rental or assets on which the land revenue was based as with the share of the assets which the Government has appropriated. In other words, their contention is not that the tenant contributes too large a share of the produce of his holding to his landlord and the Government, but that the Government leaves the landlord too small a share of that contribution. Into this matter we are not here called upon to enter, as it raises a different issue from that under our notice, which is the pressure of the land revenue on the cultivators. But we may observe in passing that for the Central Provinces, as a whole, the share of the assets (53 per cent.) taken from the landlords as revenue at the recent settlement is considerably less than the share (63 per cent.) taken at the previous settlement. In the Central Provinces, as in Northern India, the tendency is for the State to take a diminishing share of the assets as revenue. We commend this tendency, believing that it is sound fiscal policy.

263. In Berar the land revenue falls at Re. 1-3-9 per cultivated acre, representing 13 per cent. of an acre's outturn of staple food crops. The oral evidence, however, points to a revenue incidence of about 7 per cent. of the gross produce, and this is, in our opinion, a reasonable estimate. The explanation of this difference is that in Berar the non-food crops occupy rather more than half the cultivated area and, it would seem, the better lands. Cotton, of a superior quality, by itself occupies, on the average, one-third of the net cropped area.

264. The agricultural statistics which have been supplied to us for Ajmer and for the Delhi Division of the Punjāb show that in those tracts also the incidence of revenue on the produce is moderate. In the khāla or ryotādāl area of Ajmer the incidence is Re. 1-7-1 per acre, which is equivalent to about 10 per cent. on the gross produce; for the āstulīnārī area no data are given. In the Hīsār district of the Delhi

Division, which is a precarious tract, the incidence is very low, being only 7½ annas per cultivated acre, or about 3½ per cent. on the normal produce; but in the other districts it averages a little over a rupee per acre, or about 7 per cent. on the produce, except in the Delhi district itself, where it rises to Re. 1-11-10 per acre, or 10 per cent. on the produce. We concur in the local opinion that the incidence of land revenue in these regions does not interfere with agricultural efficiency in ordinary years. In adverse seasons, however, there is a distinct need for leniency, and this is recognized by the orders of the Local Government.

265. The figures supplied by the Bombay Land Records Department indicate that the incidence of the land revenue in the Deccan is about Re. 1-3-0 per acre, and that it absorbs about 7 per cent. of the gross produce. The Bombay district officials, whom we have examined, are generally of opinion that the revenue is moderate, herein agreeing with the Deccan Commission of 1891;† on the whole, however, they place its incidence on the gross produce higher than the Land Records Department does.

266. We ourselves are disposed to think that the assessment in these Deccan districts is a full assessment for tracts where “the soil is sterile, the climate precarious, a good crop being in some parts obtained only once in three years, and the peasantry, though sturdy and ordinarily law abiding, are described as utterly uneducated and with a narrow range of intelligence.”† But whether the assessment be moderate or full, we have no doubt that it cannot be collected in short years without forcing the ryotāds into debt.

267. Except in the Pauch Mahālīs, where the land revenue is shown as about 5 per cent. of the produce, this figure being due to the backward character of the people and their primitive methods of cultivation, the assessment in Gujarāt is a full one, taking 20 per cent. of the produce. Notwithstanding this, the Deputy Director of Agriculture considers that the profits on cultivation in Gujarāt are greater than in the Deccan, and we have no doubt that this is so. An assessment of 20 per cent. of the gross produce in a fertile ryotādāl region like Gujarāt is not greater than the rent which landlords in many districts of Northern India levy from their tenants for lands of even less productiveness. But, when landlords in Northern India take such high rents, they are obliged to allow suspensions in bad years.

268. We have now stated for each province visited what is, according to the statistics and evidence placed before us, the pressure of the land revenue on the soil. We are aware that in such a complex matter averages are exposed to error; and that the liability to error grows with an increase in the number or diversity of the rates and scales on which the averages are struck. But we have been as careful as we could be in the circumstances, and we feel confidence in the general correctness of our conclusion. Our general conclusion is that, except in Bombay, where it is full, the incidence of land revenue is also severe.

† Mr. Nicholson considers that this statement applies only to parts of the Bombay Presidency.
point we fully concur: but we also desire to go further and to emphasize the value of suspensions and remissions of revenue as a preventive measure of constant application in adverse years. Considerable advance in this direction has, during the last twenty years, been made in every province, except Bombay; and in Bombay a large proportion of the officers whom we examined are now in favour of a change of policy. But, while there is much agreement as to the general policy which should be pursued in this connection, practice varies greatly in the different provinces.

271. In the North-Western Provinces agricultural calamities are divided into two classes: (1) those causing serious deterioration of the soil, and (2) those injuring a particular harvest. In cases of the first class the revenue is at once postponed, as a preliminary to suspension or remission, or to a reduction of revenue for a period not exceeding five years. In cases of the second class, the general circumstances and history of the village are regarded, including the stress of the assessment on it. In all cases, the primary objects for consideration are the extension of relief to the tenant and the adjustment of the means by which this object can be attained. The following scale of relief is laid down for general guidance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loss of Produce</th>
<th>Relief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 annas</td>
<td>No relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 annas suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 12</td>
<td>Reasonable remission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relief point is, thus, six annas' loss of crop. Where the calamity is widespread, relief is uniform on all round village estimates of the loss. Where the calamity is local and isolated, relief is given field by field after local enquiry. Generally the order of relief is first postponement, then suspension, and finally remission. The Collector has power to postpone; but suspension and remission, which carry with them relief to the tenant, require, under the existing law, the sanction of Government.

272. In the Central Provinces the rules are both less liberal and less elaborate. No action is contemplated on a loss of less than three-quarters of the crop. No scale of relief is laid down. But the Deputy Commissioner has power to suspend for a month, and the Collector has power to suspend without a time limit up to Rs. 5,000. Suspensions of revenue are made conditional on suspensions of rent.

273. In the Punjab the rules look back to the character of the settlement; and agricultural calamities are divided into (1) those contemplated by the Settlement Officer in making his assessment and (2) those which were not foreseen at the time of the assessment and for which no allowance was then made:

(1) In cases of the first class—such as irregularities of rainfall, failure of irrigation or periodic inundation, injury by drifting sand, or the like—enquiries are only made by holdings when the injury is purely local; the character of
the original assessment is closely scrutinized with a view to appreciating the allowance then made for calamities; remissions are given with greater reserve than in cases of the second class; and differential treatment is metered out to rich and poor proprietors.

(2) In cases of the second class—such as destruction of crops by locusts, heavy floods, or similar wholly unforeseen accidents—enquiries are made by holdings; remissions are the rule; and the wealth or poverty of the individual proprietor is not taken into consideration.

274. Remissions in the Punjab are not given outright; the Deputy Commissioner decides at each harvest how much of the outstanding arrears can be collected, and at the end of three years whatever has not been recovered is usually remitted. The local officers in this province appear to be given greater discretion than elsewhere; and the precise degree of crop failure entitling to relief is not definitely fixed.

275. In Bombay there is at present no system of suspensions or remissions in ordinary years; but the terms of the Famine Code give Collectors ample powers of suspensions in the case of "an abnormal failure of the harvest causing total or almost total destruction of the crops over a considerable area," and direct that such suspension should be eventually followed by an enquiry into each case as to the desirability of collection or remission. It appears, however, that the executive orders of the Bombay Government have taken away the discretion allowed to Collectors by the terms of the Code.

276. In Berar the Bombay rule has been adopted.

277. In Madras, as in the Punjab, the rules, we understand, look back to the character of the assessment, though in a somewhat different way, and the practice varies according to the extent of the crop failure. In ordinary years, when the failure of the crops is only local and isolated, remissions, preceded by suspensions, are by the standing orders allowed at the annual settlement for any failure of the crops on lands assessed at wet rates, which is due to a want or excess of water. The remissions are based on field to field enquiry, which the elaborate system of continuous crop inspection in this Presidency permits. Remissions are not usually given in ordinary years for crop failure on lands assessed at dry rates, a liberal allowance being made in the assessment for the precarious nature of the cultivation on these lands. In very bad seasons, however, when the crop failure is widespread, general suspensions are at once allowed, and remissions are granted on all lands, whether assessed at wet or dry rates, according to a regular scale. That scale begins with a possible 25 per cent. remission for yields between one-half and one-third of a normal crop (taken at 12 annas), and ends with a remission of from 75 to 100 per cent. for yields below one-sixth of a normal crop. The affected area is divided into small homogeneous tracts; the ratio of the remission to the assessment is fixed for each of such tracts; and every field obtains its proportionate share, except those scheduled as protected. Under neither method is there any differential treatment of rich and poor ryot; and it is a feature of the Madras system generally that the amount of the relief is published at a very early date in order that every ryot may know how he stands.

278. The conditions in zamindari and ryotwadi tracts are different, but a careful examination of the rules and of their working in the recent famine shows that, in essentials, the underlying principles are the same. We desire to lay special emphasis on two conclusions:

(i) We are of opinion that it is of cardinal importance to relieve the cultivator, whether he be the revenue payer himself, as in ryotwadi tracts, or, as in zamindari tracts, the tenant of the revenue payer. In zamindari tracts it is not, in our opinion, sufficient to make the suspension or remission of revenue conditional on a suspension or remission of rent. The Government should have, in all cases, authority to order suspension or remission of rent. In some provinces legislation to this end will be required, and we recommend it.

(ii) It follows that in zamindari tracts the wealth or the poverty of the revenue payer, who is a rent receiver, should not influence the question of suspension or remission: it is necessary to give relief to him in order to relieve the cultivator. But in ryotwadi tracts the differential treatment of rich and poor ryot is undoubtedly a practical question, which has given rise to considerable discussion.

279. While expressing to us their opinions in favour of a system of suspensions, and possibly remissions, of land revenue in years of crop failure, the majority of Bombay officers wished to exclude money-lenders altogether from its benefits, and we found that a similar feeling on this point exists in some other provinces. No doubt there are arguments in support of this view. If the revenue is moderate, and the revenue payer is rich and intelligent (as many money-lenders are), he may be fairly called upon to pay in a bad year from the surplus he has laid by in a good one. If the system of land records and the subordinate revenue staff were such in any province as to enable the Government to classify its revenue payers into pure agriculturists and capitalist owners of land, it might be reasonable to show to the former a greater measure of leniency in the matter of revenue payments than the latter would require. But, so far as we know, the land records system of no province permits of such classification being made; no attempt at differentiation has been made in the Punjab, but with no satisfactory results; in Bombay the attempt has inevitably failed. Moreover, the subordinate staff in every province is of such a character that personal enquiries into the means of individuals not only lead to endless corruption, but involve a delay which is fatal when promptitude is essential to relief. Furthermore, as a matter of fact, very many of the money-lending owners of land are small men, trading on borrowed capital, or cultivators themselves, who are in need of considerate treatment. After all money-lenders have their uses, and we think it very bad policy to alienate them, for they are at present the principal capitalists who are willing or able to finance the cultivators.
offer a few brief remarks on the direction which, in our opinion, a practical scheme of Agricultural Banks should follow.

290. The underlying idea in all Mutual Credit Associations, such as we recommend, is that a number of persons, by combining together, create a new and valuable security, which none of them previously possessed as individuals. Co-operation substitutes for isolated and helpless agricultural units a strong association competent to offer guarantees and capable of inspiring confidence. The advantages of lending to groups instead of to individuals need no demonstration. It is simpler for a creditor to deal with a group of fifty or a hundred associated cultivators than with the same number singly; it is simpler for him to obtain repayment from the group than from each of the members composing it; it is simpler for the group to make its own arrangements with each member than for the lender to try to do so. By the same process of reasoning, it is simpler for a Central Agricultural Bank to deal with groups of associated cultivators in each village than to make an attempt to deal with each cultivator singly.

291. To obtain the full advantages that co-operation offers, any group of cultivators, voluntarily associating together to obtain credit on their joint responsibility must agree to abide by certain recognized rules. Notwithstanding the difference between eastern and western conditions, the rules of the Raiffeisen credit associations are probably the best that, subject to necessary modifications, any similar association in India could adopt. On this point some further remarks are required; but before offering them, we desire to remove some misconceptions, which our enquiries have shown to prevail, both as to the scope of village banks and as to the fundamental principles which should regulate their working.

292. It should be understood from the outset, and made perfectly clear to all concerned, that the establishment of a village bank does not imply the creation of an institution from which the villagers may draw money at their discretion. A village bank, based generally upon the Raiffeisen system, admits no one to membership who does not fulfill certain conditions which are essential for the safe conduct of the bank’s operations; it works only for the benefit of its own members, and it grants no loan except for purposes connected with the promotion of agriculture. It is most important that these objects and limitations should be clearly understood, so that there may be no disappointment afterwards and no unnecessary alarm caused to the old established village money-lender.

293. We have been told by some non-official witnesses that, if Agricultural Banks do not lend for miscellaneous purposes, they stand no chance of succeeding; and by other witnesses that, if they do lend for miscellaneous purposes and thus compete with the money-lender, they are sure to fail. We think that both apprehensions arise from a misconception of the objects in view. It is not intended to frighten the village money-lender by permitting a village bank to enter into competition with him over the whole field of his business; still less is it the intention to encourage borrowing for unproductive purposes. No association borrowing on the joint responsibility of its members would be justified in devoting any of its funds to loans for unproductive purposes. It does not consequently enter into the scope of a village bank’s operations to lend for marriage festivities or for caste feasts or similar objects. If people wish to borrow money for such purposes, or for any other purpose unconnected with agriculture, they must still go to the village sankâr or bâna. The co-operative agricultural bank only aims at freeing the great business of the cultivator’s life from the terrible burden, which now presses on it owing to the excessive interest taken for agricultural loans.

294. To sum up, the objects of an Agricultural Bank of this kind may be thus enumerated:

1. To enable its members to obtain loans at reasonable rates for agricultural purposes by placing them in a favourable position to borrow, and by assisting in the creation of a new credit, which individually they did not possess.

2. To provide them with a secure place, in which to deposit their small savings.

3. To encourage thrift, by holding up before the eyes of the members the principle that money should not be borrowed unless for reproductive purposes.

4. To promote co-operation among the village community in all agricultural affairs.

295. Having thus defined the scope of an Agricultural Bank’s operations, we next wish to enumerate the principles upon which they are usually based. They are as follows:

1. There should be unlimited liability: members must be jointly and severally responsible for all the obligations contracted by their society.

2. The area in which the village institution works must be well defined and restricted to narrow limits.

3. Members must be carefully selected, and none admitted but those of approved character.

4. All services in connection with the bank’s administration must be gratuitously rendered.

5. There should, in general, be no paid up capital.

6. All net profits are payable, not as dividends to members, but to the reserve fund, which must be indivisible.

A few words of explanation on these conditions are necessary.

296. Unlimited liability is insisted on, because under such conditions a few ordinary villagers can readily provide a guarantee sufficiently strong to satisfy the requirements of those persons willing to lend money to them at reasonable rates. It remains to be seen whether the principle of limitation by guarantee will not be equally efficient and more acceptable. The feeling of joint responsibility induces each member to exert himself to the utmost to safeguard the common interest; it compels caution in the distribution of loans to members, and causes
them to hesitate over the introduction of any new members likely to cause loss to the association by unpunctuality or backwardness in making payments.

297. The limitation of area is an absolutely necessary condition in the case of a society which relies so greatly, as a safeguard against loss, on the bond of common interest, on the influence of social pressure, and on the intimate knowledge the members have of each other's character and affairs. Usually the members of a village bank should all be residents in the same village or in the same group of villages, provided that no one lives further than three or four miles from the bank's head-quarters.

299. The selection of members is one of the principal factors in the success of a village bank, which should never contemplate going to law to recover any of its advances. Loans are made to members on their personal security, guaranteed according to the amount of the loan by the security of one or more other members. The greatest care at the outset must be exercised in the choice of the original members. The latter may be safely relied upon to exercise discrimination in the admission of new members, because the loss that may be caused to the society, by the failure of a borrower and his sureties to fulfill their obligations, will ultimately fall on the whole body of members.

300. Gratuities; services in connection with the bank's business are desirable, because, as the bank works only for the benefit of its own members, and the primary object of the society is to facilitate the obtaining of loans at reasonable interest, any expense would have to be borne by the society and would tend to nullify the object in view. Moreover, such gratuitous service directly tends to foster a sense of public duty and the acquirement of business habits. As a village bank does not meet usually more than twice a month, and the proceedings do not occupy more than an hour or so, the amount of labour devolving on the office bearers is trifling.

301. The formation and indivisibility of the reserve is one of the great sources of strength to a village bank. As the association starts without any subscribed capital, the formation of a continually growing reserve to supplement the guarantee of the associated members is necessary both to enable the members to obtain better terms when borrowing and to safeguard them from the loss which defaults on the part of any member might bring upon them. As the members do not associate for the purpose of profit on invested capital, but for the purpose of furthering their common interest, all profits obtained from the bank's operations are credited to a common fund, the joint property of all the members. The division of this fund is forbidden in order to prevent its growth from the capitalisation of members and to break up their society for the sake of small temporary profit.

302. The village bank organized on the preceding principles must obtain at the outset from some source outside itself the capital with which it has to work. In those European countries where the system of agricultural banking has taken root, village banks are largely financed by Central Banks operating on a large scale; but in India there is no hope, in the beginning at all events, that these Central Banks or Joint Stock Companies will come into existence. Efforts must therefore be made to create local agencies. It may be that at first such efforts may not be successful, and in this case there would be, we think, no objection to employing State aid to finance experimental village banks. But the object should be to avoid the intervention of the State, except in the matter of audit and supervision.

303. In order of time and when village banks have taken root, the Organization Societies in a district or even in a division may be amalgamated; when this happens, the Central Society would take on itself the functions of financing and controlling all village banks in its sphere of operation. In this scheme the Organization Society would, in point of fact, be an intermediate stage of development.

304. The duties of the Organization Society may be summed up as follows:

1. To promote the knowledge of the principles of co-operative banking in the locality.
2. To organize village banks and to supervise their working.
3. To grant advances to village banks under its supervision.
4. To arrange for the proper audit from time to time of the bank's books.

305. In many districts there are large landlords (we especially instance the Court of Wards, managing estates of disqualified owners) who may themselves wish to establish village banks on their estates and to advance to them, at reasonable interest, the money required for their operations. There is no reason why this should not be done, and why village banks financed by the landlord alone should not work and prosper. But in all cases, whether the bank is financed by one capitalist or by a society of capitalists, it is essential to have and successful working that there should be strict attention to business methods and regularity. To ensure this, external supervision and audit are essential.

306. The above is only a brief sketch of the principles, organization and object of village banks founded on the English system. It appears to us that there is in every province, which we have visited, a wide scope for the establishment of such banks; some have been already established in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. In some
provinces the hope of successful working is better than in others, but everywhere there is justification for an effort. No doubt such banks may, in the commencement, meet with opposition from the money-lender, who already occupies the field, and they may also meet with suspicion and half-hearted support from those who do not understand their principles. But Indian native life presents us with instances of co-operation for mutual benefit, and the principle which underlies the Raiffeisen-system is not really foreign to the thoughts of the people.

307. The system cannot succeed unless the people themselves aid freely in working it. But, if the experimental banks initiated by the Organization Society take root in any district, the future growth of the movement will be in proportion to the desire of the people to free themselves of their present burden of indebtedness. The system separates the working bees from the drones, and gives the former an opportunity of escape from the disqualifications which now press so heavily on both classes of cultivators alike.

308. The preceding remarks apply to Mutual Credit Associations in their agricultural aspects; the same needs exist and a similar remedy applies in connection with the promotion of rural industries and the relief of artisans. It may, indeed, be possible for one association to combine both forms of relief. But in any case it will be necessary to legislate concerning the privileges which all such associations should enjoy; this matter, we understand, already under the consideration of the Government of India.

309. There remains the larger question of encouraging land and mortgage banks and private individuals to apply capital to the permanent improvement of the soil. This was considered in connection with Act XIX of 1888, and we desire to mention it with approval of its general object.

Section V: Advances by Government.

310. There is some connection from the historic as well as from the economic stand-point between the establishment of Credit Associations and the encouragement of advances under the Agricultural Loans Acts. The historic connection lies in the fact that it was originally intended to incorporate in the Land Improvement Loans Act a scheme for the creation of Agricultural Banks, although not of the Raiffeisen class. The economic connection lies in the identity of the object, at which both Agricultural Banks and the system of Government advances alike aim.

311. That object is the promotion of agricultural prosperity and the improvement of the cultivator's condition. "The real justification of the policy of Government advances to cultivators lies," said the Member in charge of the Bill, which became Act XII of 1884, "in the position of Government as the great landlord of the country, and the direct bearing which the welfare of the cultivator has on its revenues." But a wider view may be taken of the responsibilities of the Government, and its interest in the cultivator as a citizen no less than as a contributor to its revenues justifies it in promoting his industry. The policy of the Taqdiw Acts should not be regarded as productive merely, but also as protective; and it is upon the protective aspects especially that we would insist. We recognize the progress that has been made, since these measures were originally introduced, but we are convinced that there is both scope and need for a further extension of the policy in its protective aspect on lines of greater liberality. It will be convenient to deal separately with the two Acts, although many considerations apply equally to both.

312. The Land Improvement Loans Act (XIX of 1888) in its present form rose out of the recommendations of the Famine Commission of 1880. That Commission noticed many defects in the existing law regarding agricultural advances, and their recommendations led to improvements, which, so far as they have gone, have proved beneficial. Still much remains to be done.

313. It is not necessary to enlarge upon the importance, from the protective point of view, of agricultural improvements generally. The Commission of 1880 drew attention to the matter and suggested, among other reforms, the possibility of extending the practice of Bombay and Madras to Upper India so far as to rule that the assessment of land irrigated from a permanent well should not be liable to enhancement on account of the well at any revision of the settlement, provided the well is kept in efficient repair." This recommendation was embodied in the Bill which afterwards became Act XIX of 1888, and was thus referred to by the Hon'ble Member of the Governor-General's Council in charge of the Bill during the debate upon it:—

The section, as it left the hands of the Select Committee, proposed to go even beyond the recommendation of the Famine Commission, and to exempt from increase of assessment profits arising from improvements effected by the aid of loans taken under this Act, not merely for each period as would secure to the maker a reasonable return for his investment, but for all time. In those temporarily settled provinces where cultivation has almost reached its natural limits, the principle might perhaps be applied with advantage; but in others where extensive areas are still awaiting reclamation, which can practically yield no return and pay no revenue until irrigated, the enactment of such a law and fast rule would result only in a useless sacrifice of the prospective financial resources of the State.

314. For these reasons the clause which embodied the recommendation in question was curtailed; and the profits of those improvements, which consist of the reclamation of waste land, or the irrigation of land assessed at unirrigated rates, are still, in Upper India, exempted from an increase of assessment only for a limited term.

315. We have carefully considered this question in the light of the grievous misfortunes which have within recent years afflicted Upper India. Our enquiries demonstrate that there is a field for the construction of wells, tanks and other artificial means of irrigation, to which it would be difficult to assign a limit. It has also been forcibly brought home to us—as it was to the Commission of 1880—that the present terms on which these loans are offered do not attract the owners of land to make more than a partial use of the opportunities held out to them. We are convinced that nothing short of a permanent exemption will stimulate the owners of land to that full activity, which is on every ground so greatly to be desired.
316. We recommend, then, that in all future settlements any increase of assets due to the construction, otherwise than at the expense of the State, of wells, tanks or other artificial sources of irrigation should be permanently exempted from assessment to revenue. We are aware of the objection that it is financially unwise to exempt permanently the increase of assets due to irrigation in the poorer soils, but because it is in the poorer soils that irrigation will lead to the largest increase of assets. But this objection is met by the consideration that, from the protective point of view, it is just the poorest soils which are most in need of irrigation.

317. With a view to the encouragement of well sinking, we would also recommend that an expert staff be appointed, with power to disturb loans on the spot. Under the advice of this staff trial wells might be dug, the cost being recoverable from the landholder only if good water is reached. In all cases we recommend that partial or complete remissions should be granted if the well is a failure from causes beyond the borrower’s control. The cost of this expert staff and of these remissions should be charged to a fund constituted from the difference between the rates of interest at which the Government respectively borrows and lends.

318. In this connection we would call attention to the recommendation of the Famine Commission of 1890, that the rate of interest should be reduced. It is a matter of financial calculation; but we consider that a rate of 5 per cent. would be sufficient. The principle is already admitted, for in the rules of most provinces provision is made for loans at low rates of interest, or altogether free of interest, and in Madras and Bombay the ordinary rate for these loans is 5 per cent. But we think the time has come to introduce a general rule of greater liberality.

319. Although the rules in this respect are generally liberal, something may also be done to stimulate improvements by a more careful adjustment of the payment of interest to the time when the profits begin to accrue, and by lengthening the period allowed for repayment of the principal. We also think that permission should be given to Local Governments to substitute for recovery of the principal the imposition of a permanent charge on the land irrigated from the well.

320. In the course of a Resolution of the Bombay Government dated 25th July 1884, justifying the policy of charging an increased revenue on land which possessed the advantage of sub-soil water, it was stated that the cultivator would be “stimulated to utilise the sub-soil water by this method of assessment.” The evidence which we have taken indicates that this hope has not been realized. Indeed, this method of assessment has apparently created much dissatisfaction in Gujarat. It was pointed out that the incidence of a “water advantage” rate is unequal and unfair; for while the rich and large landholders can construct wells and recoup themselves, the poor cultivator, with a small holding and without capital to construct a well, must pay the rate without hope of recompense. It was said, moreover, that the holdings of cultivators even when they are not poor and unable to build wells, frequently consist of patches of land situated in many “fields,” widely scattered over the village, and that it could not possibly pay to construct a well for any one patch. In these cases it is urged that a “water advantage” rate is a mere addition to the assessment with no fair justification. These objections to a “water advantage” rate seem to us to be very weighty, and we are unable, in the face of the results, to reconcile its existence with the liberal policy of the Bombay Government in foregoing all additional assessment on account of wells constructed by private enterprise.

321. The reclamation of waste land is of less importance from the protective point of view than the extension of irrigation, but we consider that this also is a factor of protection. We recommend that in the case of reclamation, exemption should be granted for the term of the current settlement, or for the term of fifteen years, whichever last expires; and that in the succeeding settlement, or for the remainder of the succeeding settlement, assessment at half rates should be allowed.

322. Our recommendations apply with equal, if not greater, force to improvements made directly by private capital. Such improvements are apt to escape notice in the absence of a proper system of registration; and no effort should be spared to make the rules, for concessions to improvements made from private capital, and for their registration, widely known.

323. The Agriculturists’ Loans Act (XII of 1884) has been to some extent more successful than the sister Act. But there is one great objection to the present system—that the relief does not reach the cultivators, who are most in need of it. The conditions of security are strict, and the desire of subordinate officials to avoid all risk of loss in collection is strong. The result is that these loans in ordinary times reach only the more substantial cultivators, who are the least in need of them. The cultivator who is struggling in deep waters cannot hope to profit by a tagbang advance. He is in debt because he is poor; and his poverty prevents him from obtaining the means of escape from debt. We recognize that it is impossible to reach by loans of public money the lowest strata of agricultural society; some security at least must be required. But we are of opinion that more may be done by a development of joint personal security. One of the three great objects of Act XII of 1884 was to “provide for loans being made to village communities or other associated agriculturists,” and to the principle of joint responsibility we look for a large extension of these loans. We have already noted that this principle was applied with great success in the Central Provinces during the recent famine, and it is not, we think, too much to hope that a system which was so far successful on one occasion may be generally utilized to extend the beneficent range of these advances to deserving and poverty-stricken cultivators. Before this can be done, however, there must be a revision of such existing rules as lay stress on the need for the security of real property and the desirability of limiting the advances, that can be made, to those whose rights in their holdings can be brought to summary sale—an instance, surely, of the manner in which the object of the rules is lost sight of in their application. It is scarcely necessary to remark that the reasons for reducing the rate of interest are particularly cogent in the case of loans under this Act.

324. We believe that, if our recommendations on both these Acts are adopted, one step will have been taken towards the solution of a
great problem. In the debate on Act XIX of 1883 it was remarked that "the Northern India Taqârî Act requires for its application in each case but little preliminary enquiry," and the need for enquiry decreases by the present machinery may be removed. Some help may be obtained from the stiffness of Collectors, as to the classes to be relieved and as to the extent of the relief, are inconsistent with the policy that we advocate. It is a good rule, and has worked well in practice, to authorize Deputy Commissioners, and Assistant or Extra Assistant Commissioners, to distribute agricultural loans on tour after enquiry on the spot. We strongly recommend the adoption of this rule, wherever it is not at present in force. It is peculiarly suited to advances on a joint bond, which it is also calculated generally to popularize. And it is to the principles of the joint bond and personal security that we look in the future for the greatest benefit from these loans.

SECTION VI.—Indebtedness in the Bombay Presidency.

325. Our instructions permit us to record "any recommendations or opinions which it is thought may be of use * * in anticipation ** of future famines." Nothing can be more useful in anticipation of famine than improvements in the material condition of the cultivators, whereby they may be enabled to withstand the pressure of hard times; and nothing more impedes such improvements than an agrarian system, under which the cultivators fail to reap the full fruits of their industry and are kept in a state of indebtedness. We fear that the system at present prevailing in Bombay has these unhappy effects, and we therefore consider it desirable to draw attention to the question here.

326. The indebtedness of the Bombay ryot has for many years engaged the earnest attention of the Supreme and Provincial Governments. We agree with the analysis of the causes of such indebtedness made by the Decane Riots Commission; but we desire to call special attention to the agrarian system introduced by the Survey Settlement as an accentuating cause of indebtedness, and more especially to the unrestricted right of the cultivators to transfer their holdings, which the Survey Settlement recognised. A brief exposition of the leading features of this agrarian system is necessary to explain our meaning.

327. The salient features of the system are (a) the creation of a territorial unit of land revenue assessment, which is called "the field"; (b) the assessment of land revenue on each "field" independently, each thus becoming a separate holding; (c) the recognition of the recorded occupant of "the field" as possessing complete proprietary rights over it, subject only to the payment of the revenue or tax assessed on it; and (d) the punctual recovery of the land tax from the recorded occupant in both years as in good.

328. The system was devised for small cultivators; there was no intention to create large holdings. "There would seem," wrote Captain Wingate, one of the authors of the system, "to be few grounds for anticipating the establishment of wealthy agriculturists cultivating large farms under any circumstances in India. Our measures have to be framed for the class of small farmers who now prevail universally." Accordingly the "field" was designed to contain "the extent of land capable of being cultivated by a pair of bullocks." This was the theory; but the facts of existing holdings and their boundaries were accepted and fitted, as best might be, into the new scheme.

329. The recorded occupier of each "field" under the Survey Settlement became the recognized owner, subject to the payment of a moderate land tax. His rights as owner were, says Captain Wingate, "absolutely free from all conditions except the one of discharging the Government tax." But this condition was to be rigidly enforced. In the discussions which preceded the adoption of the principles of the "Joint Report," which is the basis of the Bombay Revenue system, the advantages of elasticity in the collection of the land tax did not escape notice.* But, nevertheless, a leading principle of the Revenue System, as finally established, was that, in view of the mitigation of the assessment, sufficient elasticity was given by making the assessment of each "field" separate, and by giving the registered occupant complete power of transfer or relinquishment over his "field." 330. A strong tenure of this sort held at a low assessment was a very valuable property; and it is easy to see now that it would have been wise to have kept a vigilant watch over the use which an ignorant and unthrifty peasantry was making of it. But the authors of the system held that the best way to excite the cultivator to independence and to create agricultural capital was "to exempt him as much as possible from the pugilage to, and surveillance of, Government officers." There was, it was said, "an obvious advantage to get land out of the hands of the cultivators unable to pay their way and to transfer it to cultivators with more capital. * * * As the customs and native revenue systems of India are adverse to land transfers, it is therefore all the more necessary to adopt measures for giving them effect." Accordingly it was decided that there should be no interference by Government officers with the people, and that no enquiries should be made regarding the financial condition of the cultivators.

331. Thus things were left to take their own course; and the result was—as invariably happens when an ignorant and improvident peasantry can dispose without restriction of valuable rights in land—that the cultivators sank deeper into debt, and that their property began to pass out of their hands. It must be admitted that the conditions on which, under the Revenue System, the cultivators held their lands helped to bring this result about. The rigidity of the revenue system forced them into debt, while the valuable property which they held made it easy to borrow.

332. This is the state of things to-day, and while it remains unaltered, indebtedness in the Bombay Presidency must continue and increase.

* The advantage of elasticity in collecting the land revenue was well recognized in the present settlement period as appears from the evidence (question 2129-2) given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1885 by Lieutenant-Colonel Sykes, Statistical Reporter to the Bombay Government.
333. We desire to guard ourselves against the supposition that we
impute want of care or solicitude for the people's interest to the
authors of the Bombay revenue system. The authors of that system
were men of ability, humanity and zeal for the public good: and
nothing is further from our thoughts than to impugn the excellence
of their intentions. What we wish to point out is that their intentions
have not been fulfilled. They expected the accumulation of
agricultural capital; but their plan did not promote thrift, nor did
they conduce to the independence of the ryot. They looked for the
capitalist cultivator; and we find the "sankadr's serf.

334. On the extent of the indebtedness of the Bombay cultivators
no precise official information, we believe, exists, but there are materials
for a probable estimate. We know that the Deccan Riots Commission of
1876 found that "about one-third of the occupants of Government land
are embarrassed with debt; that their debts average about 13 times their
assessment; and that nearly two-thirds of the debt is secured by mortgagethey have from debt; and that the remainder are indebted to a greater
or less extent.

The Commission of 1891 found that, within the preceding eight years, land paying 10 per cent. of the revenue, in the districts
which they visited, had been sold, two-fifths going to money-lenders; while lands paying 17½ per cent. of the revenue had been mortgaged,
four-sevenths going to the "sankadri". In his evidence before us the Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government said that 28 per cent. of
the land in Broach had passed into the possession of the money-lending
classes; and from a report of the Collector of Ahmedabad
considerable way. Taking all these statements into account, and
we know that the money-lenders, in the villages visited by the Commission, paid about one-eighth of the who's land revenue—"their property having been acquired within the preceding twenty, and for the most part the preceding ten, years—while it was notorius that the private transfers of land were, in most cases, not recorded. The Commission of 1891 found that, within the preceding eight years, land paying 10 per cent. of the revenue, in the districts
which they visited, had been sold, two-fifths going to money-lenders; while lands paying 17½ per cent. of the revenue had been mortgaged,
four-sevenths going to the "sankadri". In his evidence before us the Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government said that 28 per cent. of
the land in Broach had passed into the possession of the money-lending
classes; and from a report of the Collector of Ahmedabad it appears
that in his district expropriation of the old owners has also made considerable way. Taking all these statistics into account, and
comparing them with the evidence we have recorded, we think it
probable that at least one-fourth of the cultivators in the Bombay
Presidency have lost possession of their lands; that less than a fifth are free from debt; and that the remainder are indebted to a greater
or less extent.

335. It is unnecessary to retrace here the efforts which since 1876
have been made to remedy this lamentable state of things. Commissions
have sat and reported; Acts of the Legislature have been passed and
amended; executive action of various sorts has been taken. But, of all,
the result has been disappointment. Comparing the statistics of sales and mortgages in the four districts to which the Relief Acts have applied with the corresponding figures in non-Act districts, and weighing the evidence of the witnesses on the point, we form the conclusion that these Acts have done but little substantial good. Indeed, there is positively
room for improvement—and statistics show—that transfers of property, both by sale and mortgage, have become more frequent in districts to which the Relief Acts apply. We therefore think that the time for palliative measures has passed, and that the hour has come for recognizing facts
as they exist, and for applying those measures which the facts demand, no
matter how unwelcome may be the disillusionment that they may bring.

336. The cultivators, whose names are recorded, may, for the
purpose in hand, be divided into three classes: (1) those who have
completely lost their lands; (2) those who have only mortgaged their
rights; and (3) those who are free from debt. We are only concerned
with the first and second classes.

337. It is a curious, but common, practice in Bombay for the
money-lender owner to maintain the name of a cultivator of the first
class on the village proprietary register and to keep his own name off it.
The motive for such action is suggested in paragraphs 70 and 77 of
the Report of the Deccan Riots Commission, which also incidentally explain
why such a large portion of the land revenue in the Bombay Presidency
is paid by money-lenders:

Instances of the redemption of mortgage are almost unknown; a mortgage is
equivalent to a transfer of the ryot's title, his interest in the mortgaged land, where, as is usual, he remains upon it as cultivating for the mortgages, being that of a tenant at a rack rent. * * * * The ryot's land is often more valuable as security to the "sankadri" than it is as an ordinary investment to a purchaser; for, through the great reluctance of the ryot to sever all connection with his land, the "sankadri" is able to exact more than the ordinary rent, and, besides, the land is not the only security which the "sankadri" holds; the law gives him control not only over the debtor's movable property, but over his labour and the labour of his family.

338. Now, we urge that the maintenance of the old owner's name
on the register has inconvenient results in many directions. The first of
these is that the register is not a record of actual facts as it should be;
and from this it follows that the demand for the land revenue is made
upon a person who is not actually responsible for the payment of it;
that an opportunity is, thus, given for the exercise by untrustworthy sub­
ordinate officials of powers which are susceptible of great abuse; that
the capitalist owner is exempted from directly bearing those responsi­
bilities which the possession of property should impose; and that the
Government is prevented from protecting the actual cultivator, i.e.,
the expropriated owner, by a Tenancy Law. Moreover, there is reason
for believing that the refusal to recognize actual facts in this connection
has positively contributed to the people's indebtedness. It is in evidence
that the madredri or alien class of money-lender, the most exacting of
all, does not care to stand forth as owner and cultivate the land. Had
money-lenders of this class been compelled to record their names, had the
duties of proprietorship been enforced against them, and had their sub­
tenants been protected against excessive mortgaging, these money-lenders
would probably have concluded that land was a less desirable investment
then it has been and is.

339. Two ways of dealing with this first class of cases suggest them­selves, for we put aside as Utopian the re-purchase of the old holdings
by the State. One is to restate the old owners by coming to a composi­tion
with the de facto owners and by arranging for the payment of the
latter's claims by instalments. This method would, we gather, be acceptable to Bombay opinion, and, if a practicable means of enforcing it can be devised, it would no doubt be in every way desirable. But we fear that,
at best, it holds out but a slender hope of success. There are no possible means by which the de facto owners can be compelled to part with their property: while even a liquidation based on consent could hardly be effected within any measurable period of time.

340. Failing such a scheme, one practicable method of dealing with this class of cases seems to us to be to recognize the facts, to record the money-lenders for what they are, viz., the owners of the land which has passed away from the tenants and to protect the latter from rack-renting by a suitable Tenancy Act. There is universal agreement that the expropriated owner has, as a rule, sunk the improvement on the land and making over the produce to the owner. In good years he has nothing to hope for except a bare subsistence; in bad years, like last year, he falls back on public charity.

341. In regard to the cultivators of the second class who are as yet the owners of their holdings, and in respect of whom the money-lender is still merely a mortgagee, the situation is different. The problem is how to preserve to the ryots their rights in their holdings, which are fast slipping from their grasp. Here the remedial measures called for are of a legislative as well as of an executive character. The executive measures are the introduction of elasticity in the collection of the Government demand, and its corollary, the improvement in the system of land records. The legislative measures are concerned, first, with enabling the tenancy to compound for their existing debts, and, next with limiting their power of incurring fresh debts or, in other words, imposing limitations on the transfer of their property in the future. We will deal with the legislative remedies first, and then express our views upon the administrative question.

342. We propose the following legislative measures, and we note that the probability of lasting success will be greatly strengthened if Mutual Credit Associations take root and flourish in the country. In the first place, power should be given by statute for the following or some similar procedure:—

(1) The account between debtor and creditor should be investigated, and a fair sum should be fixed, to be paid by the former to the latter in liquidation of the debt.

(2) The average produce of the holding should be ascertained, and its money value should be expressed in cash.

(3) The surplus produce, after providing for the subsistence of the cultivator and his family and the necessities of cultivation, should be appropriated to the payment of debt, provided that such appropriation shall not be continued after the lapse of a term of years.

(4) In substitution for (1), (2) and (3) the holding should be made over, at the land tax assessed, to the creditor in usufructuary mortgage for a term of years.

In either case the holding should be declared free of debt at the end of the term. We have ascertained that a procedure similar to this is followed in Rajputana.

343. In the second place, we think that legislation with the object of restricting the transferability of land* should be undertaken in Bombay, and we might refer to the legislation lately carried through in the Punjab, as indicating how this object can be effected. Otherwise we fear that, as the Commissioner of the Central Division said in 1883, "the number of non-cultivating occupants will continue to largely increase, and our moderate survey rates, which are intended to benefit the cultivators, will only benefit land speculators, who will, as occupants, pay the low rates to Government and grind down their sub-tenants under a hideous system of rack-renting."

344. Coming next to the executive measures, we need not again refer to the question of elasticity in the collection of the land revenue, but a few words are necessary as to improvements in the Land Records system which are essential to the proper introduction of it. These improvements consist chiefly in the better organization of the Land Records staff; in the mapping and registration of every plot contained in the "field"; in the maintenance of a correct map by the village accountant; and in the due registration in the village records of all particulars regarding ownership, encumbrances and cultivating rights.

345. We were unfavourably impressed by the insufficient control, which, under the Bombay system, is exercised over the village accountant, and with the waste of strength involved in employing one set of officials in dealing with the land revenue and a different set in dealing with agricultural statistics. The experience of other provinces shows that both functions are best and most economically discharged by one properly graded staff of village accountants, circle superintendents (or kāningos) and district superintendents (supervisor kāningos), working under the Collector. It is only by consolidating the two staffs in this way that the necessary control can be established over the village accountant.

346. Above all, there should be a real record of all proprietary rights in land, and to this end registration of title in the village register should be enforced. At present there is no precise information as to the actual ownership of the land, and the entries in the village papers are often at variance with the facts. The result is that, when the revenue falls due, and the actual cultivator, who is not the owner, protests that he is not responsible, the local officials are reduced to a shrewd guess as to who the responsible party may be. This throws an enormous power into the hands of the village accountant, a subordinate official, who, in every province, requires to be kept under strict control.

347. We advise that no time be lost in giving effect to the reforms which we have suggested above.

SECTION VII.—Agricultural Development.

348. The last topic in connection with protective policy, on which we desire to remark, is Agricultural Development; and under this head we include irrigation, and the expansion of the Provincial Agricultural Departments, as well as improvement in agricultural processes.

349. The aspects of the famine problem, which, in the opinion of the Commission of 1890, called most urgently for attention, were the...
ascertainment of the actual facts regarding the agriculture of the country, and the circulation of the surplus stocks of food. To this end the policy of protective railways and of Agricultural Departments was recommended; and this policy has now, by the mere process of achievement, ceased to respond to the requirements of the present time.

350. To the policy of protective railways such ample effect has now been given that the final horror of famine—an actual dearth of food—need no longer be a source of apprehension. In inaccessible mountain country or in some remote valley the local officers may have upon occasion to bring food for the people, or to subsidize private trade to do so; but in the continent at large there is, for the future, no anxiety as to the ability of private trade to deliver food where it is needed. There is, indeed, necessity, as we have already pointed out, for improving the means of transport by an increase of the rolling stock; but generally railway construction has, in our opinion, played its part in the policy of famine insurance. To put the food-supply of the country in circulation was necessarily the first object of a wise famine policy; to protect and develop the supply itself should be its second object; and this is the function of agricultural development generally, and of irrigation in particular.

351. This subject was dealt with at considerable length by the Famine Commission of 1898; and the evidence which we have taken and our own experience, show that there is a wide field for the construction of irrigation works. All provinces do not, indeed, present practicable schemes for the construction of great canals; but the possibilities of smaller protective works have in no province been exhausted, while in some provinces they have as yet hardly been examined. For storage tanks, reservoirs and, above all, irrigation wells the scope and necessity are very great. As the whole subject of irrigation has now been taken up by the Government of India in pursuance of the recommendations of the Commission of 1898, we need do no more than point to the confirmation which our enquiries afford to the conclusions of the last Commission, and express our cordial approval of a new departure in famine policy which would place irrigation works in the place that protective railways have hitherto occupied in the famine insurance programme. We have already made recommendations which, we hope, will greatly stimulate private enterprise to work for this important end.

352. The recommendations of the Commission of 1898, touching Agricultural Departments, were promptly accepted by the Government of India, and carried out so far as lay with them. Undoubtedly much progress has been made in the last twenty years, but the progress has been unequal, and the time has, in our opinion, now come for a further advance. These Agricultural Departments have a double function to discharge, and this is expressed in their designation as Departments of Land Records and Agriculture. They have on the Land Records side to register all facts connected with the tenure of land, with questions of rent and revenue and with agricultural statistics. On the Agricultural side they have to deal with the condition of the cultivating classes, with agriculture and with agricultural methods and the various questions connected with their efficiency.

353. We are, indeed, far from thinking that the Indian cultivator is ignorant of agriculture; in the mere practice of cultivation Agricultural Departments have probably much to learn from the cultivator. But in the utilization of his hereditary skill, in economy of the means of production, and in the practice of organized self-help the Indian cultivator is generally ignorant and backward. It is in correcting these deficiencies that Agricultural Departments will find their richest fields of labour. Without pretending to exhaust the number of subjects on which these departments may usefully employ themselves, we may mention the following: improved agricultural teaching to the better classes; the promotion of Mutual Associations; agricultural research and experiments; inquiries regarding tillage and manure; the investigation of crop diseases and their remedies; the provision of improved seed; the experimental introduction of new staples; the improvement of cattle breeding; the investigation of cattle diseases; and the development of the fodder supply. To some of these subjects more or less attention has, we know, been already given, but they all claim greater and more systematic attention. To this end the employment of a stronger expert staff in every province is necessary. The steady application to agricultural problems of expert research is the crying necessity of the time.

CONCLUSION.

354. These hopes for the future are the seal of the past. In our opinion their complete and lasting fruition depends no less on success in evoking the spirit of self-help and thrift among the people than on securing their crops from drought. For security the harvests only postpone the pressure of the population on the soil; it is prudence and knowledge and the practice of thrift alone which will relieve it. But pending the effective growth of these qualities there will, we believe, be great protection for the people in the adoption of the recommendations which we have now made. They are the outcome of a careful study of past experience and of the incidents of the last famine. Like other famines it had its successes and its failures, which convey lessons of encouragement and warning. But through all one fact stands out very clearly—that almost every responsible officer did his best. There has rarely been so great a call on the officers of Government, European and Native, for devotion in the service of humanity; and there has never been a readier response to the call.

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May 8th, 1901.