

## CHAPTER XI

### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

#### ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES AND STAFF

FOR administrative purposes the district is divided into the two subdivisions of Bānkurā and Bishnupur, the former being under the direct supervision of the Collector, while Bishnupur is in charge of a Subdivisional Officer, who is generally a Deputy Collector of the Provincial Civil Service. At Bānkurā the sanctioned staff consists of three Deputy Collectors, of whom two are magistrates of the first class and one is vested with the powers of a magistrate of the second or third class; in addition to these officers, there are sometimes one or two Sub-Deputy Collectors. At Bishnupur the Subdivisional Officer is assisted by a Sub-Deputy Collector.

#### REVENUE

The revenue of the district, under the main heads, rose from Rs. 7,16,000 in 1880-81, when the income-tax had not been imposed, to Rs. 8,11,000 in 1890-91 and to Rs. 9,45,000 in 1900-01. In 1906-07 it amounted to Rs. 10,81,000 of which Rs. 4,85,000 were derived from land revenue, Rs. 3,49,000 from stamps, Rs. 1,20,000 from excise, Rs. 1,06,000 from cesses, and Rs. 21,000 from income-tax.

#### LAND REVENUE

The collections of land revenue fell from Rs. 4,59,000 in 1880-81 to Rs. 4,58,000 in 1890-91, but rose again to Rs. 4,60,000 in 1900-01. In 1906-07 they aggregated Rs. 4,85,000 collected from 1,143 estates, the current land revenue demand being Rs. 4,83,000 of which Rs. 4,81,000 were payable by 1,071 permanently settled estates and Rs. 800 by 53 temporarily settled estates, while the demand from 19 estates

held direct by Government was Rs. 1,100. The total land revenue demand is equivalent to 25 per cent of the gross rental of the district.

#### STAMPS

The receipts from judicial and non-judicial stamps rank next in importance as a source of revenue. They increased from Rs. 2,49,000 in 1896-97 to Rs. 2,79,000 in 1900-01, and rose still further to Rs. 3,49,000 in 1906-07. There has, in fact, been a steady increase year after year, owing to the growth of both the number and value of suits instituted in the Civil Courts, which is attributed to the spread of education making the people better acquainted with their rights. More than four-fifths (Rs. 2,90,000) of the receipts in 1906-07 were obtained from the sale of judicial stamps, and in particular of court-fee stamps, which accounted for Rs. 2,64,000; while Rs. 59,500 were obtained from the sale of non-judicial stamps, nearly the whole of this sum (Rs. 57,000) being due to the demand for impressed stamps.

#### EXCISE

The receipts from excise rose from Rs. 82,000 in 1896-97 to Rs. 95,000 in 1900-01, and further increased in 1906-07 to Rs. 1,20,000. The greater portion of the excise revenue is derived from the sale of country spirit prepared by distillation from the flower of the *mahuā* tree (*Bassia latifolia*). The receipts from this source amounted in 1906-07 to Rs. 54,000, or nearly half of the total excise revenue. The manufacture and sale of country spirit were previously carried on under both the outstill system and the central distillery system, i.e., there were outstills serving the wild tracts to the south-west and a central distillery at Bānkurā for the supply of the rest of the district. In 1907 the contract supply system was introduced, i.e., the local manufacture of country spirit has been prohibited, and a contract for the wholesale supply of spirit given out to a firm of distillers. The contractors are forbidden to hold any retail licenses for its sale, but are allowed the use of distillery and warehouse buildings for the storage of liquor. The right of retail vend is disposed of by separate shops, each of which is put up to auction; and the retail vendors are forbidden to sell liquor except at prescribed strengths, for which maximum prices are fixed.

According to the returns for 1906-07, there is one retail shop for the sale of country spirit to every 16,417 persons; and in that year the average consumption of the central distillery liquor was 4 proof gallons and of outstill spirit 53 proof gallons per 1,000 of the population. The receipts from the sale of country spirit and of the fermented liquor called *tāri* represented an expenditure of Rs. 721 per 10,000 of the population, a figure lower than that returned by any district in the Burdwān Division except Midnapore. On the other hand, the receipts from *pachwai* or rice beer are considerable, amounting to Rs. 26,000 in 1906-07, a total exceeded in only four other districts in the Province (Burdwān, Birbhūm, Darjeeling and the Sāntāl Parganas). This is the national drink of the aboriginal races, who regard it as a nutritious food and utilize it as a substitute for a meal. The consumption of imported liquors is exceedingly small, the mass of the population being unable to afford foreign spirits and also preferring the country spirit and *pachwai* they have drunk for generations past.

The consumption of opium is not great, only Rs. 23,000 being obtained from the duty and license fees. The revenue from this source is less than in any other district in the Burdwān Division, and amounts to only Rs. 203 per 10,000 of the population. There is even less demand for *gānjā*, i.e., the dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant (*Cannabis indica*) and the resinous exudation on them. The consumption of this drug is less than in any district in Bengal except Angul, the duty and license fees realising only Rs. 16,000 in 1906-07 or Rs. 150 per 10,000 of the population.

#### CESSES

Road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee. The collections fell from Rs. 97,000 in 1896-97 to Rs. 94,000 in 1900-01, but increased to Rs. 1,06,000 in 1906-07. The current demand in the year last named was Rs. 1,05,476, of which Rs. 94,340 were payable by 1,432 revenue-paying estates, Rs. 5,580 by 1,502 rent-free properties, and Rs. 5,268 by 387 revenue-free estates. The number of estates assessed to cesses is thus 3,321, while the number of tenures is 92,704, and there are therefore 28 times as many tenures liable to pay cesses as there are estates.

The number of recorded shareholders of estates and tenures is 8,760 and 1,04,490 respectively.

#### INCOME-TAX

In 1901-02 the income-tax yielded Rs. 18,000 paid by 985 assesseees, of whom 698 paying Rs. 8,000 had incomes of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000. At that time the minimum income assessable was Rs. 500, but this was raised in 1903 to Rs. 1,000, thereby giving relief to a number of petty traders, money-lenders and clerks. The number of assesseees consequently fell in 1903 to 374 and the collections to Rs. 16,000. In 1906-07 the tax yielded Rs. 21,000 paid by 463 assesseees.

#### REGISTRATION

There are 9 offices for the registration of assurances under Act III of 1877. At Bānkurā the District Sub-Registrar deals as usual with the documents presented there, and also assists the District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* District Registrar in supervising the proceedings of the Sub-Registrars in charge of the other registration offices. The average number of documents registered annually during the quinquennium ending in 1899 was 26,310, but in the 5 years ending in 1904 it increased to 30,380, the increase being due to the settlement of resumed *chaukīdārī* and *ghāt-wāli* lands.

The marginal statement [the statement below—*ed.*] shows the number of documents registered and the receipts and

Office	Documents registered	Receipts		Expenditure	
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Bānkurā ...	4,456	7,538	7,023		
Bishnupur ...	3,839	4,242	1,679		
Gangājalghāti ...	4,785	4,947	2,281		
Indās ...	3,974	4,449	1,943		
Khātrā ...	2,354	2,153	1,886		
Kotalpur ...	5,036	5,106	2,052		
Ondā ...	2,712	2,851	1,426		
Raipur ...	2,573	2,338	1,653		
Sonāmukhī ...	2,544	2,667	1,677		
Total ...	32,273	36,291	21,620		

expenditure at each office in 1907. The number of registrations was higher than in any other district in the Division, except Burdwān and Midnapore.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

##### CIVIL JUSTICE

The staff entertained for the administration of civil justice consists of the District Judge and Sub-Judge at Bānkurā and of six Munsifs, of whom three hold their courts at Bānkurā and the remaining three at Bishnupur, Khātrā and Kotalpur. There has been, on the whole, a steady increase in the number of civil suits in recent years, which the District Magistrate ascribes to the growth of intelligence and education among the masses, who are gradually becoming more accustomed to resort to the Civil Courts than to use criminal force in establishing their rights.

##### CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Criminal justice is administered by the District and Sessions Judge, the District Magistrate, and the Deputy and Sub-Deputy Magistrates stationed at Bānkurā and Bishnupur. The sanctioned staff at Bānkurā consists of the District Magistrate, two Deputy Magistrates of the first class and one Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class, in addition to the Sub-Deputy Magistrates of the second or third class who are sometimes stationed there. The Subdivisional Officer at Bishnupur is almost invariably a Magistrate vested with first class powers, and is usually assisted by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class. Besides these stipendiary Magistrates, there are benches of Honorary Magistrates at Bānkurā and Bishnupur, besides an Honorary Magistrate at each of the following places: Gangājalghāti, Indās, Khātrā, Raipur and Sonāmukhī.

##### CRIME

Bānkurā has long had an unenviable reputation for harbouring organized bands of dacoits, who commit numerous dacoities within its borders or in the surrounding districts. It stands high in the list of districts in which this form of crime is prevalent; in the three years 1901-03 the average annual number of dacoities committed was 15, and though the number fell to

3 in 1904 and also in 1905, it rose again to 10 in 1906. Systematic efforts have been made in recent years to break up these gangs of dacoits, and the cases instituted have brought to light some remarkable facts regarding them. It was found that one gang had been in existence for over 20 years and consisted of no less than 103 members, and that another had been at work since 1879. A third included 35 members, and the ring-leader of a fourth confessed to no less than 22 dacoities and 50 burglaries committed by his gang in Bānkurā between 1890 and 1901. The history of a fifth gang which carried on its operations in Bānkurā is even more remarkable, for it dates back to the Mutiny of 1857, when the gang is reported to have waylaid a body of the mutineers and stripped them of their arms and loot. It was composed of aboriginals, 76 in number, to whom were traced 30 dacoities, committed in this district and Mānbhūm between 1895 and 1905. Another gang, composed chiefly of Bhumijes, formerly known locally as *chuars* or robbers, committed crime not only in Bānkurā, which they made their headquarters, but also in Hooghly, Midnapore and Mānbhūm; no less than 18 dacoities and 7 burglaries were traced to this gang. Another famous band of dacoits consisted of Tuntiā Musalmāns, who were accountable for 22 dacoities committed in Bānkura and Hooghly. Yet another gang, consisting of Lohārs, was in the habit of committing dacoities not only in Bānkurā, but also in Hooghly, Burdwān and the 24-Parganas.

#### CRIMINAL CLASSES

The above account of the Bānkurā dacoits will show the existence of certain classes who obtain their livelihood by habitual and organized crime. Among those who have acquired notoriety as dacoits, the Lohārs and the Tuntiā Musalmāns may be mentioned. The Lohārs are not, as in other districts, a respectable artisan class of Aryan descent but are semi-aboriginals, similar to the Bāgdis. Of late years, however, they have been endeavouring to improve their social condition, and in the District Census Report of 1891 it is stated as a fact worthy of notice that the Lohārs are gradually progressing. "They show by their acts that they are ambitious to improve their social status without publicly crying out for social precedence. Education is now

gradually spreading itself among them, and they are often found to take a great interest in the observance of simple Hindu rites and ceremonies. Their love for *Harisankīrtan* is gradually bringing them in close contact with higher castes."

The Tuntiā Musalmāns have their headquarters in Midnapore, but a certain number are found in the south of the district. They are a Muhammadan caste, whose traditional occupation is cultivation of the mulberry (*tunt*) for feeding silk-worms. This occupation having become less profitable of late years, many have taken to ordinary cultivation and field labour, others to twisting ropes from a reed called *sar*, while others are professional thieves and dacoits. In order to watch their movements and check their depredations, it was found necessary to establish a beat-house at Siromanipur in the Kotalpur thana.

#### MIGRATION

The control of emigration to the tea gardens plays an important part in the administration of the district. Regarding this the Commissioner writes as follows in his Administration Report on the quinquennium 1900-01 to 1904-05: "It appears that there was a steady increase of emigrants from year to year, but the number represents to a large extent the coolies recruited by garden *sardārs*, who are more successful in securing coolies than the recruiters employed by contractors. The number of contractors' coolies is gradually coming down with the gradual development of the free system, which has practically taken its place. During the last few months, registration under Chapter III has practically ceased, but instances of fraudulent recruitment by free recruiters have been so common and widespread that legislation is necessary, so as to protect simple and ignorant villagers from being enticed away and sent off to the tea districts under false representations. As great care is taken to see that no cooly is fraudulently recruited when produced for registration, the recruiters under the contract system, whenever they have any doubts of securing registration, betake themselves to the more easy procedure laid down under section 92 of the Emigration Act and manage to send the coolies to labour districts as free recruits. Free emigration is therefore open to many

abuses, and the system goes to increase rather than to decrease the facilities of fraudulent recruitment. A large number of emigrants were repatriated last year, and most of them were recruited as free emigrants. The Magistrate states that it is very difficult to bring home to the offenders charges of unlawful recruitment for want of sufficient evidence. There were 12 depots and rest-houses at the close of the period under review as against 5 in 1899-1900."

#### POLICE

For police purposes the district is divided into 9 thanas or police circles, viz., in the headquarters subdivision, Bānkurā with an area of 332 square miles, Gangājalghāti with the Barjorā outpost having a combined area of 465 square miles, Ondā (329 square miles), Raipur (333 square miles) with the Simlāpāl outpost (119 square miles), and Khātrā (343 square miles); and in the Bishnupur subdivision, Bishnupur (302 square miles), Kotalpur (133 square miles), Indās (124 square miles) and Sonāmukhī (141 square miles). Besides the thanas, there are 11 outposts as shown below :

Police Station	Outpost	Police Station	Outpost
SADAR DIVISION A.		BISHNUPUR SUBDIVISION	
Bānkurā	Chhātānā.	Bishnupur	{ Jaypur.
Gangājalghāti	{ Sāltorā	Kotalpur.	{ Jayrāmpur.
	Mejiā.		Sonāmukhī.
	Barjorā.		Indās.
SADAR DIVISION B.		TOWN POLICE	
Ondā	Tāldāngrā.	Bānkurā.	Rājgrām.
Raipur	Simlāpāl.	Bishnupur.	Sonāmukhī.
Khātrā	Indpur.		

The regular police force consisted in 1906 of a Superintendent, 5 Inspectors, 31 Sub-Inspectors, 35 Head-Constables and 325 constables, a total force of 397 men, representing one policeman to every 6.6 square miles and to every 2,812 of the population. The rural force for the watch and ward of villages in the interior is composed of 249 *dafādārs* and 2,754 *chaukīdārs* including a small body of men called *simānādārs* in the Indās and Kotalpur

thanas, whose services are remunerated by grants of land; other *chaukīdārs* are paid Rs. 4 a month.

#### JAILS

There is a district jail at Bānkurā with accommodation (in 1907) for 301 prisoners, viz., barracks for 213 male convicts, 12 female convicts, 30 under-trial prisoners and 8 civil prisoners, cells for 6 male convicts, and a hospital with 32 beds for male convicts. There is a subsidiary jail at Bishnupur, which has accommodation for 12 male and 3 female prisoners. The industries carried on in the district jail are oil-pressing, brick-making, weaving of *darīs* and cloth, and cane and bamboo work.