

CHAPTER XI

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

EARLY HISTORY

IN the "Ain-i-Akbari" (1590 A. D.), Burdwan is mentioned as a *mahal* or *pargana* of *Sarkar* Sharifabad, and was, as then constituted, assessed at 46,903½ Akbarshahi rupees of 175 grains troy of silver each. The present district area, however, at Todar Mal's settlement fell within various *sarkars*, portions of which were afterwards amalgamated into one great zamindari, including also the whole of Bankura and Panchet (Manbhum) together with parts of Hooghly and Birbhum.

The settlement was revised in 1658 by Prince Shah Shuja, the son of the Emperor Shah Jahan, and again in 1722 by Murshid Kuli Khan, better known as the Nawab Jafar Khan. In his statement Burdwan is mentioned as a '*chakla*', comprising the *sarkars* of Sharifabad, Madaran, the greater part of Salimabad or Sulaimanabad, and a portion of Satgaon or Hooghly, and included the great estates of the Burdwan house, one-third of Birbhum, and the whole of Bankura and Panchet. The *chakla* contained 61 *parganas*, and was assessed at a revenue of 22,44,812 *sikka* rupees. On the 27th September 1760 A. D., Burdwan, which then contained an area of 5,174 square miles, and was described as being the most productive district within the whole Province or *Subah* of Bengal, was ceded to the East India Company, together with the districts of Midnapore and Chittagong, by Nawab Mir Muhammad Kasim Khan, Governor of Bengal. By the Imperial *farman* which made the grant, the Company acquired the right of free perpetual tenure in the land, and these rights extended over the whole *chakla* of Burdwan. This great zamindari when ceded to the Company, was estimated to yield a net revenue of

31,75,391 *sikka* rupees but for many years afterwards the Company's officers had the greatest difficulty in collecting even a portion of this sum. The first "Superintendents" appointed by the Company were Mr. Johnstone, Mr. Hay and Mr. Bolts. Dissatisfied with the collections for 1760-61 they farmed out the estate at public auction for a period of three years with the result that the revenue was increased from Rs. 31,75,391 to Rs. 38,58,429, the total gross revenue from the district in 1765 being estimated at Rs. 44,84,049. The increase was however more apparent than real and it was not till 1771 that this revenue was realised in full.

A most interesting account of the early revenue history of the district under British rule is given in Mr. Sharistadar Grant's famous review of the revenues of Bengal, which is incorporated in the fifth report of the Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company. After proudly comparing the zamindari of Burdwan, "the most compact, best cultivated, and, in proportion to its dimensions, by far the most productive in annual rent to the proprietary sovereign" with the "boasted Hindoo territory of Tanjore" and the great zamindari of Benares he goes on to point the moral of his comparison. "This pre-eminence of the ceded British territory in financial circumstances, hath been attained chiefly in a period of ten years by repeated *hustabood* investigation, and bringing to the credit of the exchequer the Keffyet or profitable increase discovered to have been privately realised from the country by the zamindar and other intermediate Agents of Government, in addition to the jumma Ausil and Abwab already authoritatively established. The Company's management of Burdwan is approved of on all sides, and by the most enlightened of our English financiers held up as an example worthy of general imitation. The circumstances which distinguished it were briefly as follows.

FIRST ENGLISH SUPERINTENDENTS

In September 1760 the whole district, with all the other ceded lands, became subject to the British Government; it was rated proportionately, in the moment of transfer, by

original and increased assessments, at a standard considerably higher than that of any other zamindary jurisdiction of the *saubah*; yet then or afterwards, no diminution of its rental, such as was suddenly effected by M. R. Khan in 1765, could even have been dreamt of. On the contrary, with the extension of local knowledge, the revenues were progressively improved, and always surpassed the share that should be proportionately forthcoming. When Bengal altogether was rated at or yielded the largest income to the exchequer, before the Company's acquisition of the Dewanny, Messrs. Johnstone, Hay and Bolts, were the first appointed English Superintendents. They appear to have acquired a minute and intimate knowledge of the resources and capacity of the country confided to their charge, in so much as to ascertain the portions of the country cultivated, uncultivated, alienated, and most productive lands. In their researches though aided by uncommon universal intelligence, they probably obtained the most satisfactory information through the custom, which then was tolerated, of admitting European farmers. They held a considerable part of the district in their own hands and were accused of selecting of themselves the most profitable parganas leased.

"In violation of the financial practice of the Mogul Empire, the rents of Burdwan were let at public sale in 1169 A.B. (1762) for three years to irresponsible temporary farmers, from whose engagements, if fulfilled, a Keffyet or annual profit would have accrued to Government of 13 lakhs of rupees above the aggregate assessments of Ausil and Abwab. The needy adventurers who became contractors at the sale of course failed in their agreements, and to crown the measure of imputed mismanagement, an impost of 9 annas per bega was levied on all the Bazee Zemeen found in the district, to make good the deficiencies of the stipulated malgoozary. The territory thus alienated, and ascertained by Mr. Johnstone, after an arduous scrutiny by 70 persons for eight months, in 1763-64 A.D., was 568,736 begas, making near a fifth part of all the arable productive ground in the zamindary; which, estimated at 2 rupees per bega, being

the valued medium rent of all the lands in Burdwan, yield an annual income to the possessors of 11,37,472 rupees. These possessors are, undoubtedly, for the most part, the official land-owner himself clandestinely, his minions, and the mutseddies of the Khalsa; whose acquiescence to such collusive benefices, under the sanctified appellations of religious or charitable gifts, at different times became necessary, as they were in their nature wholly fraudulent and sure to be resumed if made known to the Mussulman Government. Mr. Johnstone, who had the principal part in all these transactions, was subjected to all the opprobrium that could hence be attached to his public character by the suggestions of his powerful political enemies, and of the aggrieved multitude, and was soon afterwards for those reasons proscribed by his ruling countrymen. Finally Mr. Varelst, in 1172 A.B. (1765) appointed Supervisor of Burdwan, profiting by the errors and local information of his predecessors, his own financial experience matured by further *hustabood* investigations on the spot, restored the ancient system of managing the revenue, an adherence to which brought back the most effective standard of the collections regularly in 1778, to the full amount of the supposed inflated contract price of the three years' settlement in 1171 (1764) fixed on the impolitic ground of extra farming, and ultimately involving a real instead of the nominal Keffyet or improvement before mentioned of 13 lakhs." According to Mr. Grant's analysis the revenue of the zamindari when ceded to the British Government in 1760 amounted in all to *sikka* Rs. 31,75,391, after allowing for a deduction of *sikka* Rs. 51,543 on account of collection charges. This sum consisted of the "Ausil Jamma," the imperial revenue collected by Akber and his successors which in 1722 amounted to *sikka* Rs. 23,07,277, and various *abwabs* or cesses imposed after that date by the Subahdars of Bengal, amounting in all to Rs. 9,19,657. Of the latter the most interesting was the *chaut maratha*, a cess imposed by Ali Vardi Khan on the pretence of raising the well-known tribute exacted by these marauders from the Mughal Empire. In the year 1771 the gross revenue was increased to

43,28,509 *sikka* rupees and in 1783 to 43,58,026 *sikka* rupees. On these figures Mr. Grant in 1787 estimated the annual net revenue at *sikka* Rs. 40,00,000 after deducting Rs. 3,30,000 on account of charges. These charges included the *Salanah mushahara*, or proprietary allowance made to the Maharaja, which was estimated at 10 per cent, on the imperial revenue and amounted to *sikka* Rs. 2,30,000; *sikka* rupees 50,000 on account of embankment charges or *pulbandi*. This estimate was accepted as a basis for the permanent settlement, and in 1789 the Maharaja executed an agreement to pay Government a land revenue of 40,15,109 *sikka* rupees and 1,93,721 *sikka* rupees on account of *pulbandi*, making a total of 42,08,830 *sikka* rupees. But in spite of the permanent settlement the affairs of the estate did not fully recover and the disastrous effects of the famine of 1769 and the bond of debt and arrears which it had left in its train were still felt. The estate fell into arrears. The disorganisation and mismanagement became so pronounced that Maharani Bishnu Kumari, the mother of Maharaja Tej Chandra, compelled him to execute a deed of sale assigning the entire estate to her. She was a woman of considerable business capacity and she might ultimately have succeeded in saving the whole estate if her life had been prolonged. Many of the lands had been parcelled out among a large number of farmers or *ijaraddars*—the settlements extending from five to ten years. Most of these *ijaraddars* withheld payment and the proprietor found it well-nigh impossible to realise his rents through the courts with the same punctuality with which he was compelled to pay this Government revenue. The inevitable result of this sub-infeudation was the accumulation of arrears in the Government demand. In 1794, we find the Collector referring to the Board of Revenue as letter from the Maharaja complaining of his difficulties:

"The difficulty I found in realizing the instalment (kist) of revenue for Agraphayan from the Maharaja induces me to listen to his earnest request of representing to you the hardship he sustains from one of his renters, who, destitute

of good faith, and availing himself of the delay that necessarily attends the institution of law process for the recovery of arrears of rent, is encouraged to withhold from him his just dues. The Maharaja begs leave to submit for your consideration, whether or not it can be possible for him to discharge his engagements to Government with the punctuality which the Regulations require, unless he is armed with powers as prompt to enforce payment from his renters as Government has been pleased to authorize the use of in regard to its claim on him. He seems to think that it must have proceeded from oversight rather than from any just and avowed principle, that there should be established two methods of judicial process under the same Government,—the one summary and efficient for the satisfaction of its own claim; the other tardy and uncertain in regard to the satisfaction of claims due to its subjects,—more especially in a case like the present, where the ability to discharge the one demand necessarily depends on the other demand being previously realized.”¹ The translation of the Maharaja’s protest which is annexed to the Collector’s letter will show the difficulties with which he had to contend.

“The arrear of rent on account of *pergunnah* Baleya, to the end of Pouse 1200 B.S., amounts to *Sikka* Rupees 43,743, and the arrear on account of 1199, amounts to *Sikka* Rupees 3,900, in all 47,643, now due from Barranessy Ghose, farmer of that *pergunnah*, who absents himself, and fails in the performance of his engagements. I have many times represented his conduct to the Hazoor, and twice made application to the Adawlat; but without obtaining any satisfaction of the demand. I therefore request the case may be represented to the Board of Revenue, and application made to have the defaulter apprehended, and sent to the cutcherry, to discharge his engagements.”

CREATION OF *PATNI* TENURES

As a result of this reference Regulation XXXV of 1795 for better enabling individuals to recover arrears of rent or

1. Letter from the Collector of Burdwan, 9th May 1794.

revenue due to them, and Regulations XXXVI and XXXVII of 1795 defining the powers of the Courts in relation to each other were passed, and the Governor General in Council decided that the districts then comprised within the zilla of Burdwan should be formed into two districts with a separate Judge and Collector, for each. Those measures proved quite inadequate. The Maharaja was summoned to attend the Board of Revenue, and was threatened with the forfeiture of his estates but to no purpose. Munshi, afterwards Raja, Naba Krishna Deb was appointed *kruk suzawal*, or attaching officer, but could do nothing. Matters finally reached a climax when the Collector of Burdwan, despairing of realising the sums due, suggested the sale of the estate in lots as the only way of recovering the arrears of revenue, and in 1797 the Board commenced selling portions of the estate each lot consisting of several villages. The principal purchasers of the lots thus sold were Dwarka Nath Sinh of Singur, Chhaku Sinh of Bhastara, the Mukharjis of Janai and the Banarjis of Telinipara. Thus was laid the foundation of the landed aristocracy of Burdwan and Hooghly. The Maharaja, alarmed at the dismemberment of the estate, himself bought up several lots in the names of his officials and dependants, and on the death of the Maharani, which occurred about this time, resumed the management of the estate. The difficulty experienced by the Maharaja in paying his revenue suggested to him the advisability of binding his tenants to the same conditions to which he himself was bound by Government, and one of his first acts was the creation of *patni* tenures or perpetual leases, a measure which ultimately proved the salvation of the estate.

The main conditions of this tenure are the hypothecation of the land as security for the punctual payment of the rent, and the liability of the tenure to summary sale in the event of default. The *patni* system gradually extended, and by 1825, nearly the whole estate of the Maharaja was leased out in this manner. The *patnidars*, finding how much trouble this mode of settlement took off their shoulders, created *dar-patnis*, or *patnis* of the second degree, upon the same terms and with the same rights over the land as they

themselves had ; and the *dar-patnidars* created *se-patnis*, or *patnis* of the third degree. The subordinate tenure-holders possess their land upon the same terms and subject to the same liabilities as the original *patnidar*. When the *patni* system was first introduced, the Maharaja used to let the land to the highest bidders at public auction, held in his Revenue Court. In case of arrears, the lands were publicly sold in the court, and as much of the arrears was recovered as their sale fetched. These transactions were sometimes recognised and confirmed by the Board of Revenue, and sometimes ignored and set aside. The natural result was that great irregularity and confusion ensued. Under the permanent settlement the zamindars were declared to be entitled to make any arrangement for the leasing of their lands that they considered suitable. But by Regulation XLIV of 1793 such leases were subject to two conditions ; first, that the rent should not be fixed for a period exceeding ten years and, second, that in a sale for arrears of Government revenue they should at once become void. Regulation V of 1812 rescinded the first restriction and Regulation XVIII of the same year distinctly declared that zamindars were entitled to grant leases fixing the rent in a perpetuity. In practice such leases, which were really *patni* leases, had frequently been given. Before the passing of Regulations V and XVIII of 1812, however, such leases were illegal and even after that date it was doubtful whether such as had been formerly created in contravention of the provisions of Regulation XLIV of 1793 were valid.

Ultimately, in 1819, at a suggestion by the Maharaja, the Board of Revenue recognised all *patni* tenures by a regular legal enactment, and Regulation VIII of 1819 was passed with this object. The preamble to the Regulation describes the history, incidents, and peculiarities of this tenure as follows.

“Furthermore, in the exercise of the privilege thus conceded to zamindars under direct engagements with Government, there has been created a tenure which had its origin on the estates of the Maharaja of Burdwan, but has since been extended to other zamindars. The character of

this tenure is that it is a *taluk* created by the zamindar, to be held at a rent fixed in perpetuity by the lessee and his heirs for ever ; the tenant is called upon to furnish collateral security for the rent, and for his conduct generally, or he is excused from this obligation at the zamindar’s discretion ; but even if the original tenant be excused, still, in case of sale for arrears, or other operation leading to the introduction of another tenant, such new incumbent has always in practice been liable to be so called upon at the option of the zamindar. By the terms, also, of the engagements interchanged it is amongst other stipulations provided that in case of an arrear occurring, the tenure may be brought to sale by the zamindar. And if the sale do not yield a sufficient amount to make good the balance of rent at the time due, the remaining property of the defaulter shall be further answerable for the demand. These tenures have usually been denominated *patni taluks* ; and it has been a common practice of the holders of them to underlet on precisely similar terms to other persons, who on taking such leases went by the name of *dar-patni-talukdars* ; these, again, sometimes similarly underlet to *se-patnidars*. The conditions of all the title-deeds vary in nothing material from the original engagements, executed by the first holder. In these engagements, however, it is not stipulated whether the sale thus reserved to himself by the granter is for his own benefit or for that of the tenant, that is, whether in case the proceeds of sale should exceed the zamindar’s demand of rent, the tenant would be entitled to such excess ; neither is the manner of sale specified ; nor do the usages of the country nor the Regulations of Government afford any distinct rules, by the application of which to the specific cases the defects above alluded to could be supplied, or the points of doubt and difficulty involved in the omission be brought to determination in a consistent and uniform manner. The tenures in question have extended through several districts of Bengal, and the mischiefs which have arisen from the want of a consistent rule of action for the guidance of the Courts of Civil Judicature in regard to them have been productive of such confusion as to demand the interference of the Legislature.”

Section 3 of Regulation VIII of 1819 accordingly declared that 'the tenures known by the name of *patni taluks* as described in the preamble to this Regulation, shall be deemed to be valid tenures in perpetuity, according to the terms of the engagement, under which they are held. They are heritable by their conditions ; and it is hereby further declared that they are capable of being transferred by sale, gift, or otherwise, at the discretion of the holder, as well as answerable for his personal debts, and subject to the process of the Courts of Judicature, in the same manner as other real property.' The Regulation also vested *patni talukdars* with the right of letting out their *taluks* in any manner they might deem most conducive to their interest, and the engagements so entered into by them were declared legal and binding.

LAND REVENUE

Most of the district is now held in *patni* from the Burdwan Raj. There are also a large number of *aimma* estates, and other revenue-free tenures ; but many of the old service holdings, e.g., the *ghatwali* lands, have been resumed. The land revenue demand of 30.58 lakhs is higher than that of any other part of Bengal, and is estimated at 25.15 per cent, of the gross rental of the district, the incidence per cultivated acre being exceeded only in the neighbouring district of Hooghly. Rents rule higher than in any other part of Bengal, except Hooghly. They are lowest in the poor paddy lands in the Raniganj and Asansol thanas, and highest in the irrigated areas and in the rich alluvial soil further east, and range from Rs. 3-6 per acre in high lands to Rs. 9 in low lands, the average being Rs. 7-12-7. The following table shows the collections of land revenue, as compared with the total revenue, in thousands of rupees :

	1880-81	1890-91	1900-01	1908-09
Land Revenue ...	30.45	30.13	30.50	30.68
Total Revenue ...	38.36	40.51	45.18	50.08

The subdivision of estates has gone on rapidly under British rule ; and, notwithstanding the present greatly diminished area of the district as compared with what it was in the last century, the number of estates in 1870-71 had increased by 108 per cent, above the number in 1790, and the number of individual proprietors or co-sharers had increased by 134 per cent, within the same period.

The total number of estates in 1908 was 5,212 and the land revenue demand was Rs. 30,58,992 of which by far the greater part was paid by the Maharaja of Burdwan. Of these estates 5,026 with a demand of Rs. 30,35,561 are permanently settled. Besides the permanently settled estates there are 153 estates of which Government is the proprietor, 120 with a demand of Rs. 6,457 having been leased to farmers for fixed periods, while 33 are under direct management. The former are mostly petty estates formed out of the surplus road-side land along the Grand Trunk Road and unimportant properties which have been bought in by Government at sales for arrears of revenue. The latter include alluvial accretions on the river Bhagirathi. There are also a large number of *aimma* estates in the district. Some of these were originally granted free of revenue by the Muhammadan Government but they are mostly of the class described in section 9, Regulation VIII of 1793, as *malguzari aimmas* which were originally granted for the purpose of bringing waste lands under cultivation. Such grants doubtless originated from the desire of the Muhammadan Government to establish colonies of soldiers and followers throughout the country. Some of the estates are now very profitable as the revenue assessed on them is very low ; but they are usually subdivided among many co-sharers.

TENURE

The intermediate rent-paying tenures of Burdwan consist of properties held under the zamindars and comprise (a) *patni taluks* with their subordinate *se-patni* and *dar-patni*

tenures ; (b) *Mukarrari taluks* ; (c) *istimrari taluks* and (d) *ijaras* including *dar-ijaras* and *zar-i-peshgi ijaras*. The following is a brief description of each of these classes.

PATNI TENURES

This class of tenure was, as has already been described, created by Maharaja Tej Chandra of Burdwan in 1799 when, after the death of his mother, he resumed the management of his estates. It is said that the design of granting perpetual leases was suggested by his son Pratap Chand who for some time acted as his regent. The measure, which from the landholder's point of view was most successful, was gradually extended throughout Burdwan, and Bishnupur until by 1825 almost the whole estates of the Maharaja were leased out under these tenures.

A *patni* tenure is, in effect, a lease which binds its holder by terms and conditions similar to those by which a superior landlord is bound to the State. By Regulation XLIV of 1793 the proprietors of estates were allowed to grant leases for a period not exceeding 10 years, but this provision was rescinded by section 2 of Regulation 5 (V) of 1812 ; while by Regulation XVIII of the same year proprietors were declared competent to grant leases for any period even in perpetuity. Finally, as the Patni Sale Law, declared the validity of these permanent tenures, defined the relative rights of the zamindars and their subordinate *patni talukdars*, and established a summary process for the sale of such tenures in satisfaction of the zamindar's demand of rent. It also legalized under-letting on similar terms by the *patnidars* and others.

Since the passing of the Patni Sale Law, this form of tenure has been very popular with zamindars who wish to divest themselves of the direct management of their property, or part of it, or who wish to raise money in the shape of a bonus. It may be described as a tenure created by the zamindar to be held by the lessee and his heirs or transferees for ever, at a rent fixed in perpetuity, subject to the liability of annulment on sale of the parent estate for arrears of

Government revenue, unless protected against the rights exercisable by auction purchasers by common or special registry, as prescribed by sections 37 and 39 of Act XI of 1859. The tenant is called upon to furnish collateral security for the rent and for his conduct generally, or he is excused from this obligation at the zamindar's discretion.

Under-tenures created by *patnidars* are called *dar-patni*, and those created by *dar-patnidars* are called *se-patni* tenures. These under-tenures are, like the parent tenures, permanent, transferable and heritable ; and have generally the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities attached to them. They are usually granted on payment of a bonus. Section 13 of Regulation VIII of 1819 provides rules for staying the sale of a *patni*, if it takes place owing to the intentional withholding of payment of rent by the *patnidar* with the object of ruining his subordinate tenure-holders. In such cases, the under-tenants are allowed the means of saving the *patni* tenure and their own under-tenures, by paying into the Collector's office the advertized balance due to the zamindar. The *patni* tenure so preserved forms the necessary security to the depositors, who have a lien on it in the same manner as if the loan had been made upon mortgage. The depositors may then apply to the Collector for obtaining immediate possession of the defaulter's tenure ; and the defaulter will not recover his tenure, "except upon repayment of the entire sum advanced, with interest of the rate of 12 per cent. per annum up to the date of possession having been given, or upon exhibiting proof, in a regular suit to be instituted for the purpose, that the full amount so advanced, with interest, has been realized from the usufruct of the tenure."

MUKARRARI TENURES

These are hereditary tenures at a low rent fixed in perpetuity as the name itself, which is derived from the persian *karar*, implies. Many of them were created by the operation of section 9 of Regulation XIX of 1793, which prescribes that resumed *lakhiraj* plots of less than 100 bighas existing before

1790 are to be settled in perpetuity at a fixed rent. At the creation of *mukarrari* or *dar-mukarrari* tenures the lessee usually pays a bonus or *salami*.

Dar-mukarraris are subordinate to *mukarraris* and are created by the *mukarraridar*. These tenures are also of a fixed nature and their rights and incidents are, in the absence of special provision, those of the parent tenure. *Dar-mukarrari* tenures are not however common in Burdwan.

IJARAS

The status of *ijaradars*, or farmers, and of their subordinate *dar-ijaradars*, differs widely from that of the other intermediate tenure-holders described above. *Ijaradars* hold farming leases, by which a definite amount of annual rent is fixed for a specified term, usually varying from 5 to 30 years. Such leases are granted not only by the zamindars or superior landlords, but also by subordinate *talukdars* or tenure-holders in an estate. The lessor cannot enhance the rent of an *ijara* lease during its term; and on its expiry, the *ijaradar* is not entitled to renewal. If the latter is not specifically, by the conditions of his lease, debarred from creating an under-tenure, he occasionally creates a *dar-ijara* tenure, the term of which cannot, of course, be longer than that of his own lease.

Another kind of *ijara* is that known as *zar-i-peshgi ijara*, i.e., a lease granted in consideration of an advance of money. It may be granted for an unspecified term of years, and is usually made terminable on certain conditions, e.g., when an estate is mortgaged has recovered the amount of debt and interest from the proceeds of the property. Such leases are much in vogue in this part of the country, where even the cultivators often give a *zar-peshgi ijara* of their lands to the village *mahajan*.

TENANT'S HOLDINGS

The tenures held by actual cultivators comprise (a) *jama* or *jot*, (b) *miadi jama*, (c) *mukarrari* and *maurasi jama*, (d) *korfa* and *dar-karja*, and (e) *bhag jot*.

JAMA OR JOT

Cultivators' holdings, called *jama* or *jot*, were generally, but not always, held without any written engagement. The lands have in many cases remained in the possession of one family from generation to generation and in most cases without any document of title. Written leases and agreements are now however usually taken and demanded when a new settlement is made. All these tenures are now governed by the Bengal Tenancy Act, VIII of 1885, as amended by Act I of 1907. In practice, a *jama* is divided into as many parts as suit the convenience of the ryots who hold it, and the total rent contributed by the different holders thereof is paid by one of them to the *gomashta* or rent-collector.

MIADI JAMA

The term *miadi jama* is applied to the holding of a cultivator with only a temporary interest in his land, which he holds for a fixed term of years under a *patta* or lease.

BHAG JOT

Holdings for which the tenant pays a share (*bhag*) of the produce as rent are known as *bhag jot*. In some cases the arrangement is that the cultivator shall deliver a certain quantity of produce even although the crop should fail. Lands thus held are called *dhan thika* lands; but the payment of rent in kind in this manner is very rare in Burdwan. On the other hand holding in *bhag jot* are very common and every well-to-do tenant usually holds a certain proportion of his land in *bhag jot* generally from another tenant. Under-tenants also almost always hold their lands in *bhag jot*.

MUKARRARI AND MAURASI JAMA

Some cultivators hold land under leases called *mukarrari* and *maurasi*, the chief stipulations of which are that the rent is subject neither to enhancement nor abatement, and that the tenure descends from father to son. These leases are generally granted on the payment of a bonus or *salami* by the tenant.

KORFA AND DAR-KORFA

A sub-ryoti tenure subordinate to that held by an ordinary cultivator is called *korfa*. *Korfa* tenures are generally created verbally, and in some cases there are also *dar-korfadars* or ryots holding under *korfadars*.

SERVICE TENURES

When the *chakla* of Burdwan was ceded to the East India Company, there were four bodies of men employed in the protection of the country and in the collection of revenue. These were, first, a military force called *nagdis*, paid in cash, but since practically disbanded; they are now represented by the bodyguard of the Burdwan Maharaja, who, at the permanent settlement, received an annual remission of Rs. 50,000 for the support of this force; second, the *thanadari* police; third, a body termed *gram saranjami paiks*, who were at once village watchmen and collectors of rent; and fourth, *ghatwals*, whose duty it was to keep the hill passes and roads free from robbers, and to protect travellers. These three latter classes were paid by assignments of land. The following is a brief account of each.¹

THANADARI POLICE

In 1790 the total strength of the Thanadari police was 3,079 men, holding 14,491 acres of land. Under the provisions of Regulation XXII, of 1793, a portion of it, called the *sadar thanadari*, consisting of 801 *thanadars* and *thana paiks* and peons holding 4,652 acres of land, was abolished, and the lands resumed; while the remainder, consisting of about 2,200 *chaukidars* or *pharidars* in charge of *chaukis*, and *paiks* and peons subordinate to them, holding in round numbers 10,000 acres of land, was retained. By 1837 this force had sunk to the level of the *gram saranjami paiks*, and performed zamindari as well as police services.

1. McNeil's Village Watch.

GRAM SARANJAMI PAIKS

In 1794, the total number of *gram saranjami paiks* was reported to be 17,284 holding 46,236 acres of land. Their duties were 'to assist the farmer in collecting the rents, guarding the mufassal treasuries, conveying public money to the treasury of the District, and serving as guides to passengers.' In addition to these functions, 'they were considered as dependent on the authority of the thanadars, and had to apprehend offenders, etc., and sometimes received a gratuity called *dwar mashahara* for this service'¹ from the cultivators; engagements were also taken from them at that date to report offences. Since that date they have been known as *chaukidars*, a curious instance of the degradation of a title: a hundred years ago the word meant the commandant of a *chauki* or post to which were attached several paiks.

The numbers of the village police existing in the district, according to a report of the Collector dated April 1873, was as follows: *chaukidars*, 8,978, of whom 66 were paid in cash; *simandars* (originally keepers of village boundaries), 2,138; *halshanas* (originally zamindari servants who kept the measurements of the cultivators' holdings), 36; *mirdahas* (originally peons who carried a measuring chain for surveyors), 2; *sardars*, 5; *nagarchis* (originally drummers), 7; *ashtapraharis* (originally watchers of the crops), 2.

GHATWALS

From the *chakran* registers of 1836-40 for the fifteen thanas then included in the district, it appears that there were at that time 71 *ghatwali* tenures. Subsequent transfers added to the number and some years later the total number of tenures of this class was reported to be 238, with a holding of 7,912 bighas. The word *Ghatwal* as applied to this class of tenure-holders is a further instance of the degradation of

1. Magistrate's letter, 22nd February 1793.

a title. The *ghatwals* proper were hill-chiefs who were partially subdued by the neighbouring zamindars and turned into feudatories. Their representatives are found only in Chota Nagpur and the districts of Monghyr, Bhagalpore and the Santal Parganas. The *ghatwals* of Bankura and Burdwan were, on the other hand, commandants of picquets created by the zamindars. Their proper designation was *ghat sardar* and their posts were *ghats* and not *ghatwalis* which contain many *ghats*. A *ghatwal* was essentially a *talukdar*, who was bound to support *ghatwali* police and from whom personal service was not demanded. A *ghat sardar* was an actual police servant and the direct head of a body of watchmen.

The original duty of the *ghatwals* was nominally to protect the *ghats* or hill passes, to keep open the roads and to protect travellers. Some of them held their lands free, others paid a quit-rent known as the *Panchaki* to Government and others to the zamindars. In Burdwan they were to all intents and purposes treated as part of the rural police, with the exception that they were exercised not within the village as such, but within an area roughly determined by immemorial custom and known as a *ghat*. They were, however, for the most part practically useless for police purposes and, in November 1894, an amicable settlement of the *ghatwali* lands was undertaken with a view to releasing them from police duties. Those operations have now been concluded. A full account of the history of these tenures up to the present time will be found in the Bankura Gazetteer.

The *chaukidari chakran* lands and the other allied service tenures mentioned above have also now been resumed and transferred to the zamindars under Act VI (B.C.) of 1870, the *chukidars* being now paid from the *chaukidari* tax.

RENT FREE TENURES

Rent-free tenures from the last class of landed estates in Burdwan. These have always been very numerous and in 1763-4 A.D. the territory thus alienated and not assessed to

revenue at all was estimated at 5,68,736 bighas. One of the first acts of the newly appointed British Superintendents was to restore this area to the rent-paying lands of the district between 1765 and 1788, however, grants to hold 6,600 acres revenue free under the names of *debottar*, *brahmottar*, etc., were given to 408 persons with a view to bringing waste lands under cultivation. In 1876 it was reported that there were 170,240 rent-free holdings of small plots of land included within the limits of permanently-settled estates. These are held rent-free of the zamindars ; but Government revenue is paid by the proprietors on account of them. The tenures consist mainly of lands granted for religious purposes, such as *brahmottar*, *sivottar*, *debottar*, etc., by Hindus and *pirottar*, *chiragan*, *nazrat*, etc., by Muhammadans. Besides these, there are other rent-free tenures granted for charitable purposes, and numerous small rent-free holdings which do not appear to have been assigned for any special purpose.