



## CHAPTER XI

# GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The area of the district was formerly very much greater than it is now, including as it did the greater portion of the present districts of Bogra and Malda and considerable tracts now included in Rajshahi, Rangpur and Purnea. Buchanan Hamilton estimated it at 5,374 square miles. At the time of the Revenue Survey (1857-61) it had fallen to 4,586 square miles. At the census of 1872 the area was taken as 4,142 square miles, while the area included within the present boundaries of the district is 3,946 square miles only. The object aimed at in thus gradually reducing the size of the district was improved administration. When Dinajpur first came under British rule in 1765 it was notorious for the lawlessness of its inhabitants, and a brief experience showed that it was impossible for an ordinary district staff to cope successfully with the dacoits and river pirates with which this large tract of country was infested. The following is a brief account of the changes in area which have occurred from the year 1794-95 onwards. Between this year and

ADMINIS-  
TRATIVE  
CHANGES  
AND STAFF

1800-01 a large number of estates, hitherto included in Dinajpur, were made over to Purnea, Rangpur and Rajshahi. No further change occurred till 1833 when considerable transfers were made to Bogra and Malda. In 1864-65 the large pargana Khatta was detached from Dinajpur and annexed to Bogra, and between 1868 and 1870 both Bogra and Malda received further slices of Dinajpur territory. Finally in 1897-98 the whole of thana Mahadebpur in the south of the district was transferred to Rajshahi.

The criminal and revenue jurisdictions in the district have never been coterminous. The first has always been regulated by the natural boundaries of the district while the latter is regulated by the old division of the country into parganas. Thus an estate included in the Tauzi roll of Dinajpur but situated in the heart of the Rangpur district is subject to the revenue jurisdiction of the Dinajpur authorities while falling within the criminal jurisdiction of the Magistrate of Rangpur. The criminal and civil jurisdictions, on the other hand, coincide.

The Sub-divisional system of administration was first introduced in the year 1860, when Mr. Clementson, an uncovenanted Deputy Collector and Deputy Magistrate, with a small office staff, was stationed at Thakurgaon. This Sub-divisional Office continued in existence till September 1867, when it was abolished as there was very little work for the Sub-divisional Officer and his staff. In 1887 the greater portion of the northern half of the district was formed into the present Thakurgaon Sub-division and placed in charge of a Deputy Collector of the Provincial Civil Service. The remainder of the district continued under the direct supervision of the Collector till November 1904, when the five thanas of Balurghat, Gangarampur, Porsha, Patnitola, and Phulbari were separated from the rest of the district to form the Balurghat Sub-division and placed like Thakurgaon under a Deputy Collector.

At head-quarters the sanctioned staff consists of five Deputy Collectors, of whom four are generally possessed of first and the fifth of second or third class magisterial powers. Of late years, owing to increase of work, it has generally been thought necessary to supplement this staff by another Deputy or one or two Sub-Deputy Collectors. Besides the Deputy Collector in charge, an assistant, in the person of a Sub-Deputy Collector, is generally stationed at

Thakurgaon.

There are no Government estates in this district. The Single resumed estate is a small one and is in general charge of a Sub-Deputy Collector. A manager is employed under the Collector for each of the estates which he administers under the Court of Wards, provided the incomes of the individual estates are large enough to justify the expenditure involved. Where there are several such estates so small as to be unable to afford separate managers, they are commonly placed collectively in charge of one general manager.

Owing to the frequent changes which have taken place in the area of the district, it is difficult to compare the revenue at one period with that at another. Notwithstanding the shrinkage in the size of the district, the revenue in the long period between 1787-1871 showed a fairly steady tendency to rise. This is accounted for by the fact that, although the land revenue decreased according as estates were transferred to other districts, the receipts from the other main heads of revenue rose more than in proportion. In 1860-61 the revenue received a substantial increase from the income-tax which was introduced in that year. In 1892-93 the total revenues of the district were Rs. 23,22,864. In 1897-98 a fall of over a lakh in land revenue, occasioned by the transfer of thana Mahadebpur to Rajshahi, brought the income of the district down to Rs. 22,10,865. In the last ten years or so there has been little change, the revenue in 1909-10 being slightly above 23 lakhs.

The earliest settlement of which we have any information was made in 1728 in the reign of Raja Ramnath, the revenue payable to the Subadar of Bengal being fixed at Rs. 12,49,816. Through the able management of the Raja, who was a favourite with the dominant power, this assessment remained unchanged till his death in 1760. In 1762 the assessment was more than doubled, the large sum of Rs. 26,44,733 being made payable as revenue. Four and a half lakhs of this remained uncollected, and in 1765, the first year of British rule, the demand was reduced to Rs. 18,28,144. There was little alteration in the demand during the ensuing nine years, but, as great difficulty was experienced in collecting the revenue in full, in 1774 a further reduction to Rs. 14,60,444 was made. The assessment was in terms of sicca rupees and was equivalent to Rs. 15,57,806

REVENUE

LAND REV-  
ENUE

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Company's rupees. It applied, however, to the Dinajpur Raj estates only, and there is reason to believe that something like 1½ lakhs of land revenue were paid by other smaller estates in the district. The revenue of these was presumably collected by the Company's servants direct. In 1780 Raja Baidyanath, with whom settlement had hitherto been made, died, and for the two years 1781 and 1782 the Dinajpur Raj estate was farmed out to Raja Devi Singh of Dilwarpur in Murshidabad, at a revenue of sicca rupees 16,60,444 or 17,41,140 Company's rupees. On the expiry of the two years Raja Devi Singh was removed on account of mismanagement and oppression, and the former assessment was reverted to. In 1787 we learn that the revenue assessed on the estates not included in the Dinajpur zamindari was sicca rupees 1,52,445. Thus the total land revenue of the district in this year came to 16,12,889 sicca or 17,20,515 Company's rupees. In 1791 a decennial settlement was made, which in 1793 was made permanent. No appreciable change in the assessment took place. Between 1796 and 1800 the greater portion of the Raja's estates were sold for arrears of revenue, and a number of smaller estates were formed which were settled with the purchasers in perpetuity. In 1808 the land revenue was 17½ lakhs which must have represented something like 75 per cent of the gross rental of the assessed estates at the time. This total was gradually reduced as the boundaries of the district were circumscribed, and the demand is now Rs. 15,20,500 on 764 estates. The single resumed estate which is still in the hands of Government has been temporarily settled at Rs. 50. So the total land revenue demand is Rs. 15,20,550, which is estimated to be equivalent to about 50 per cent of the gross rental of the district, the incidence per cultivated acre being Re. 1-3-5. It is thus evident that the value of zamindars' estates has increased materially in the last 100 years in comparison with the land revenue demand.

## STAMPS

Next to land revenue the receipts from judicial and non-judicial stamps are the most important source of income. The increase in litigation, especially civil litigation, and the growing importance of registration have brought about a corresponding steady increase in the receipts under this head. In 1871-72 the income from stamps was Rs. 1,74,120; in 1892-93 it was Rs. 2,47,076; in 1901-02 it amounted to Rs. 2,83,522; while in 1909-10 it had reached

the respectable figure of Rs. 3,39,974. Of this total Rs. 2,28,735 were derived from the sale of judicial, and Rs. 1,11,239 from that of non-judicial stamps.

Road and public works cesses are levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee. The first valuation was made in 1875. In 1892-93 the demand stood at Rs. 1,97,247. By 1904-05 in consequence of the transfer of thana Mahadebpur to Rajshahi, it had fallen to Rs. 1,66,421. In this year a general revaluation was held, with the result that there was a substantial increase in the demand, which in the year 1909-10 amounted to Rs. 2,13,861, of which Rs. 2,10,060 was payable by 1,174 revenue paying estates, and Rs. 3,801 by 186 revenue-free estates. The number of estates assessed to cesses is thus 1,360 while the number of tenures so assessed is 77,202. The number of recorded shareholders of estates and tenures is 4,014 and 77,202 respectively.

## CESSSES



The receipts from excise have risen steadily during the last 60 years and, representing as they do the consumption of luxuries, are a fair indication of increase in prosperity. In 1850-51 these receipts amounted to Rs. 47,220; in 1870-71 they were Rs. 93,225; in 1892-93 they had risen to Rs. 1,19,546; in 1901-02 the total receipts were Rs. 1,43,481. In 1908-09 the abnormally large total of Rs. 2,76,775 was attained. The reason for this was that Government had decided to introduce the central distillery system into the district from 1909-10, and in consequence there was very keen competition amongst the liquor shop-keepers for the out-still licenses for 1908-09, in the hope of making a final profit before the introduction of the new system, which they imagined would materially reduce their gains. In 1909-10 the receipts dropped to Rs. 2,16,118, which was, nevertheless, an advance on the figures for 1907-1908. Of this total the sale of country liquor accounted for Rs. 99,656, or nearly half. This liquor is consumed almost entirely by what might be called the foreign population, mostly consisting of low-caste Hindus from Behar and neighbouring tracts, who have settled in the district and are employed as agricultural labourers, carters, railway coolies, etc. The shifting population of earthworkers and agricultural labourers, who come from the west and stay for the cold weather, also consumes a good deal of country liquor. *The indigenous population, more than half of whom are*

## EXCISE

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Muhammadans, consume very little liquor except *tari*, and not much of that. In 1909-10, after the abolition of the out-still system, a bonded warehouse was opened at Parbatipur, from which the holders of licenses for the sale of country liquor obtain their supplies. All the liquor issued is of a certified strength and is sold to the licensees at a fixed price inclusive of duty. A small amount of *tari* is manufactured in the southern portion of the district, which is the only locality where the *tal* or toddy-palm grows in any numbers. Fermented *tari* is made from this tree while unfermented *tari*, which is consumed to some extent, is generally made from the date-palm. In 1909-10 the income derived from these licenses was only Rs. 3,297. A large number of licenses for home brewing of *pachwai*, a kind of beer made from rice, are issued every year to the Santal and Chota Nagpur settlers. The rate is Re. 1-8-0 per license per year, and the liquor made is supposed to be for home consumption only. The amount realised from these licenses in 1909-10 was Rs. 5,378. The large sum of Rs. 69,257 was realised in the same year from the sale of *ganja* and other preparations of *Cannabis Indica*. This deleterious drug is consumed by all classes, but its use is regarded as a vice and few will admit that they are addicted to it. After country liquor and *ganja* the only other important source of excise revenue is opium, from the duty and license fees on which Rs. 34,792 was realised in 1909-10. This drug is not consumed to anything like the extent that it is in many parts of the province, and indeed, considering the population and the malarious character of the district, the consumption is small. It is in use amongst the indigenous population chiefly, especially the Rajbansis and Paliyas. There are two licenses only for the sale of imported liquor. One of these is issued for the railway refreshment room at Parbatipur for Rs. 180, and the other for Rs. 3,260 to a Bengali firm in Dinajpur town, which sells cheap spirits to Indians of the middle and upper classes.

INCOME TAX

The Income Tax Act was introduced into the district in 1860-61 and realised in that year Rs. 1,45,980, the number of assessees being 4,920 and the minimum taxable income Rs. 200. In 1862-63 the minimum taxable income was raised to Rs. 500 and the number of assessees and the amount realised fell to 1,390 and Rs. 76,205 respectively. In 1871-72 the minimum taxable income was raised to Rs. 750 and the amount realised fell to Rs. 20,567. In the following

year the minimum was again raised to Rs. 1,000 and the revenue realised was only Rs. 14,834. In 1886-87 the minimum of Rs. 500 was reverted to and the amount realised rose to Rs. 54,056, the number of assessees being 3,013. In 1901-02 Rs. 66,544 was realised from 3,586 assessees. In 1903-04 the minimum taxable income was again raised to Rs. 1,000 and in the year 1909-10 we find that Rs. 45,068 was realised from 1,080 assessees.

There are eight offices for the registration of assurances under Act XVI of 1908. At Dinajpur the Special Registrar deals with documents presented there and also assists the District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* District Registrar, in supervising the work of the Sub-Registrars in charge of the other registration offices. The number of registrations is gradually on the increase. The average number of documents registered annually during the period of five years ending in 1899 was 23,390. The number for the same period ending in 1909 was 38,904. About one half of this number represented mortgage-deeds of *ryati* holdings.

REGISTRATION

The marginal statement shows the number of documents registered and the receipts and expenditure at each office in 1909.

Office	Number of documents registered	Receipts	Expenditure
		Rs.	Rs.
Sadar	7,669	1,115	7,253
Thakurgaon	4,329	4,263	2,543
Birganj	4,072	3,667	2,205
Pirganj	5,014	4,664	2,488
Phulbari	5,730	5,299	2,608
Raiganj	3,258	3,206	1,668
Balurghat	6,074	6,216	2,883
Lahiri Hat	2,758	3,064	2,096
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,904</b>	<b>41,494</b>	<b>23,744</b>

Owing to increase of work a joint Sub-Registry Office was opened at Sadar on the 1st April 1910.

The staff entertained for the administration of civil justice consists of the District Judge, who is also District Judge of Jalpaiguri district, one Sub-Judge, who is also Sub-Judge of Jalpaiguri, and five Munsifs, *viz.*, two Munsifs of Dinajpur, one of Thakurgaon, one of Balurghat and one of Raiganj. Civil work is increasing steadily, more especially suits under the Tenancy Act. Out of an average of some 20,000 suits instituted during the last three years about one half were instituted under this Act.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. CIVIL JUSTICE

Criminal justice is administered by the District and Sessions Judge, the District Magistrate, and the Deputy and Sub-Deputy Magistrates stationed at Dinajpur, Thakurgaon,

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and Balurghat. The sanctioned staff at Dinajpur consists of the District Magistrate, four Deputy Magistrates of the 1st class, one Deputy Magistrate of the 2nd or 3rd class and a Sub-Deputy Magistrate of the 2nd or 3rd class. The Sub-divisional Magistrates of Thakurgaon and Balurghat are always vested with 1st class powers and the former generally has a Sub-Deputy Magistrate with 3rd class powers to assist him. Besides these stipendiary Magistrates, there are at Dinajpur two Honorary Magistrates with 1st class powers sitting singly and a bench of Honorary Magistrates with 3rd class powers. At Balurghat and Raiganj there are benches of Honorary Magistrates with 3rd class powers.

**CRIME**

A hundred years or so ago the district was notorious for dacoits and river pirates and every kind of violent crime was common. From the remarks of major Sherwill, the Revenue Surveyor, in 1863, it is apparent that even then the character of the district had undergone a considerable change. He says that although murders were common and dacoities not infrequent the general character of the people was peaceable. Nowadays cases of heinous crime are rare. A few murders are committed every year and an occasional case of dacoity occurs, but these dacoities are rarely accompanied by murder and the amount of property looted is generally small. Some of the worst dacoities have been perpetrated within measurable distance of the Purnea and Malda borders, the bad characters of these districts being rather fond of committing depredations on the more peaceable inhabitants of Dinajpur. In 1908-09 dacoities were exceptionally numerous owing, it is believed in great measure, to the scarcity prevailing in this and the neighbouring districts. Cases of rape are rare and serious rioting, so common in some of the eastern district, is practically unknown. Arson is fairly common, especially in the southern portion of the district. The offence is, however, seldom brought home to any one, and there is some reason to suppose that a good many of the cases reported are the result of accident. Thefts and petty burglaries are numerous, though the amount of property stolen is generally small. Disputes about land with their inevitable accompaniment of forgery, perjury and the fabrication of false evidence are common as is the case elsewhere, and the cultivator shows the usual tendency to try and drag what are really civil disputes into the criminal courts.

For police purposes the district is divided into 15 **POLICE** thanas or police circles, viz., in the head-quarters Sub-division - Kotwali (394 square miles), Kaliyaganj (300 square miles), Raiganj (243 square miles), Parbatipur (166 square miles), Bansihari (257 square miles) and Nawabganj (238 square miles); in the Thakurgaon Sub-division - Thakurgaon (441 square miles), Ranisankail (189 square miles), Pirganj (238 square miles), and Birganj (304 square miles); and in the Balurghat Sub-division - Balurghat (291 square miles), Gangarampur (262 square miles), Porsha (202 square miles), Patnitola (262 square miles), and Phulbari (160 square miles). Besides these there are eight independent out-posts, namely, Atwari, Baliyadangi, Khansama, Hemtabad, Itahar, Chirirbandar, Kumarganj, and Ghoraghat. There are thus 23 centres for the investigation of crime. The regular police force consisted in 1909 of one Superintendent, one Assistant Superintendent, four Inspectors, 50 Sub-Inspectors, 55 Head-constables, and 387 constables, a total force of 496 officers and men or one policeman to every 7.9 square miles and to every 3,147 of the population. The cost of maintaining this force was Rs. 1,44,133. The rural force for the watch and ward of villages in the interior is composed of 3,686 chaukidars and 324 daffadars. There are also ten town chaukidars employed in the Dinajpur town. With the exception of these town chaukidars and one chaukidar employed at the head-quarters of the Thakurgaon Sub-division, who draw Rs. 6 per mensem, all the other chaukidars in the district are paid at the rate of Rs. 5, daffadars getting Rs. 6.

There is a District Jail at Dinajpur with accommodation for 308 prisoners, viz., barracks for 204 male convicts, 27 female convicts, 36 under-trial prisoners and 5 civil prisoners, cells for 4 male convicts, and a hospital with 32 beds. There are sub-jails at Thakurgaon and Balurghat with accommodation for 18 and 20 prisoners respectively. Prisoners are kept in these sub-jail up to 14 days. Those sentenced to longer terms of imprisonment are forwarded to the District Jail once a week, when a police escort is available. **JAILS**