

THE LAND REVENUE HISTORY
OF THE RAJSHAHI ZAMINDARI.
(1765 - 1793)

By

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A thesis presented for
the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of London.

1966

School of Oriental and
African Studies.

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ABSTRACT.

This work is devoted to a study of the land revenue history of the Rajshahi Zamindari from 1765 to 1793.

The first chapter is introductory and narrates the creation of this vast zamindari in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The second chapter deals with the seven years of Diwani rule in Bengal from 1765 to 1772, years of hesitation and confusion, and discusses the East India Company's early revenue policies and their implementation in Rajshahi. The arguments of James Grant about the proper level of demand upon Rajshahi, and the results of collection by the Supervisor and under the Triennial settlement are reviewed, and the results of the 1770 famine are assessed.

The third chapter discusses the Quinquennial farming settlement introduced by Warren Hastings in 1772, and the attempts made by Rani Bhabani, zamindar of Rajshahi to work with and then to resist the Company. Particular attention is paid to the fate of the zamindari during the conflict in the Calcutta Council between Hastings and Barwell, and Clavering, Monson and Francis.

The fourth chapter reviews the working of the temporary settlement of Rajshahi under the Collectors William Hosea and Edward Baber, acting through local agents, and the causes of failure which led to a renewed settlement with the zamindar.

The fifth chapter is devoted to Hastings' Permanent Plan for the Revenue Administration of 1781, and to his refusal to allow any settlement with the Rani. The four different revenue experiments in Rajshahi which thereupon follow are then considered, and the circumstances of their success or failure.

The last chapter studies the changes in attitude in India and England which led to the adoption of a permanent zamindari settlement in Bengal, and surveys the difficulties which precede Rajshahi's ultimate inclusion in that settlement.

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ABBREVIATIONS.

<u>B.M.Add.: MSS.</u>	<u>British Museum Additional Manuscripts.</u>
<u>B.P.C.</u>	<u>Bengal Public Consultations.</u>
<u>B.R.C.</u>	<u>Bengal Revenue Consultations.</u>
<u>B.R.P.</u>	<u>Bengal Board of Revenue Proceedings.</u>
<u>B.S.</u>	<u>Bengali Sal.</u>
<u>C.C.</u>	<u>Committee of Circuit Proceedings.</u>
<u>C.C.R.</u>	<u>Controlling Committee of Revenue.</u>
<u>C.R.O.</u>	<u>Commonwealth Relation Office.</u>
<u>H.Misc. Series.</u>	<u>Home Miscellaneous Series.</u>
<u>L.R.</u>	<u>Letters Received.</u>
<u>M.C.R.</u>	<u>Murshidabad Council of Revenue.</u>
<u>M.F.R.</u>	<u>Murshidabad Factory Records.</u>
<u>Orme MSS.</u>	<u>Orme Manuscripts.</u>
<u>P.B.C.</u>	<u>Parliamentary Branch Collection.</u>
<u>P.C.R.</u>	<u>Proceedings of the Controlling Committee of Revenue.</u>
<u>P.S.C.</u>	<u>Proceedings of the Select Committee.</u>
Rs.as.gs.	Rupees annas gandas

CHAPTER IINTRODUCTIONA Brief Survey of the Zamindari of Rajshahi -
Its Rise and Decline

Before the East India Company's accession to the Diwani of Bengal, the Zamindari of Rajshahi, to quote James Grant, 'was the greatest territorial jurisdiction throughout Bengal or perhaps Hindustan.'¹ The latter part of the statement is undoubtedly an exaggeration, but it is a measure of the zamindaris' importance in the early days of British rule in India. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the importance of the zamindari has remained merely subject for a quotable quote and has received so little attention from historians. Many stories have been told about the charities and religious munificence of the Ruling House of Nator, particularly that of the celebrated Rani Bhabani who played such a large part in the fortunes of the zamindari in the last half of the eighteenth century. No one, however, has yet attempted to study the history of the Zamindari's rise and the factors that eventually led to its eclipse. In fact, local history is still a backwater and one of the neglected fields of Indian studies. Dr. H.N. Sinha has made the point, "We have

1. J. Grant, Analysis of the Finances of Bengal, published as Appendix to the Fifth Report from the Select Committee, House of Commons, 1812. ed. W.K. Firminger, Vol.II, p.296.

history of dynasties, of wars and conquests, of kingdoms and empires, but of village and janapads, of cities and towns, of regions and states, we know next to nothing. We have studied and written about the peoples who have entered India as settlers and invaders, as builders of kingdoms and empires. The broad and majestic sweep of events, the main currents of life and the kaleidoscopic character of civilization in this vast country have fascinated the scholars and historians. But the more humdrum events, the work and achievements of petty rulers in obscure parts of the country, the activities and pursuits of the people as they live and die in the little localities of their own have not attracted much attention so far."¹

In the nineteenth century many British administrators attempted to write the history of particular districts in which they had served, and the series known as Historical and Statistical Accounts of Bengal was the result of their efforts. For Bengal for example, we have The District of Bakarganj by H. Beveridge, H.J.S. Cotton's 'Revenue History of Chittagong', J.C. Price's Notes on the History of Midnapore, or J.L. Sherwitt's 'Geographical and Statistical

1. Dr. H.N. Sinha - Presidential Address, Local History, Section IV, 19th Session, Indian History Congress, Agra, 1956, p.383.

Report of the Dinagepore District'. But such studies, although valuable, were limited in scope, and made no attempt to explore all the historical sources available. Moreover, the district of Rajshahi and the Zamindari, our particular concern, although very important both in size and revenue have so far received scant attention. There are works of a general type, dealing with the development of British revenue and judicial administration in eighteenth century Bengal,¹ but these do no more than mention Rajshahi in passing. On land revenue policy in the district there are chapters in W.W. Hunter's A Statistical Account of Bengal, in L.S.S. O'Malley's District Gazetteer of Rajshahi and in W.H. Nelson's Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of Rajshahi, 1912-22. But in all three works, land revenue history is only a small part of the whole, rather than a central theme, and they contain no adequate survey of source materials.

Yet, as will be seen, the revenue history of the Rajshahi district is of particular interest, for its structure represents an extreme. A recent study of Chittagong district² in this period gives a picture of small and

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1. B.B. Misra, The Central Administration of the East India Company 1773-1834; The Judicial Administration of the East India Company in Bengal 1765-82, and N.K. Sinha, The Economic History of Bengal, [Two vols].
 2. A.M. Serajud-din. The Revenue Administration of Chittagong. From 1761 to 1785. (Unpublished London Ph.D. thesis, 1964).

fragmented zamindaris, some of as little as one or two acres in extent, too small to attract the attention of outside purchasers; of an area still in the process of agricultural settlement; of a district unaffected by the disastrous famine of 1770. By contrast virtually the whole of Rajshahi was contained in a single zamindari, a zamindari subjected to farming by outsiders who eventually came to buy up a great part of it; again Rajshahi was long settled and populated, and in 1770 it was one of the districts worst hit by famine. And if Chittagong provided Harry Verelst with his training in land revenue matters, Rajshahi did the same for another official, Boughton Rousé, whose views expressed in several works, also had much influence in the formation of British policy.

It is for this reason that a study of the revenue history of Rajshahi Zamindari has been undertaken and the attempt made to make good a considerable gap in our knowledge of the local history of Bengal. It is essentially an historical study that is here attempted, and the approach to the materials is not that of an economist or sociologist. The study therefore is primarily that of the East India Company's revenue policy as it was applied to the Zamindari of Rajshahi in the late eighteenth century.

The history of Bengal in our period has been studied in an uneven manner, and often on too broad a scale, partly because interest and co-ordination have been lacking on the part of research workers, partly, but not always, owing to inadequacy in the source materials. For this study zamindari papers and family records of the Nator House would have been invaluable, but none seemed to have been preserved. However, the manuscript sources of the East India Company's administration, especially the Bengal Revenue Consultations and Proceedings, include many petitions from the zamindars, letters and statements of Reza Khan, the Naib Diwan and a mass of correspondence and revenue accounts from the supervisors and collectors in the districts to the Councils of Revenue and the government at Fort William. There also exist the record of the decisions by government on the general principles of revenue administration of Bengal as a whole, which affected Rajshahi along with the other districts. To these may be added works written by those who were active in Rajshahi or in Bengal revenue administration of which the works of Boughton Rouse may stand as an example. For the earlier history of the Nator House there are also certain local chronicles which afford some light. It is from these varied and rich sources that this study has been attempted. In the present work the spelling of Indian names and technical

terms has been modernised, and in quotations from the records the frequent use of capital letters has been avoided.

At the present time the name Rajshahi applies to a district in East Pakistan, to the administrative headquarters of a Division and to a University. But the district of Rajshahi in both its name and present land area is a British creation "an example of the process by which a native zamindari has been moulded into a British District".¹ In the Ain-i-Akbari, the sources of our earliest references to the administrative units of Mughal Bengal, there is no mention of Rajshahi. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century "the successors of Islam Khan had made Rajshahi and Pabna districts into fiscal units of the Mughal administration".² Finally from 1706 onwards the Nator family began the process of assembling smaller zamindaris and taluqdaris into the great Rajshahi Zamindari. The area of the present Rajshahi district hardly exceeds four thousand square miles, but the Rajshahi of our period, when the zamindari was virtually coterminous with the administrative district composed^{of} an area of about thirteen thousand square miles, one of the most unwieldy and important districts of Bengal.

1. Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol.XXI, p.162.

2. The History of Bengal, Ed. J.N. Sarkar and R.C. Majumdar, vol.II, p.414.

It extended from Bhagalpur on the west to Dacca in the east, a distance of some two hundred miles, thus including a large part of the modern districts of Malda, Bogra, Pabna and Faridpur, and also embraced a large tract of land called parganah Niz Rajshahi south of the Padma which now lies in Murshidabad district. Because of its proximity to the city of Murshidabad, then the capital of the Nawabs of Bengal, the zamindars of Rajshahi played a significant role in the Nawab's administration of Bengal in the eighteenth century.

Regarding the origin of the name Rajshahi there is considerable speculation and difference of opinion. The popular view is that Rajshahi derives its name from the concourse of rajas and other noble families in the district.¹ This is a specious claim, however, and historians have sought to trace the name back to the accession of Raja Ganesh or Kans, the Hindu chief of Bhaturia in the fifteenth century. The Raja, having ousted the Muslim ruler of Gaur, usurped the throne of Bengal and according to Blochmann, was consequently known as Rajshahi. Blochmann argued that "the district of Rajshahi is connected with Raja Kans; for just as Mahmud Shāhi, Barbakshāhi and other names in the neighbourhood of Rajshahi refer to the Bengal Kings Mahmud Shāh

1. Imperial Gazetteer, vol. XXI, p. 162. Rajshahi - 'the royal territory'; because there were many big Zamindars in the district such as the Houses of Nator, Dighapatiya, Puthia, Dubalhati and Balihar, etc.

and Barbak Shāh, so can Rajshahi, i.e., Rajashāhi, only refer to the Rāja who was the Shāh, i.e., to a Hindu Rāja who ascended a Musalman throne. In its shortened form, Rajshāhi is certainly a most extraordinary hybrid; for the Hindi raj is the same as the Persian shāhī."¹ Beveridge rejected this view, pointing out that Rajshahi is a comparatively modern name, and the district remote from the kingdom of Ganesh. His own suggestion, however, that the district may get its name from the Muslim Rajās of Birbhum, seems equally unacceptable.² A Bengali scholar has tried more recently to discover some connection between Raja-Man Singh,³ the Mughal general, and Rajshahi, but all these explanations, if plausible, remain hypothetical and unproven.

If the name Rajshahi is of uncertain origin, we are on firmer ground in studying the growth of the zamindari, though history here too has legends attached. When the British took over the revenue administration of Bengal they found the Rajshahi Zamindari well established. It had been created by the suppression of a number of inferior zamindars, and consolidation of their lands under one big Zamindar - the Raja of Nator. Unlike many old and illustrious zamindar

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1. H. Blochmann - 'The History and Geography of Bengal', J.A.S.B. 1875, vol.XLV, No.III, p.287.
 2. H. Beveridge - 'The Original Rajah of Raj'shahi', J.A.S.B. January 1893, pp.13-17.
 3. K.P. Vandhopadhya - Banglar Itihāsa. (Nawābi Amal), pp.65-66.

families of Bengal, the Nator Rājas could not trace their history as territorial magnates beyond the early eighteenth century. They were new zamindars created and sustained by the strict revenue policy of Nawab Murshid Quli Khan. The strictness of the revenue policy introduced by the Nawab caused the ruin of many ancient families who failed to pay their revenue dues, yielding place to new comers. The most fortunate of the beneficiaries of this process of replacement was the Nator family.¹ The family also benefited by another feature of Murshid Quli Khan's revenue policy - his introduction of the chakla system and encouragement to the formation of big zamindaris. Under the Nawab half the land revenue of Bengal was realized from six major zamindars, of whom the Nator Raja was one.

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1. K.C. Mitra, "The Territorial Aristocracy of Bengal" - The Calcutta Review, January 1873, vol.LVI, pp.6-7. Mitra was born in 1822. He was the brother of Piari Chand Mitra, a distinguished social reformer and literary figure in the nineteenth century Bengal. Like his brother Kishori Chand had also literary aptitude and in 1844 was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Asiatic Society. He largely contributed to the Bengal Spectator, The Bengal Harkaru and the Calcutta Review, and gained thereby considerable reputation. In 1846 he was appointed a Deputy Magistrate at Rajshahi. Afterwards he became a junior Magistrate of the Calcutta Police Bench. For some years he occupied the Bench with credit to himself. He was some years in charge of the 'Indian Field' a newspaper, which later on incorporated it with 'Hindu Patriot'. In 1859 he became a member of the British India Association. He died in August, 1873.

According to legend the founders of this illustrious family traced their ancestry to one of the five Brahmins of Kanauj who had settled in Varendra - the modern Barind,¹ whence the high esteem in which they were held. More prosaically the line is traced to Kamdēva a tahsildar of Baraihati in parganah Lashkerpur, a minor official of the Puthia Raj family.² He had three sons, Ramjivan, Raghunandan and Bishnuram, and it is in their day that the phenomenal rise of the family took place. The effective founder of the zamindari was the second son, Raghunandan, who began his career as flower gatherer to the Puthia House, in which family he had been brought up.³ There are many stories regarding his rise to prominence. On one occasion, it is said, he was plucking flowers for Puja [worship of the gods] when becoming fatigued he fell asleep in the garden. Soon a venomous snake came out and spread its hood to protect Raghunandan's head from the scorching rays of the sun. When this was reported to Darpa Narain, then head of the Puthia family, he predicted that one day Raghunandan would be a great man and that the whole of Rajshahi would come under his possession. He at once sent for Raghunandan, announced

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1. The History of Bengal, vol.II, p.414, & K.N. Chandhuri, Rajshair Samkhipta Itihāsa, p.146.
 2. B.R.C. 7 June 1774, Range. 49, vol.46. & M.F.R. vol.8, 5 May 1774.
 3. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p. 4.

his prophecy and extorted from him an assurance that when he become zamindar of Rajshahi he would not deprive the Puthia family of their ancient lands in parganah Lashkerpur.¹ This Raghunandan readily promised, and when the East India Company acquired the Diwani in 1765 they found the Nator family master of the whole vast Rajshahi Zamindari except for Lashkerpur, which, though situated at the heart of Rajshahi, was still governed independently. Was this because Raghunandan was true to his word out of respect and gratitude for his master's family? Popular belief would say yes. Whatever the legends may be, it is a fact that Darpa Narain helped Raghunandan in his career. Finding him a man of ability and intelligence, Darpa Narain appointed him his wakil or representative at Jahangirnagar (Dacca), the capital of Bengal.² This event undoubtedly was a turning point in his career. When the capital was transferred to Murshidabad, he was employed in a similar capacity as his master's

1. Kishori Chand Mitra, op.cit., p. 4.

2. Quoted in K.C. Mitra, op.cit., pp.4 -5. It was the Mughal tradition and custom "for the land holders of distinction and other principal inhabitants to maintain in proportion to their rank, an intercourse with the ruling power, and in person or by wakil or agent to be in constant attendance at the seat of Government, or with the officers in authority over the district where their lands or their concerns were situated. To establish an interest at the darbar, and to procure the protection of some powerful patron, were to them objects of unceasing solicitude."

representative there.¹ As Raghunandan was a man of parts and ability he soon acquired great proficiency in the laws and regulations prevalent in the Nawab's court. As a result he soon caught the attention of the Sadar Qanungo, who in the Provincial hierarchy of the Mughal administration was the most influential and powerful officer after the Nazim and the Diwan.² Being satisfied with Raghunandan's knowledge both as a financier and lawyer the qanungo appointed him his deputy or naib qanungo. His duty as Naib was to prepare statements of accounts and to stamp them with the seal of his master before submission to the Nawab and then to the Emperor. He earned the entire confidence of his master so that the latter had no hesitation in entrusting him with his seal! Raghunandan was not slow to take advantage of this situation for his personal aggrandisement and soon he became the favourite of Diwan Murshid Quli Khan (then Kartalab Khan).

Raghunandan's advancement in the service of Murshid Quli Khan followed from his support to the Diwan when the latter came into conflict with Azim-ush-Shan, grandson of the Emperor Aurangzeb, and Subadar of Bengal from 1697 to 1704.

1. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p.4.

2. The Qanungos had numerous functions besides being the expounders of local custom and usages. All documents attested by them were to be received as authoritative. The Sardar Qanungo was in certain respects a check upon the authority of the Diwan.

Their quarrel centered round various financial reforms introduced by the Diwan and the Prince's interference in revenue matters.¹ The reforms restricted the Prince, who was also censured by the Emperor for his extravagance and for his illegal private trade, and he determined to have the Diwan assassinated. The conspiracy failed, Murshid Quli Khan moved his headquarters to Maksudabad, later known as Murshidabad, and he received the commendation of the Emperor for his efficient management of the revenues and regular despatch of money to the imperial court. The Prince, further aggrieved by the favour shown to the Diwan sought further occasions to discredit him with the Emperor.² So when in 1703 Murshid Quli Khan prepared to visit the Emperor in the Deccan and to submit an account of the Provincial finances, the Prince ordered the Sadar Qanungo Darpa Narain not to sign and seal the accounts, and so to indicate they were not authentic. The Diwan was informed that unless he paid three lakhs of rupees to the Sadar Qanungo, the accounts would not be certified. Murshid Quli Khan thereupon offered to pay one lakh on his return from the Deccan, but this was refused.

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1. The Mughal Provincial administration was in some sort an administrative dyarchy - the Subadar representing the Police and Criminal administration, and the Diwan the Civil and revenue branch. There occurred frequent clashes between the two.
 2. A. Karim, Murshid Quli Khan and His Times, p.25.

Kishori Chand Mitra states that he then sent for Raghunandan, the Naib Qanungo and asked him to save him by affixing his master's seal to the accounts. Unable to resist the temptation to win the favour of the Diwan Raghunandan at once did so, and without any condition.¹ This account is not borne out however, by the author of the Riad-al-Salatin, who states that Jai Narain the other Sadar qanungo signed the accounts, nor by the fact that Darpa Narain, the supposed bribe demander, remained high in Murshid Quli Khan's favour.² But if there is some doubt about the way in which Raghunandan won Murshid Quli Khan's favour, there is no doubt that he did so. By 1716 the English speak of him as a revenue official and farmer of customs,³ and in 1717 they report his appointment as darogah of Murshidabad mint.⁴ It was owing to the good grace in which he stood at the darbar that he was able to secure zamindaris in Rajshahi and Bhusna, held in the name of his elder brother Ramjivan.⁵

During the period of Mughal rule in Bengal land revenues were collected through a variety of agents, of which the zamindars were the most prominent. Several different

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1. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p.5.
 2. A. Karim, op.cit., pp.66-68.
 3. B.P.C., 10 December, 1716, R.I. vol.3.
 4. Ibid., 18 July, 1717, R.I. vol.3, & C.W.B. Rous, Dissertation Concerning The Landed Property of Bengal, Appendix, No.IV, p.246.
 5. A. Karim, op.cit., p.70.

categories of zamindar existed, whose nature was summed up by Muhammad Reza Khan, in a statement to the Calcutta Council, as follows: "Some of them subsisted previous to the introduction of the Mohammedan religion into this country whose proprietors having acknowledged their subjection and agreed to pay their rents to the Mohammedan emperor were accordingly continued in their possessions. A second kind is those which have been cleared of jungle and cultivated from a barren desert state, the zamindars of which are called jungle-burs. A third kind is those which have been purchased.¹ A fourth kind is those which have been granted as a free gift.² Besides the foregoing kinds there is another kind called sanady, zamindaris of which are the following viz., the first is when the King grants to any person a certain quantity of waste jungle land to be by him brought into a state of cultivation after which he pays a rent for it to Government. A second is when the King or ruling magistrate turns out a zamindar without fault or reason and gives a sanad for it to another. A third kind is when a zamindar dies and some person makes a representation

1. The zamindaris obtained through purchase were known as Intikali.

2. And the title Ahkami given to free gifts.

to the King of his being dead without heirs and obtains a sanad for his zamindari of which he keeps possession for some generations, till at length the proper heirs appear. A fourth kind is when a principal zamindar arbitrarily usurps the possession of other small zamindaris and afterwards applies to the King or the ruling Magistrates for a sanad for the same, who grants him one in consideration of his paying a nazarana. A fifth kind is when a zamindar dies without heirs and the King for some time keeps his zamindari khas, but at length grants it to another for a nazarana.¹ Reza Khan might properly have added that zamindaris might also be granted to others upon forfeiture for default in payment of revenues, or for rebellion. As will be seen it was by grants under such circumstances that Raghunandan acquired most of his estates, though he did also purchase one zamindari.

Raghunandan secured the first portion of the Rajshahi Zamindari in 1706 when Parganah Banugachi was handed over to his brother Ramjivan after its Chaudhuris Ganeshram and Bhagabati Charan had mismanaged the estate and become constant revenue defaulters.² The next addition, and

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1. Quoted in N.K. Sinha, The Economic History of Bengal, vol.II, pp.7-8.
 2. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p.6. & B. Rouse, op.cit., pp.245-46.

a most important one was that of Parganah Bhaturia. This had been under the management of Rani Sarbani, widow of Rājā Ram Krishna, the Brahmin zamindar of Bhaturia. The Rani having died without any children, the zamindari was bestowed on Balaram, a brother of Ramkrishna.¹ As he was blind and deaf, and was quite unable to undertake the task of its management, the parganah was placed under Raghunandan. Within a short time Raghunandan had settled the entire zamindari in the names of his brother Ramjivan and nephew Kalika Prasad. He procured a sanad from the Emperor confirming their possession in 1711 A.D.² The other important acquisition of the Nator family was the parganah Niz Rajshahi. It is probable that the whole zamindari derived its name from this parganah. According to the author of Riad-al-Salatin, Udainarain, the zamindar of Chakla Rajshahi, which lay south of the Ganges refused to pay the revenues and revolted against the Nawab's authority. He collected a large following and took shelter in the hills of Sultanabad and there defied the Nawab. The Nawab sent a large force under Raghunandan who within a short time defeated the rebel.

1. B.R.C. 7 June, 1774. Range. 49, vol. 46.
 2. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p.6.

Udainarain committed suicide to avoid the wrath of Murshid Quli Khan.¹ 'In 1713 he [Raghunandan] was allowed to annex Rajshahi as a reward for his capture of Udainarain'.² Soon after this the Nawab bestowed parganah Naldi upon Ramjivan. This too was a transfer consequent upon a revolt by its owner, Sitaram Rai of Bhusna.³ Sitaram was the son of a Hindu revenue collector under the Muslim faujdar of Bhusna. He took the lease of parganah Naldi from the Nawab with a promise to pay regular revenues and to suppress the Afghan bandits there. In course of time he created a big estate for himself and dreamt of establishing an independent kingdom. In pride of his power he defied the authority of the Nawab and oppressed and robbed the inferior zamindars and stopped paying revenues to the treasury. To suppress this lawlessness and punish Sitaram the Nawab ordered faujdar Abu Turab to deal with the situation. But the faujdar was killed in a sudden attack by Sitaram's men. As the faujdar was related to Prince Azim-ush-Shan, Murshid Quli Khan could no longer brook Sitaram's audacity. A strong force was dispatched under the command of his brother-in-law

1. Ghulam Husain Salim, Riad al-Salatin, p.259.
2. B.R.C. 15 February, 1780. R.50, vol.22. & J.Shore's Minute, 18 June 1789, respecting The Permanent Settlement of the Lands in Bengal Provinces.
3. L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers; Jessore, p.35.

Baksh Ali Khan. In this campaign against Sitaram, Ramjivan - the co-founder of the Nator House and his diwan Dayaram Rai co-operated.¹ As a reward for their services the Nawab transferred the whole of Sitaram's zamindari of Bhusna, together with Parganah Ibrahimpur to Ramjivan in 1714. The greatness of the Nator family was established with this dismemberment of Sitaram's estate. Another acquisition to the zamindari was Tanki Sarubpur, five miles from Jessore in Sarkar Mahmudabad. This zamindari was held by two Afghan chiefs, Shuja'at and Naja'at Khan. They were notorious for their lawlessness and plundering habits. At one time they even threatened to plunder Murshidabad. Nawab Murshid Quli Khan was not a man to tolerate lawlessness in his vice-royalty and he captured the chiefs who passed the rest of their lives in prison. After their extirpation the Nawab settled their zamindari in 1718 with his favourite Ramjivan, who became renowned for his competent management and punctual payment of revenues.² Subsequently, Ramjivan purchased parganah Havily and Fatehbad from the zamindar of Jalalpur (Dacca).

1. The History of Bengal, vol.II, p.414; & P.C.R. 31 March 1783, R.68, vol.21.

2. Riad, pp.279-80; Salim 'Allah - Tawrikhe-Bangala, f61-62.

By these successive additions the gigantic principality of Rajshahi was built up during the lifetime of its founders. It became the second largest zamindari of Bengal, rivalling Burdwan for the premier position, and tradition called it an estate of fifty two lakh of rupees.¹

This zamindari of Rajshahi thus became the best example of Murshid Quli Khan's policy of creating big zamindars. It was through Raghunandan that the Rajshahi zamindari was assembled, but its successful consolidation was largely due to the shrewdness and energy of his elder brother Ramjivan. He established a strong central authority and maintained peace and order in the vast estate. For strategic reasons he made the key town of Nator the principal seat of his zamindari.² He surrounded it with defensive ditches and being a great builder beautified it with numerous buildings, temples and tanks. The huge stagnant sheet of water called Laldighi is said to have been excavated by him in building the Rajbari palace.³ He also established two subsidiary headquarters, one at Barnagar on the banks of the Bagirathi, not far from Murshidabad, and the other at

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1. J. Westland, A Report on the District of Jessore, p.61.
 2. Nator remained the headquarters of Rajshahi district until 1825 when the headquarters were removed to Boalia, the present site.
 3. O'Malley, District Gazetteer, Rajshahi, p.170.

Sherpur in Bogra district. Throughout his life he maintained cordial relations with Murshid Quli Khan, who was greatly pleased with his punctual payment of the revenues and procured for him a sanad and robe of honour from the Emperor.

He was much aided in the administration of Rajshahi by his agent Dayaram Rai, later appointed his diwan. Dayaram was a first-rate man of business, and his contribution to the fortunes of the zamindari have been assessed by Kishori Mitra as follows: "Were it not for his good management, Ramjivan could not have extended or preserved his zamindari. In truth, while Raghunandan at Murshidabad was the creator of the Nator estate, Dayaram was the consolidator of it. While one was the Clive, the other was the Hastings of the Raj."¹ His merit was recognised both by Ramjivan, who conferred on him valuable talucs which in the course of time became the estate of Dighapatiya, and by the Nawab, who conferred the title of Rai Rayan on him for his valiant services.² As will be seen Dayaram later became the guardian and manager of Ramjivan's adopted son.

Raghunandan died in 1724 without leaving any heir. His death was then followed by that of Kalika Prasad, Ramjivan's only son, and in 1730 by that of Ramjivan himself.

1. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p. 8.

2. The History of Bengal, vol.II, p.414.

Before his death, however, Ramjivan adopted a boy named Ramkanta as his heir. The only other survivor was Devi Prasad, the son of Bishnuram, Ramjivan's brother, who had never had any share in the Rajshahi zamindari. Nevertheless, Ramjivan proposed to divide the estate, ten-sixteenths to Ramkanta, six-sixteenths to Devi Prasad. Devi Prasad, however, considered Ramkanta as a usurper, and despite Ramjivan's efforts to placate him by sharing the zamindari, showed such bad blood towards Ramkanta that in the end Ramjivan left the entire zamindari to Ramkanta.

Ramkanta thus succeeded to the whole zamindari in 1730,¹ at which date he was a young man of eighteen years of age and entirely inexperienced in zamindari administration. It is said that he passed most of his time in religious pursuits and neglected business affairs as a consequence. Happily, however, Ramjivan had left him in the care of Dayaram, who thus for a time became de facto zamindar and continued his careful management, while Ramkanta's wife

1. O'Malley gives 1730 as the date of Ramkanta's succession to the zamindari, and so does Akhai Maitra, a noted Bengali historian. Kishore Chand Mitra, in his article in the Calcutta Review gives the date of Ramjivan's death as 1737, but the existence of a sanad from the Emperor Muhammad Shah of 1735 shows that by that date Ramkanta was in possession of the zamindari. O'Malley, op.cit., p.171.
Akhai Maitra's opinion is quoted in Rajshahir Samkhipta Itihasa, by K.N. Chaudhuri, p.150.
K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p.9

Rani Bhabani also proved to be a woman of great foresight, sagacity and intelligence. Nevertheless, either through inattention to business or through the enmity and intrigues of Devi Prasad, Ramkanta lost possession of Rajshahi. K.C. Mitra and K.N. Chandhuri both ascribe this loss to Ramkanta's mismanagement, relating that Ramkanta fell into arrears with his payment of land revenue, and that when Dayaram remonstrated with him he took this as a personal insult. Believing malicious representations that Dayaram was more an enemy than a real friend to the Nator Raj, he relieved him of his post.¹ Ramkanta thus played into the hands of his enemy Devi Prasad, for the diwan proceeded to Murshidabad and related the maladministration of Ramkanta, and the constant arrears to the Nawab Ali Vardi Khan. The Nawab, having great confidence in Dayaram, acted on his advice, depriving Ramkanta of the Zamindari which was then bestowed on Devi Prasad.² More trustworthy however, is the report from the Provincial Council at Murshidabad, written in May, 1774 which ascribes the upheaval directly to Devi Prasad's intrigues: "Devi Prasad, during the time of Ali Vardi Khan seized and retained the zamindari for four months

1. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p. 9. & K.N. Chaudhuri, op.cit., pp.158-59.
 2. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p.9 & K.N. Chaudhuri, op.cit., pp.158-59.

without any sanad, being supported by Mustafa Khan a Risaldar of great authority. Ramkanta, however, soon recovered possession, which he afterwards held till the day of his death."¹ It is said that Dayaram had a great part in the restoration, and that moved by pity for Ramkanta and regard for Rani Bhabani, he utilised the good will of Jagat Seth and other nobles to convince the Nawab that Ramkanta was the rightful owner and to secure his restoration.² Since Dayaram continued as diwan of Ramkanta and then of his widow, the Rani, the account of the Provincial Council seems the more probable version of the brief loss of the zamindari by Ramkanta. Further evidence would also seem to support the view that it was not mismanagement that caused the temporary loss of the zamindari. From James Grant's 'Analysis of The Finances of Bengal' we find that whereas in Ramjivan's time the zamindari consisted of 139 parganahs and paid Rs.17,41,987 in land revenue, in Ramkanta's day there were 164 parganahs and their revenue paid had risen to Rs.18,53,325.³ It would seem that both the size and the revenues of the estate had increased. The sanad granted by the Emperor Muhammad Shah ~~II~~ in 1735 had enjoined on Ramkanta that "he

1. B.R.C., 7 June, 1774, Range 49, vol.46. &MF.R. 5 May, 1774, vol.8.

2. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p. 9.

3. J. Grant, Analysis, pp.302-07.

shall remit the Peshcush etc. and the balances in stated instalments to the treasury, and realize the revenues, (after taking credit to himself for the Muscoorat Nancar, etc.) from year to year in the customary manner, and at the usual seasons; conducting himself towards the ryots and inhabitants in general in a conciliating manner, and being indefatigable in the expulsion and chastisement of the refractory - he shall be careful that no theives, highwaymen, or disturbers of the public peace, take shelter within the limits of his jurisdiction, and he is otherwise to exert his endeavours to promote the comfort and security of the ryots, the increase of cultivation, population, and the revenue."¹ The figures given by Grant suggest that Ramkanta had complied with these instructions and proved a competent manager of

1. Quoted in James Grant's An Inquiry into the Nature of Zemindary Tenures in Landed Property of Bengal.

Appendix No. III. B. pp. 77-78.

The Sanad also instructs Ramkanta that "he shall be attentive to the protection of the high roads, that travellers may pass and repass without danger or molestation; but if a robbery should be committed, he shall produce the perpetrators with their booty; which shall be restored to its owner, and the delinquents given up for punishment; if he fails to produce the culprits, he shall consider himself responsible for the amount plundered. He shall take especial care, that no individual within the boundaries of his zamindary shall practise any unlawful deeds or drunkenness, and he is strictly forbidden from levying any Aboabs [exactions] prohibited by the Imperial Edict. He shall transmit the requisite accounts of the district in the usual manner, signed by himself and qanungoes of the soubah to the Public Exchequer."

the Zamindari.¹

Ramkanta died in 1748 leaving a daughter Tara. He was succeeded by his wife Rani Bhabani. Before his death he permitted the Rani to adopt a son and heir in accordance with Hindu law.² Thus Rani Bhabani became the de jure zamindar of Rajshahi. At the outset she did not assume the responsibility of management into her hands, but entrusted the charge of administration to her son-in-law Raghunath.³ However, the latter soon died and the entire burden devolved on her, though she was ably assisted by the veteran diwan Dayaram, who was greatly devoted to her. Holwell describes the position of the Rajshahi zamindari in his day as follows: "at Nator, about ten days travel from North-East of Calcutta, resides the family of the most ancient and opulent of the Hindu Princes of Bengal, Raja Ram Kanta, ... [who] was succeeded by his wife, Rani Bhawani; whose Diwan or Minister was Dayaram of the tuli caste or tribe. They possess a tract of country of about 35 days travel; and under settled government, their stipulated annual rents to the crown were

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1. In addition, during Alivardi Khan's time the Rajshahi Zamindari paid Rs. 3,02,480 as chauth to the Marathas. Quoted in James Grant's 'Analysis', p.314.
 2. Ram Krishna was adopted by Rani Bhabani to succeed her.
 3. J. Grant, 'Analysis', p.324.

70 lakh of sicca rupees, - the real revenues, about one crore and an half."¹

The Maharani was a lady of great virtues and capacity for business. K.C. Mitra states that on account of her efficient management the profits from several parganahs were increased substantially and that the ruin of others was arrested.² She maintained cordial relations with the Nawabs of Murshidabad, preserved the estate during the Maratha ravages, and thereafter maintained it in peace and tranquillity. When the East India Company took over the Diwani administration of Bengal in 1765 they found the zamindari exhibiting an appearance of opulence and dignity, and they maintained the Rani in undisturbed possession of the zamindari.

The Rani also upheld the dignity and prestige of the Zamindari by her social activities. She granted large areas to Brahmins as lakhiraj or rent-free land - the Amini Commission of 1776 reported that 4,29,149 bighas of land came under this denomination.³ "At Benaras alone", O'Malley writes, "she is said to have established 380 Shrines, guest-houses etc., and many temples were built in other parts of

1. J.Z. Holwell, Interesting Historical Events, p.192.

2. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., p.10.

3. B.M. Add. MSS. 29087, pp.132-33.

the country and endowed with money and land. The great embanked road in the Nator subdivision which runs east to Bhawanipur in Bogra, and is still called Rani Bhawani's Jangal, was constructed by her, and numerous tanks and sarais were built with her money. Doctors were entertained to give medical relief to the poor in different villages, and her charity extended to the animal world."¹ She was also a great patron of Hindu learning and she bestowed large endowments for the maintenance of education. The last remnants of her educational charities survived even to the time of Lord Bentinck and Lord Auckland, when W. Adam, in his report on 'the State of Education in Bengal' found schools at Basudevpur and Samaskhalasi still in receipt of eight and sixty rupees a year from her zamindari.² For her charity, no less than her management of the estate she won general admiration.

In subsequent chapters we shall follow the story of the different revenue experiments conducted by the Company in Rajshahi from 1765 to 1793. Briefly to review the later history of the Nator House, we may note that in 1790 Raja Ramkrishna, the adopted son of Rani Bhabani, was

1. O'Malley, Rajshahi, p.172.

2. W. Adam, Report on the State of Education in Bengal, (1835 & 1838), Ed. A. Basu, pp.166-71.

allowed to engage for the entire Zamindari on a permanent assessment of Rs. 23,28,000. Like his mother, Ramkrishna was exceedingly pious and passed most of his time in religious duties, but unlike her he took little interest in the management of the estate and allowed himself to be plundered on every front by his agents, notably by Kali Sanker, the founder of the Narail Raj.¹ "Then came the Permanent Settlement which expedited its ruin further", since the strict regulation "for the recovery of revenue arrears by sale of the defaulter's estate were constantly called into requisition against the Rājā, and parcel after parcel of his hereditary property was sold."² In 1796 Ramkrishna died and his zamindari was partitioned between his two sons Shibnath and Bishwanath. Like their father they too neglected punctual collection of revenues and the efficient management of the zamindari. As a consequence of their folly and sloth the estate shrank still further. It was finally extinguished by the promulgation of the East Pakistan Land Acquisition Act of 1951.

1. K.C. Mitra, op.cit., pp. 15-16.

2. Imperial Gazetteer, vol. XXI, p. 162.

CHAPTER II

THE REVENUE ADMINISTRATION OF RAJSHAHI UNDER THE DIWANI RULE
from 1765 to 1772

On 12 August, 1765, Robert Clive by an historic farman from the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam, obtained the Diwani of Bengal and Orissa for the East India Company on condition of a regular payment of twenty-six lakhs of rupees to the Emperor.¹ By a separate agreement with the Nawab of Bengal, Najmud-daula, concluded on 19 August 1765, the Company agreed to pay him fifty-three lakhs of rupees as his stipend, out of which the Nawab had to pay the expenses of the Nizamat.² The residue of the revenues of the Provinces could be appropriated by the Company for its own use.³ The defence of the country also devolved on them. The acquisition of the Diwani was undoubtedly a landmark, since it brought about a revolutionary change in the relation between the Nawab and the Company in Bengal. From the status of a Mughal zamindar in the Ceded and Calcutta lands,⁴ the Company

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1. Proceedings of the Select Committee, Fort William, 7 Sept., 1765, vol.6.
Farman, The command of the Emperor. Diwani, the fiscal administration under the Mughal System. The Diwan was responsible for finance of the Province and collection of revenues and civil justice.
 2. B.P.C. 9 Sept., 1765. Range.I, vol. 38.
Nizamat, The office of the Nazim, the executive head of government - was in charge of criminal justice.
 3. Letters Received from Bengal, 30 Sept., 1765.
 4. W.H. Moreland, The Agrarian System of Muslim India, pp.191-92.

became to all intents and purposes "the sovereign of a rich and potent Kingdom."¹

But the Company did not choose to assume direct responsibility immediately after the acquisition of the Diwani. Clive was afraid that a sudden and extensive assumption of public authority would create jealousy among the European rivals of the Company.² The Company also sought to conceal from the Indian powers the revolutionary change that had taken place in its position in consequence of the assumption of the Diwani and thereby to avoid their suspicion and hostility.³ Again the Company lacked adequate numbers of trained servants experienced in revenue matters who could be called upon to take over the functions of the Diwani. Clive estimated that "three times the present number of civil servants would be insufficient for that purpose."⁴ Therefore, he thought it both expedient and wise to leave the existing revenue administration intact. Little innovation was made in the existing machinery of internal administration until 1772, when the Company assumed direct responsibility

1. P.S.C., 30 Sept., 1765, vol.6.

The Ceded Districts were Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong. Mir Qasim gave these territories to the Company as a price for his elevation to the Nawabi of Bengal in 1760.

2. L.R., 30 September, 1765.

3. Ibid., and P.S.C., 16 January, 1767. R.A. vol.7.

4. L.R., 30 September, 1765.

for revenue administration.

The revenue system under Muhammad Reza Khan, the Company's Naib Diwan in Bengal, was fundamentally the same as that in existence under the Nawab's government. He had virtually "an exclusive direction of all details relative to the settlement and collection of Bengal districts."¹ An English Resident at the Nawab's Darbar was appointed to superintend and control financial affairs. He was to act in consultation with the Naib Diwan who was entrusted with both the civil and criminal functions of government but the Resident's exact relationship with the Naib Diwan in revenue matters is difficult to determine. Subsequently the Resident was designated collector of the Diwani.² His task was to provide funds for administration, to check encroachment on them by the Nawab's branch of government, and also to prevent oppression of the people. In view of its importance the post was always held by a senior servant of the Company. Francis Sykes, a member of the Select Committee, was appointed Resident at the Darbar in 1765. In 1769, he was succeeded by Richard Becher.

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1. J.H. Harrington, An Elementary Analysis of the Laws and Regulations enacted by the Governor-General in Council at Fort William, vol.II, p.3.
 2. P.S.C., 11 Feb., 1767.R.A. vol. 7.

To understand the problems of the land revenue system it is necessary to describe in brief some of its essential features. Revenues were derived from various sources such as land, duties and customs, farms and trade privileges; fines and forfeitures¹. Of these the revenues derived from the land constituted the principal source. The others, such as duties or customs collected at chowkies or custom houses or at ganjes or markets, and fines and forfeitures on offenders for breaches of the law, were minor and fluctuating items. Revenues were collected through a number of intermediate agents and officials with varied powers and functions². They were variously called zamindar, taluqdar, jagirdars, chaudhuries and amils. Another class of officials, qanungoes, darogahs, amils and mutassadies superintended the collection of revenues by the above agencies. How this machinery worked can be seen from the history of land revenue in Rajshahi in the early years of the Diwani. The land revenue was usually collected from zamindars or taluqdars who held their rights or interests by virtue of a sanad (patent) granted to them either by the Emperor or the Nawab. Like many other officers such as the

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1. Fourth Report from the Committee of Secrecy - of the House of Commons, 24 March, 1773, p.95.
 2. Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, pp.171-174.

qanungoes, the rights of the zamindars under the Mughals became hereditary in course of time and they were seldom removed or dispossessed of their estates as long as they paid the stipulated revenues.¹ But if a zamindar was constantly in deficit in the payment of his revenues or rebellious, his zamindari was confiscated and vested in the favourites of the Nawabs.² The foundation of the Rajshahi Zamindari under the Nator family during the time of Nawab Murshid Quli Khan (1704-25) is an important example of Nawabi patronage extended in this case to Raghunandan Rai, his naib diwan, the founder of the Nator Raj.³

Every year an annual bando-bast or settlement was held at the capital Murshidabad with the zamindars and ijaradars or under-farmers. This was the Punyah ceremony⁴ which usually took place in the months of May or June, at the beginning of the Bengali New Year, the time fixed for adjusting the past year's accounts and valuation of the lands. The valuation and accounts thus settled between the government of the Nawab and zamindars were largely conjectural being based upon past experience rather than accurate

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1. A. Karim, op.cit., p.145 & D.N. Banerjea, Early Land Revenue System in Bengal and Behar, p.13.
 2. History of Bengal, vol.II, p.414.
 3. Supra, Chapter I.
 4. The day when the settlement for the New Year is made; inaugurating the financial year.

survey.¹ During the Punyah ceremony the zamindar either himself attended or was represented by his wakil. At the Punyah the customary links between the zamindars and the Nawab were also strengthened by the offering of nazars to the Nawab and his principal officers, and of khilats or robes of honour to the zamindar.² In settling the rent roll the government preferred to deal with the zamindars of the locality; if no zamindar or farmer was available an amil or sazawal³ was deputed by government to collect the revenues of that district. When a zamindar was temporarily dispossessed, or when the State directly assessed and collected the land revenue, the zamindar was given an allowance called malikana⁴ which was usually 10 per cent of the revenue collected. The hast-o-bud or rent roll was normally settled with the zamindars in such a way as to allow them certain profits over and above the saranjami or costs of collection. They also received nankar or rent-free lands for their subsistence.⁵

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1. M. Huq, The East India Company's Land Policy and Commerce in Bengal, 1698-1784; p. 14 & A. Karim, op.cit., p. 122.
 2. In 1771 the government provided khilats amounting to Rs. 5210 to the Rani of Rajshahi, her son Raja Ramkrishna, Dayaram and the other Zamindari servants.
 3. An officer employed for collection of revenues.
 4. I. Habib, op.cit., p. 146. Malikana - from Arabic 'malik' meaning master or owner; malikana - what belongs to such a person. Under the Mughals it came to mean the allowance given to the zamindar.
 5. M.N. Gupta, Land System of Bengal, p. 76.

The demand upon the zamindar was made in the form of an asal-jama or original revenue demand plus abwabs, the latter comprehending various increases that had taken place since the jama of Todar Mal, Akbar's Diwan in 1582.¹ Abwabs had first been levied for specific purposes from the time of Murshid Quli Khan.²

After the Sadar bando-bast had been concluded at Murshidabad with the government, the big zamindars, such as Rajshahi, entered into separate agreements with the taluqdars and revenue farmers under them, who then, in their turn made engagement with the ryots.³ All these lesser punyahs took place in the mufassil in progression from principal zamindari kachariës to parganah kachari.⁴ In every parganah there was a zamindari kachari where the naib or deputies of the zamindar conducted the business of collection and disbursement on behalf of ^{his} their master. He was aided by a host of servants consisting of pehcars, amins, wakils, mohrirs,

1. Controlling Council of Revenue Proceedings at Murshidabad, 30 April, 1771. MF.R. vol.3.

Many modern scholars have questioned whether there was any settlement by Todar Mal, because in his day the country was still in the process of conquest; W.H. Moreland did not accept the Todar Mal's settlement as anything better than summary in nature. See Moreland, op.cit., p.196.

2. W.K. Firminger, The Fifth Report, vol.II, pp.205-8.

3. D.N. Banerjee, op.cit., p.15.

4. Letter Copy Book of the Supervisor of Rajshahi at Nator. Roush to Becher, 22 June, 1770, p.24.

munshis, kazanchis, poddars and jamadars.¹ The money collected from the parganah was despatched to the Sadar Kachari [at Nator] under the escort of thanadars.² The zamindar paid his revenues either through shroffs or direct to the treasury according to his convenience.

The revenue was realized from the zamindars and revenue farmers in kists or instalments throughout the year. The kistbandi was so regulated as to allow both the farmers and ryots to pay in their rents after the harvests were gathered, and in proportion to their importance in local agriculture. Thus the demand was much higher in the months of August and September, and was again high in November and December, because these were the two principal harvesting seasons of Bengal. So, in 1786, the revenue of Rajshahi, fixed at Rs. 24,25000 was divided into the following instalments:³

April - May	Rs. 60,000	Oct. - Nov.	Rs. 175,000
May - June	" 70,000	Nov. - Dec.	" 500,000
June - July	" 100,000	Dec. - Jan.	" 420,000
July - Aug.	" 261,000	Jan. - Feb.	" 188,000
Aug. - Sept.	" 293,000	Feb. - March	" 115,000
Sept. - Oct.	" 157,000	March- April	" 86,000
		Total	<u>Rs.24,25,000</u>

1. B.R.C. 28 June, 1774. Range 49. vol.46.

2. M.C.R., 31 Dec. 1770. F.R. vol.1.

3. B.R.P. 20 Oct., 1786. R.70. vol.20.

It will be seen that the size of the revenue demands fully coincided with the two main crops of the district, the autumn paddy [Aūs] and winter paddy [Aman]. Apart from these two major crops of rice, the ryots of Rajshahi paid part of their revenue dues from the chaitally harvests of dry grains such as wheat, peas, barley, etc. which are produced in the high lands, and part from the cultivation of Boro rice which is raised in the months of March-April in the beds of lakes and nullahs. After the Company's acquisition of the Diwani it encouraged the cultivation of more profitable commercial crops such as mulberry, cotton and sugar, but the revenues derived from sources other than rice remained inconsiderable.

The chait kist was the concluding kist of the year and it was hoped that the collection and disbursement of revenue by the government should be completed by then. This aim was rarely achieved by the zamindars and farmers. There were instances where the zamindar had used the produce of the first few months of the New Year to clear up the deficits of the outgoing year.¹ This practice, known as Halbangan, was extremely prejudicial for the collection of the current year's revenue, and the government strongly discouraged it.

1. In a letter to Murshidabad Council, on 18 November, 1770, the Supervisor Rousé complained that the collection of the current year started with a deficit of Rs. 300,000 because the zamindar had realized the revenue of the first four months to make good her past arrears.

By the end of the year, if it was found that the arrears were sizeable and no valid causes existed for them, the government enforced payment by a system of coercive measures, going even to the extent of confining the zamindar and his diwan for the recovery of the balance. In 1771 after the famine, when the Rani of Rajshahi was largely in deficit, the Murshidabad Council of Revenue approved the temporary confinement of Raja Ramkrishna, the adopted son of Rani Bhabani and her diwan Dayaram Roy.¹ The zamindars too adopted drastic steps against their ryots for arrears by sending piadas or peons who either seized the ryots' effects or confined or even flogged them. Remissions were, however, given both to the zamindars and ryots in extraordinary circumstances such as the destruction of crops by flood and drought. During the heyday of Mughal rule the right of the ryot to cultivate specific fields was considered to be inviolable so long as he paid the customary revenue to the zamindars. His rights passed at his death to his sons and successors.² There were two broad categories of ryots in Bengal with distinct rights and obligations. The main body

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1. Monkton Jones, Warren Hastings in Bengal, pp.28-29.
"The defaulters were not allowed to take food or drink or even to respond to the call of nature." by Salim A'llah - Tawarikh-e-Bangala, quoted in A.Karim, op.cit., p.126.
 2. W.W. Hunter, Bengal MS Records, vol.I, p.48.

- the hereditary resident ryots with long occupancy had acquired a right of possession in the soil tilled by them. They paid revenues at a fixed rate and enjoyed certain privileges in the village they resided in, such as that to lands for homesteads and to the service of the village officials. They were known as khud kāsht ryots. The khud-kasht ryot was neither "a tenant at will, nor a tenant by virtue of a demise or a long lease, but a cultivator with a prescriptive right of occupancy, entitled to retain his lands provided he conformed to the conditions of the tenure. His rights were independent of contract."¹ A smaller body, without a right of occupancy in the land might or might not be residents of the village, were called paikasht or non-occupancy ryots, tenants at will, who had to make the best bargain they could with the landholders. It was the resident ryots who suffered most under the revenue experiments of early British administration and about their rights that subsequent controversy centered even down to the time of Lord Bentinck.

With the Company's accession to the Diwani in 1765, the zamindari of Rajshahi came under its control. Rani Bhabani the widow of Raja Rankanta of the Nator family was then the ruling zamindar of the estate. Following the acquisition of the Diwani, Muhammad Reza Khan, the Company's

1. S. Gopal, The Permanent Settlement in Bengal and its Results, p.36.

Naib Diwan concluded a yearly settlement of Rs.245,10,22 with her for 1765-66.¹ This amount was increased by an addition of two lakhs for the subsequent year.²

In his 'Historical and Comparative Analysis of the Finances of Bengal', written in 1786, James Grant traced the revenue history of the Rajshahi Zamindari back to the 1722 settlement of Murshid Quli Khan. This was corrected in 1728 during the viceroyalty of Shuja-uddin-Khan (1725-39) when the zamindari sanad was renewed to Ramjivan Rai. At that time the zamindari contained about thirteen thousand square miles, and from that date until 1793 the zamindari was assessed as one enormous unit. In Shuja-ud-din' Khan's day, the last "era of good order and good government" according to Grant, the demand was as follows.³

Rajshahi Proper	68 <u>parganahs</u>	Rs. 9,10,000
Bhaturia	30 "	Rs. 5,00,000
Naldi (Bhusna)	29 "	Rs. 3,10,000
Bazi Mahals	12 "	---
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	139 "	Rs.17,50,000
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1. J. Grant, 'Analysis' - published in the Appendix to the Fifth Report, Vol.II, p.311.

2. Ibid., p.311.

3. Ibid., pp.311-14.

By 1734 the figures had increased to:

Rajshahi	78 <u>Parganahs</u>	Rs. 8,50,000
Bhaturia	23 "	Rs. 4,00,000
Naldi	21 "	Rs. 2,70,000
Bazi Mahals	42 "	Rs. 3,40,000
	<hr/> 164 " <hr/>	<hr/> Rs. 18,60,000 <hr/>

And by 1765 to:

Rajshahi	80 <u>Parganahs</u>	Rs. 9,70,000
Bhaturia	24 "	Rs. 4,40,000
Naldi	24 "	Rs. 2,90,000
Bazi Mahals	51 "	Rs. 5,80,000
	<hr/> 189 " <hr/>	<hr/> Rs. 22,80,000 <hr/>

With the addition of parganah Baharbund, and allowance for tawfir, or improvement of lands, at Rs. 1,50,000 and Rs. 20,000 respectively a total of Rs. 24,50,000 was reached. [The figures are rounded to the nearest Rs.10,000]. This total Grant held to be the asal jama or original demand, and did not include the abwabs or additional cesses which had been levied upon the zamindari between 1734 and 1765.¹ These abwabs came to a further Rs.6,00,000, giving an approximate total demand of Rs. 30,50,000, or deducting nankar allowances

1. 'Analysis', pp.314-15.

of Rs. 44,715 to the zamindar, some Rs. 30,00,000.¹

Mir Qasim, not satisfied with the increases since 1728, had directed a new hasto-bud in 1762 for the whole zamindari except Baharbund, and in consequence had pushed up the demand by another lakh and a half. In 1763 he had then imposed a new abwab known as the serf-sicca, at the rate of one and a half annas in the rupee, so as to give a demand of Rs. 35,00,000.²

In 1765, as has been seen, Muhammad Reza Khan fixed an assessment of Rs. 24,51,022 on Rajshahi. By 1771 this had been raised to Rs. 27,51,000,³ but the figure was still much below those which Grant believed had been claimed by Mir Qasim or even by Mir Jafar on his restoration. Grant believed that Reza Khan, concealing his knowledge of past revenue demands, had exploited the ignorance of the English collectors and pitched his demand unreasonably low.⁴ The local collecting agents, in coalition with Rani Bhabani and Reza Khan had deprived the government of its rightful dues.⁵ He summed up by stating that the revenues of Rajshahi had been some thirteen and a half lakhs less than they should have been.

1. 'Analysis', p.315.

2. Ibid., p.318.

3. P.S.C. 8 July, 1769, R.A. Vol.9.

4. Grant, op.cit., pp.318-19.

5. Ibid., pp.320-26.

The actual history of the collections from 1765 onwards suggests that Grant had confused the ideal for the real, the demand for the collection. After the grant of the Diwani in 1765 Clive was anxious to realize as much revenue as possible so as to secure the Directors' approval.¹ Muhammad Reza Khan also felt that his existence depended on his ability to collect the maximum revenue, and in the seven years in which he was in charge of the Diwani administration he set out to meet the Company's demands.² He would have liked to protect the old Mughal order in Bengal but he had to yield to the pressure of Company officials who were seeking credit by maximizing revenues. Soon after his appointment as Resident at the Darbar, Francis Sykes reported that he had discovered "fraud and villainy everywhere in the revenue department." In a letter to the Select Committee written on 30 September, 1765 he declared "there was no wonder that the Nabobs of late were so distressed", when fraud had deprived them of so much revenue. For the sake of the Company he suggested that "some degree of vigour may be necessary this year to rouse the zamindars and collectors from their lethargy which they have been in, and convince them that we are determined to put a stop to [their]

1. M. Huq, op.cit., p.100.

2. Ibid., p.98.

scandalous practices."¹

We do not know whether Reza Khan's demand on Rajshahi in 1765 was collected, though the collections from the Diwani lands as a whole were far from satisfactory.² In many districts the Company appointed Amils in 1766 and 1767 to supervise the revenue agents, though whether any was deputed to Rajshahi is not known. But in 1768, when records are available, the whole Rajshahi zamindari is found divided into twelve zilas, placed each under an amil or ziladar, who collected a total of Rs. 26,94,602.³ Their appointment suggests that the Rani had been in default.

The collection was little more than Reza Khan had provided for in his original settlement, but the method of collection by amils, who eventually became more important than the zamindar herself, was thoroughly bad. The amils agreed with the Ministers at Murshidabad to pay a fixed sum for their districts, the man who offered the highest sum being generally preferred, and then proceeded to exact as much revenue as possible from the ryots so as to secure the greatest possible profit from their one year contract.⁴

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1. W. Bolts, Considerations On India Affairs, quoted Sykes' letter of 17 Nov., 1765, pp.143-44.
 2. M. Huq, op.cit., p.101. 'Out of the total settlement for Sicca Rs. 150,04,887 the gross collection amounted to Sicca Rs. 100,25,165.'
 3. B.M. Add.MSS, 29086, p.44.
 4. P.S.C. 8 July, 1769, R.A. vol.9.

"Uncertain in their office, and without opportunity of acquiring money after their dismissal", Becher later observed, "can it be doubted that the future welfare of the country is not an object with them? Nor is it to be expected in human nature."¹ This was certainly the case in Rajshahi where the amils fulfilled their contracts and produced one of the largest revenues ever paid, but only by driving the ryots to desertion and the whole zamindari to the brink of ruin.² Two of the Amils are known to us by name, Pran Bose, in charge of Bhusna in 1768 and Dulal Roy posted to Bhaturia. Of the latter Boughton Rouse, the first supervisor of Rajshahi, remarked that he was "a low and illiterate man, one of the meanest of his [Reza Khan's] dependents",³ and in a subsequent report to the Murshidabad Council he reported that Bhaturia had been squeezed by him of its last drop of wealth. The hast-o-bud, or assessment on the division had stood at Rs. 10,31,276, but he found that the amils had added mathaubs to make their collection Rs.17,12,354 in all. He listed similar instances of illegal exactions in Bhusna-Pran Bose's division. Richard Becher, on appointment as

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1. Becher to Verelst, 24 May, 1769, P.S.C. 8 July, 1769, R.A. vol.9.
 2. Rouse to Murshidabad Council of Revenue, 4 June, 1771, M.F.R. 10 June, 1771, vol.3.
 3. Rouse to Becher, 22 June, 1770, Letter Copy Book, p.23.

Resident at the Darbar, ordered a strict enquiry into the accounts of Bose, and he was found guilty of wrong-doing and improper collections. As a result a remission of Rs. 93,000 was allowed in the settlement of 1769.¹ "What a destructive system is this for the poor inhabitants!" wrote Becher, "On this destructive plan, and with a continued demand for more revenue have the collections been made ever since the English have been in possession of the Diwani."² Clive on the eve of his departure for England had advised his successor Harry Verelst, "not to be very desirous of increasing the revenues, especially where it can only be effected by oppressing the landholders and tenants."³ Francis Sykes, Resident at Murshidabad, had candidly recognised over-assessment in many districts, and in 1767 had struck off large sums to make the revenue settlement more just and equitable - attending to the rights of the government and the welfare of the subject.⁴ Yet, as has been seen, the pressure of public needs and private interests had been such that by 1769 the most experienced servants of the Company were complaining that English administration was

1. P.S.C. 8 July, 1769. R.A. vol.9.

2. Becher to Verelst, 24 May, 1769, P.S.C. 8 July, 1769, R.A. vol.9.

3. P.S.C. 1 January, 1767, R.A. vol.7.

4. Ibid., 9 July, 1767, R.A. vol.7.

ruining ~~to~~ Bengal. Becher in particular drew a dismal contrast with the past.

Under the nawabs, who had settled with the zamindars on moderate terms, the zamindars had been affluent, and from an interest in their estates had encouraged the ryots, waiting at need for their rents, and borrowing in order to pay their malguzari on time. In every zamindari there had been shroffs¹ who would lend to the zamindars, and ryots, at moderate rates. Bengal had thus flourished, even when exposed to annual Maratha raids. Now, after the experiment with the amils, most of the zamindars were ruined men.²

To meet this situation, Verelst considered two things were necessary: more accurate knowledge of the districts, and longer leases. He therefore encouraged Captain James Rennell to complete the survey of Bengal and he prepared to introduce settlements for an extended period, such as had been tried in Burdwan.³ There and in the other ceded districts and in the Calcutta lands there had been considerable prosperity and improvement. It was necessary to apply the same system to the Diwani lands. He also saw that the Resident at the Darbar, whose duty was to check

1. A banker.

2. P.S.C. 8 July, 1769. R.A. vol.9, and N.K. Sinha, op.cit., p.38.

3. D.N. Banerjee, op.cit., quoted: 'Plenty content, population, increase of revenue without increase of burden.' p.50.

abuses and oppression, could hardly single-handed restrain *the depredations of hungry collectors*. Inadequate local investigation meant that the Company could neither redress the ryots' grievances nor effect improvement.¹

In May 1769, Becher suggested that the Diwani lands should be farmed for a period of at least three years, the farmers providing security for the payment of their malguzari.² He pointed out in a later letter that such longer leases were vital: "In my idea, the only probable way to induce a man of the country employed in the collections, to study the welfare of the country, is to make it his interest to do so."³ Verelst agreed, and the plan of a triennial settlement was introduced in Purnia and Rajshahi. "These two districts", Guha points out, "were among the largest fiscal units the Company had undertaken to manage under the Diwani and represented each in its very different way, a most important type of rural economy prevailing in Bengal in the late 18th century."⁴ Becher thus proceeded to make a triennial settlement of Rajshahi with Rani Bhabani on the following terms:⁵

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1. H. Verelst, A View of the Rise, Progress etc. of the English Government in Bengal, p.14.
 2. P.S.C. 8 July, 1769, R.A. vol.9.
 3. Ibid., Becher to Verelst, 30 June 1769.
 4. R. Guha, A Rule of Property for Bengal, p.52.
 5. P.S.C. 8 July, 1769, R.A. vol.9.

For 1769-70 [1176 B.S.]	Rs. 26,01,000
For 1770-71 [1177 B.S.]	Rs. 26,76,000
For 1771-72 [1178 B.S.]	Rs. 27,51,000

The Rani also agreed to parcel out her lands among revenue farmers of her choice, while her son Ram Krishna, her diwan Dayaram Roy and Nandalal Roy became securities for the revenues.¹ She was warned that if she failed to fulfill her contract or if she oppressed her ryots, her rights as zamindar would be forfeited.² As a further precautionary step to ensure punctual payment of revenues the Naib Diwan Reza Khan appointed Dulal Roy as amil to support the farmers and receive regular payment from them. "By these means" Becher wrote, "we flatter ourselves this large District will recover its former flourishing state, so as at the end of the three years to admit of an increase."³ Becher hoped that if this experiment proved successful it would be extended to other Diwani districts as well.

Towards the end of the same year, 1769, Verelest also proceeded to appoint English supervisors to the districts, with the aim of acquiring more information, whilst also safeguarding the revenues. He hoped that the

1. M.C.R., 16 May, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3.
 2. P.S.C. 30 June, 1769, R.A. vol.9.
 3. Ibid., 8 July, 1769, R.A. vol.9.

supervisors would encourage the cultivation and reclamation of waste lands and would protect the husbandmen from all oppression and exploitation in the districts under their charge, creating a favourable atmosphere in which agriculture, commerce and trade would thrive and the people would be contented. In addition, the supervisorship would also serve as a 'nursery' for future administrators.¹ Accordingly, on 14 September, 1769, the Select Committee approved the plan of supervisorship and eight supervisors were appointed for the Diwani lands.² In his plan of Supervisorships Verelst was staunchly supported by Becher, who was directed to control and supervise their activities. The instructions that were laid down for the guidance of the supervisors were as follows:

They were to submit a summary history of the district under their charge; to submit a report on the economic condition of the district and prepare a correct hast-o-bud; to ascertain and report on cesses or arbitrary taxes; to report on conditions of trade and expose as far as possible the tricks of the gomasthas [agents]; to enforce

1. B.P.C., 16 December, 1769.

2. Supervisors were: Dacca - Mr. Kelsell; Rangpur - J. Grose; Denajpur - G. Vansittart; Purnia - G. Ducarel; Rajshahi - B. Rouse; Houghly - J. Graham; Birbhum and Pacheat - C. Stuart and W. Harwood; Nadia - J. Rider.

justice, extirpate corruption and abolish all illegal fines.¹ In fact, this was the first attempt of the Company to get first hand information about the social and economic conditions prevailing in rural Bengal.

Since the appointment of supervisors followed closely upon the change to the system of triennial farming. Becher, on the prompting of the Naib Diwan, advised Verelest not to send the Supervisors to their districts until February, 1770. The fear was that their appointment might hamper current collections.² In Rajshahi and Purnia no such delay was imposed, and accordingly Charles William Boughton Rouse took up his post as supervisor of the eastern division of Rajshahi. The western part of Rajshahi was kept under immediate supervision of the Resident along with the other Huzur Zilas.³ Rouse was ordered, however, not to interfere in the current year's collections.

Rouse took up his post at Nator, the headquarters of eastern Rajshahi on 29 December, 1769. On the following day he issued a policy statement to the public servants of the zamindari explaining his functions and the noble

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1. W.K. Firminger, The Fifth Report, vol.I, pp.clxxxii to clxxxvi.
 2. P.S.C. 25 September, 1769. R.A. vol.9.
 3. Chunakhali; Fattehsing, Lashkerpur and western part of Rajshahi. These divisions paid their revenues at Murshidabad,

intentions of government towards the zamindars, the farmers and ryots as a whole.¹ He assured them that the government was determined to abolish all sorts of oppression and injustice, and to promote commerce and manufacturers by establishing a mild and equitable administration. By June 1770, however, Rousé was complaining that he was being opposed by the amil, Dulal Roy, by the zamindar and by the Naib Diwan.² He complained in particular that Reza Khan was exerting his influence with the Rani to fabricate charges of interference in the collection of revenues against him.³ He alleged that the Naib had employed every species of bribery and intrigues to discredit the authority vested in the supervisor by the Council and to render his function ineffectual. He also complained that the Naib had confined Raja Ramkrishna in his house at Nishat Bag [within Murshidabad city] till he agreed to comply with his orders and thereby to effect the removal of the supervisor. The Nawab had adopted an identical step against the zamindars of Birbhum and Nadia.⁴ Unfortunately, shortly after Rousé had

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1. Rousé to Becher, 30 December, 1769; Letter Copy Book, p.1.
 2. Rousé to Becher, 22 June, 1770, ibid., pp.21-27.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

taken up his appointment as supervisor, he had become involved in a dispute with the Resident, Becher about the limits of his power over the zamindar and the amils.¹ In May, 1770 he was denouncing the zamindari servants for their false and deceptive accounts, and declaring that without full controlling power over these servants, amils and farmers he could not prevent abuses in the collections or protect the peasants from over-assessment and extortion.² He renewed this demand for power in August, declaring "Injunctions without contrroll I conceive to be incompatible; and admonition to the Natives of Bengal, and these employed in the revenue business I fear will avail little."³ Becher took little notice of the charges against the Naib Diwan - Reza Khan had been complaining for his part about the control of revenue administration by the supervisors. He took the demands for fuller powers as presumption in Rouse's, and instead of believing his accusations, on the contrary accepted the zamindar's allegations that Rouse was interfering in the current collections and ^{were} beating officials and that "the collections were stopped agreeable to [Rouse's]

1. Letter Copy Book, Preface, p.III.

2. Rouse to Becher; 10 May 1770, Letter Copy Book, pp.13-18.

3. Rouse to Becher, 1 August, 1770; ibid., pp.32-34.

orders."¹ The fact that in July 1770 the authority of the Resident in revenue matters was transferred to a Controlling Council of Revenue at Murshidabad, did not end the conflict of views. Becher became Chief of the Council and its meetings were attended by the Naib Diwan in an advisory capacity.²

In the meantime the first year of the triennial settlement had come to a close; the collections had failed to reach the target. The reason, however, lay not in the failings of officials, or mistakes in policy, but in natural calamity. Shortly after the introduction of the new experiment in the district famine had set in throughout Bengal. In March, 1770, the Supervisor informed the Resident of a severe drought and consequent distress of the people in several parganahs: "The inhabitants are in general so much reduced by the dearth of the season, that there are very few will be able to provide themselves with the necessary utensils without some assistance of loan from (...to assist the ryots of Bhaturia)"³. In May he wrote about the universal distress and wretchedness of the district due to excessive drought which had destroyed the crops of the greatest part of Bhaturia beyond the possibility of recovery and endangered

1. Letter Copy book, [no date], p.20.

2. M.C.R. 27 Sept. 1770, M.F.R. vol.I.

3. Rouse to Becher, 9 March, 1770, Letter Copy book, p.10.

the lives of people for want of drinkable water.¹ He added that there had been frequent desertion and mortality in many parganahs and that the farmers complained of considerable outstanding balance. To avoid further distress to the husbandmen at this crisis he suggested lenient treatment towards them.² The drought was followed by floods in August which destroyed the remaining crops and completed the ruin. He wrote: "The famine is now making deplorable havoc, and I am a daily witness to the most shocking scenes of human misery."³ The famine raged in all its severity throughout the greater part of 1770. As Muhammad Reza Khan observed, "hitherto grain was scarce but this year it cannot be found at all."⁴

Despite the alarming spread of famine conditions in Rajshahi, the final collection for 1769-70 at Rs.24,38,342⁵ did not fall far short of the original demand. Obviously the collection had been rigorously imposed throughout the year by the farmers and amils. Rouse had no power to control the oppressive activities, while Becher, the Resident, though outwardly sympathetic to the ryots and opposed to illegal

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1. Rouse to Becher, 10 May 1770; Letter Copy book, pp.13-18.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Rouse to Becher, 1 August 1770; Letter Copy book, pp.32-34.
 4. Quoted in N.K. Sinha, op.cit., p.49.
 5. B.M. Add.MSS. 29086, p.44.

exactions, was also anxious to realize the amount stipulated.

Thus the collection for the second year of the triennial settlement started with a gloomy background, and further arrears accumulated rapidly. By the end of September, 1770 the deficit against Rajshahi had risen to Rs.3,36,976.¹ The Supervisor reported on 18 October that the August harvest had been destroyed and that the lands were largely depopulated.² Despite his vigorous efforts to clear off the accumulated deficits he had signally failed to do so. The Murshidabad Council of Revenue decided, therefore, to invest Rouse with a controlling power over the collecting agents. If they had hoped that he would be able to use his new power to halt the decline in revenues they were bound to be disappointed.³ In November he had to report that the balance had increased further to some ten lakhs of rupees. Again the Council, disappointed at the staggering deficiency, ordered the Supervisor to be more active in realizing the arrears.⁴ Rouse replied on 5 December that he had already despatched four lakhs to the treasury and that he expected that the current arrears would be greatly reduced after the

1. M.C.R. 10 October, 1770, M.F.R. vol.I.

2. Rouse to Murshidabad Council of Revenue, 18 October, 1770, M.F.R. vol.I. 20 October, 1770.

3. M.C.R. 26 November, 1770, M.F.R. vol.I.

4. Ibid.

November harvest, still in progress in the district,¹ had been gathered in. Two weeks later however, he wrote more gloomily, "several parganahs", he reported, 'have been desolated to such a degree, as scarcely to pay one part in twenty of their revenue, and will be totally incapable of paying up their balances this year."² He commented particularly upon the plight of Bhaturia which was having to import food grains from the northern districts and the areas around Murshidabad. While at Murshidabad thirty seers of rice could be bought for a rupee, at Nator "situated at the heart of a rice country" the rupee bought only eighteen seers.³ The revenues from the high lands of the district would be realized, but he was not so confident about the low lands, which constituted one third of Bhaturia, because there floods had followed drought and damaged the crops.⁴ These November floods had not yet receded, and the cultivators in consequence, had not been able to prepare their fields for the Spring harvest.⁵ To these natural calamities he attributed primary responsibility for the heavy arrears. He pointed out, however, that the current year's collections had started

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1. Rouse to M.C.R. 5 Dec. 1770, M.F.R. vol.I, 10 Dec. 1770.
 2. Rouse to M.C.R. 18 Dec., 1770, M.F.R. vol.I, 31 Dec. 1770.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

with heavy deficits because the zamindar had utilized early instalments of revenue to make good the deficit of the previous year. This had happened before he had been given controlling powers and there was no way of recovering the sums thus misapplied.¹ Finally Rousé made his positive suggestions for remedying the position in Rajshahi. He told the Murshidabad Council that the renters and ryots were greatly impoverished by the drought and floods and that without aid the lands in many parts would not be cultivated and the arrears in consequence never recovered.² He therefore urged that tagavi loans should be advanced to them, to the extent of twenty to twenty-five thousand rupees, and that the revenue demand in the worst hit areas should be remitted for at least five months. "I have not a doubt", he declared, "but that the most salutary effects would be experienced, whereas the very small proportion of the balance which I should be able to recover by countenancing the severity of the mufassil officers, can not be placed in competition with the injuries the country will consequently suffer perhaps for years to come."³ While awaiting sanction for this relief, he added, he had taken steps to promote a

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1. Rousé to M.C.R., 18 November, 1770, M.F.R. vol.I, 31 Dec., 1770.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Rousé to M.C.R., 14 Dec., 1770, M.F.R. vol.I, 31 Dec. 1770.

free trade throughout the district and to punish the monopolist of grains who were aggravating the crises.¹

On 16 January 1771 Rousé reported again on the sorry state of Bhaturia, and informed the Council that he estimated that the final deficiency for 1770-71 would be about three lakhs of rupees.² He had now had over a year in Rajshahi and ventured upon some outright criticism of Company policy, deploring the fact that although Bhaturia was one of the richest and most fertile divisions of Bengal, the indiscriminate annual increases of taxes in the last few years had wrecked its economy and impoverished the people. The Council of Revenue overlooked his complaints and asked Rousé to elucidate further his plan for temporary abatements in the revenue demand. They also agreed to the granting of relief to the ryots, though they instructed Rousé in seeing that remissions were not misapplied, and that taqavi was so used as to enable the farmers of revenue under contract to pay off the loans with the revenues of the next year.³ They concluded by urging Rousé to collect as much of the balances as possible.

In April, 1771, however, the Revenue Council's more understanding attitude changed to anger when they found

1. Rousé to M.C.R. 14 Dec. 1770, M.F.R. vol.I, 31 Dec., 1770.
 2. Ibid., 16 January, 1771, M.F.R. vol.2; 21 January, 1771.
 3. M.C.R. 21 January, 1771, M.F.R. vol.2.

that the final receipts for 1770-71 from Rajshahi would be no more than Rs.21,46,247. They now attributed the deficit to the incompetence of the supervisor and rebuked him for his efforts to defend the revenue farmers with excuses about the famine.¹ Roush was surprised by this change of attitude. He pointed out that for months past he had been warning them of an impending loss due to the famine and floods.² He expressed surprise that the indulgence which had been granted in the most favourable years should be denied in a most calamitous one. The Council's response was to order that the revenues of eastern Rajshahi were to be collected from the farmers, and whatever losses had occurred from various causes must be borne by them and their securities.³

While Roush had been warning the Murshidabad Council of Revenue of the ruin caused by drought and flood, he had also been sounding a note of alarm about the multiplication of mathauts, arbitrary and often illegal additional imposts. Their growth had gathered momentum during the confused years of Diwani administration,⁴ and it is necessary at this point to consider the nature of this evil.

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1. Roush to M.C.R. 4 April 1771, M.F.R. vol.2; 11 April 1771.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Roush to M.C.R. 4 June 1771, M.F.R. vol.3. 10 June 1771.

James Grant traced the history of mathauts and abwabs back to the period of Murshid Quli Khan.¹ Under Murshid Quli Khan they included Khasnawisi; exacted from the zamindars at the time of the renewal of their leases by the accountants of the khalsa; the Nazarannah-mukarari, levied by Shuja ud-din Khan, from the zamindars as acknowledgement of improper remissions, indulgence, favour and protection, forbearance from hast-o-bud investigations and the privilege of being free of the direct supervision of amils; Mathaut Feel Khanah, or a charge for feeding the elephants maintained by the Nazim and Diwan, (Rs.67,585 from Rajshahi alone); Faujdari Abwab a limited permanent assessment to cover costs of maintaining law and order, and the Serf Mathaut, or charge of one and a half per cent on the asal jama, which provided for ^{four} component mathauts: Nazar Punyah, or gifts at the Punyah; Bha Khilat, a contribution to the cost of presentation robes of honour; Pushtabandi, a charge to cover the repair of embankments and Rusum Nezarat, or customary allowance to the Nazir and his mutasaddis. To these imposts, which all tended to become permanent additions, to the revenue demand, Ali Vardi Khan added Chauth Maratha, imposed to cover the costs of war against the Marathas, to

1. W.K. Firminger, The Fifth Report, vol.II, op.cit., pp.208-221; and p.314.

which Rajshahi contributed Rs.3,02,480; Ahuk or Kist Gaur, a charge to cover the costs of bringing bricks from the ruins of Gaur and lime from Sylhet to built the city of Murshidabad, most of which fell on Rajshahi; Dénajpur and Nadia; and Nazarana Mansurganj imposed to provide for the erection of an expensive palace for Siraj-ud-daula, in the suburbs of Murshidabad. Grant estimated that the total abwabs paid by the zamindar of Rajshahi came in 1757 to Rs.6,02,688.¹ The burden of any extra-demands fell ultimately upon the ryots, and the burden was often greater than that imposed by Government since the zamindars added something on their own account. Nevertheless, the general affluence of the zamindars when the Company assumed the Dewani would suggest that the burden of mathauts had been matched by the creation of new resources in the first half of the century.²

Mathauts were evil in their effect largely because the mode of imposition was wrong and because it encouraged the zamindars and amils to levy such cesses for themselves. Under the Company's Diwani rule such taxes had increased by manifold degrees. Shortly after his appointment as supervisor

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1. J. Grant, 'Analysis', p.314. Grant was perhaps inclined to make exaggerated estimate of the amount actually collected.
 2. N.K. Sinha, op.cit., p.23, & J. Shore's minute, 18 June 1789. Published in Firminger's Fifth Report, vol.II.

of Rajshahi Rouse¹ complained that the ryots had been subjected to various illegal taxes and fines. He found that the Qazis of the district not only enjoyed extensive judicial powers but that they levied many illegal fines upon the Muslim ryots of the Zamindari, fines which had almost doubled in the recent years,¹ so that the ryots had complained to him about the oppression of these magistrates. As their activities were highly detrimental to the Company's revenue the supervisor suggested that the Qazis should not in future be allowed to impose any tax beyond what was allowed in their sanad or charter.² Rouse also informed the Council that the Zamindar of Rajshahi was also adding to her allowance of Rs.2,50,000 fixed by the government, further sums raised by abwabs upon the various parganahs. However, without additional powers, he could not investigate and assess the exact amount thus secretly added.³

Further, on 10 May 1770 he informed the Resident that the distress of the peasants apart from that caused by the famine, was increased by the pernicious activities of the darogah's of the ganjes who, "under the name of a

1. Rouse¹ to Becher, 21 January 1770, Letter Copy Book, pp.3-5.

2. Ibid.

3. Rouse¹ to M.C.R., 16 January, 1771, M.F.R. vol.2. 21 January, 1771.

faujdari, erect a court of jurisdiction with power of fine, imprisonment and confiscation, and extend their authority by violence, even in districts, where a regular legal court is established by government."¹ In order to bring their charges to order he asked the Resident to furnish him with a list of chaukis and gumasthas stationed on his behalf in Rajshahi with their rates of duties upon each article of commerce on the basis of the Regulation of the Board at Calcutta.² To check the abuse of such chaukis, Government abolished the levy of all inland duties at all but six main custom houses in 1772.

When, after the famine the Council asked Rouse whether the arrears of 1770 could not be recovered by bringing more lands into cultivation and by better modes of collection he replied by stressing that unless the burden of mathauts were lifted little improvement could be expected. He remarked: "I am firmly of opinion", he said, "that the multiplication of mathauts, which has taken place in this district, since the Company's accession to the Dewany, has been attended with the most pernicious consequences to

1. Rouse to Becher, 10 May, 1770, Letter Copy Book, pp.13-18.
 2. Rouse to Resident, 21 January, 1770. Letter Copy Book, pp.3-5.

agriculture and the country in general; and that the continuance of such a system must have inevitably ended in its destruction. For I apprehend from the nature of these assessments that as they fall on the land only and not upon the articles of consumption, they do not therefore enhance the price of commodities, nor affect the price of labour, and manufactures, so as to preserve the necessary proportion between the charge of cultivation and the profit which the cultivator ultimately receives from the surplus he carries to market; but by resting with the husbandman only, tend continually to check his rising profit, therefore discourage ... industry and consequently population by lessening the exportation of grain must greatly injure the trade of the Province."¹ He pointed out that these taxes had always been arbitrarily imposed and oppressively collected, through the rapacity of amils and their agents and had accelerated the general decline in agriculture and manufactures. He recalled that in 1768 when the revenue of the Zamindari was realized through ziladars, the Company's demand from Bhaturia had been ten lakhs whereas the amils collected over seventeen lakhs.² Rouse went on to list several mathauts which had been collected from Bhaturia in that year.

1. Rouse to M.C.R. 4 June, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3, 10 June, 1771.
2. Ibid.

Revenue demand	Rs. 10,31,276 = 3=14=2.
<u>Mathauts levied</u>	
<u>Perkoy</u> 10 per cent [charges of <u>batta</u> for converting coins of different valuation into sicca rupees].	Rs. 74,475 =15= 2=0
<u>Nazar Company</u> [a contribution raised from the zamindars since the Company's accession to the Diwani].	Rs. 40,785 = 1=16=1
<u>Chuna Kharach</u>	Rs. 18,253 =15= 4=0
<u>Bha-khilat</u>	Rs. 18,702 =13= 4=1
<u>Pushtabandi</u>	Rs. 18,335 =10= 2=3
Old balances	Rs. 35,676 = 3= 2=1
Interest upon money borrowed from merchants	Rs. 9,187 = 9=13=2
<u>Purduckty</u> [Protection from outsiders]	Rs. 34,492 = 8= 7=3
<u>mufassil mathaut</u>	Rs. 1,25,436 =13= 4=2
<u>Sehbandi</u> [charges of amils and their servants]	Rs. 35,722 =12= 4=2
<u>Nicasi</u> [expenditure upon examination of accounts]	Rs. 9,063 =13=18=2
Total of <u>mathauts</u>	Rs. 4, 24,150 = 5=14=1
Total demand	Rs. 14,55,426 = 9= 8=3.

In addition to the above abwabs they had separately collected the following money:

Money borrowed	Rs.	23,128 = 8 = 8=0
<u>Rui Gutchani</u> [cotton sold by compulsion]	Rs.	26,294 =14=10=0
<u>Jaidad</u> [exactions from servants]	Rs.	9,959=15 = 0=0
Fines	Rs.	3,582 = 8 = 1=0
<u>Baladusty</u> [funds raised privately by various methods]	Rs.	47,410 = 6 = 3=0
		<hr/>
		Rs. 1,10,376 = 4=12=0

A further amount of Rs. 1,48,991 = 2=5=2 was added for loss of batta thus bringing the total collection in that year to Rs. 17,12,354 = 7=10=0.

In June Rouse cited further instances of mathauts levied upon Bhusna and Pukhuria, the remaining two divisions of Rajshahi under his supervision. In Bhusna and Pukhuria the government demand had been Rs.3,15,927 and Rs.366,475 respectively, but the collection had been of Rs.5,15,428 and Rs.4,20,437.¹ Rouse concluded by asking, "how far it may be the object of the Company to decline the profit of a revenue raised by such methods, in order to promote the ease of the

1. Rouse to M.C.R., 4 June, 1771, F.R. vol.3, 10 June, 1771.

ryots and thereby secure a future permanent revenue in the prosperity and happiness of the country", and by stating firmly his own view that "it is certainly to be wished that the settlement should be made upon more certain grounds than has hitherto been the practice."¹

It will be evident that by the spring of 1771 Boughton Rouse had become well aware of some of the real causes of the distress in Rajshahi and the decline in its revenues. He had made clear to the Council at Murshidabad that in his view errors of Company policy, the burden of mathauts and the disaster of the drought and floods of 1769-70 had made it impossible to maintain the revenue demand at the old level. The accusations of inefficiency flung at him by the Council were evidently unjust; the Committee of Circuit in 1772 found that in four villages near Nator the number of inhabitants had fallen from 1076 families in 1768-69 to 1033 in 1769-70 and ^{to} only 373 in 1770-71, a loss of two thirds in three years.² Why then did the Murshidabad Council continue to demand the revenues in full? How could Becher boast in December 1770 of how he had

1. Rouse to M.C.R. 4 June 1771, M.F.R. vol.3, 10 June, 1771.

2. Committee of Circuit [Krishnagar & Kasimbazar, 3 vols. in one] 25 August, 1772, p.177.

kept up the collections in the famine years: "had there been the least relaxation either on my part or on that of Muhammad Reza Khan the Company would have been much more considerable sufferers?"¹ The answer is to be found outside either Rajshahi or Murshidabad, in the war in the Deccan against Haider Ali from 1767 to 1769, which had to be paid for from the Bengal revenues, and in the undue expectations Clive raised in England, which led to a curtailment of remittances to Bengal and to the payment by the Company to the British government of £400,000 a year from 1767 onwards.² The behaviour of Becher may likewise be explained in terms of the struggle between Clive and his opponents for control of the Court of Directors, for Becher was Clive's associate and had to show that Clive's plans, when executed by him, paid handsomely. When the revenues fell in 1771, Becher fell too, for he was dismissed from the Council of Fort William.³

Despite the fears and warnings voiced by Rouse, the Murshidabad Council of Revenue set about forming a new settlement for Rajshahi on the lines of the last year of the

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1. Quoted in N.K. Sinha, ^{vol. II} Op.cit., p.55.
 2. Cambridge History of India, vol.V, p.184.
 3. A.T. Embree, Charles Grant and British Rule in India, pp.39-40.

expiring triennial settlement.¹ As early as 11 February they had prepared a plan to send the members of the Council into the districts on circuit, to make settlement on the spot and had ordered Rouse and the other supervisors to make an examination of the accounts of the farmers, their securities and their terms in preparation for farming the lands again, either by private agreement or by a well regulated auction, for a further three years.² On 5 May, Rouse submitted his suggestions for farming out the lands to responsible persons, but on condition that the rent of no farm should exceed Rs.50,000.³ To restore taluqs and parganahs ruined by the famine and floods he suggested that either the old renters should be settled with again, or the lands should be converted into khas and taken into direct management, or they should be given out on a new, easier valuation.⁴ To protect the new settlement he urged the Council to take immediate steps to repair the banks of the Padma, since otherwise Bhaturia would be seriously exposed to floods.⁵

1. Rouse to M.C.R., 4 April, 1771, M.F.R. vol.2, 11 April, 1771.

2. Ibid., 5 May, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3, 11 May, 1771.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

The Murshidabad Council showed themselves undecided as to whether contracts should continue with the existing farmers, who were greatly in arrears, or whether they should recover the arrears from the zamindar who had stood security,¹ and make new contracts. While they were still undecided the Controlling Committee of Revenue at Calcutta, constituted on 1 April 1771, had on 7 May written to Murshidabad to say that "the system of farming the lands upon short leases is the most eligible"... but ..."as the true state and real value of the land have not yet been investigated and properly ascertained it is the opinion of the Board that until this knowledge is attained the farming might not take place."² They therefore suggested that any new settlement should be for one year only, while further information was gathered preparatory to a more permanent arrangement.

As the Calcutta Committee had allowed farming settlements to proceed, where investigations had already begun, on 11 May the Murshidabad Council of Revenue instructed Rouse to go ahead with letting out the Rajshahi lands in farm to the zamindar and others, the size of individual farms to be governed by the financial sufficiency

1. Rouse to M.C.R. 5 May, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3, 11 May, 1771.
 2. M. Huq, op.cit., pp.136-37.

of the farmers.¹ Parganahs which were in decay should be leased in farm at moderate but increasing terms so as to encourage the tenants to cultivate as much land as possible.² By 26 May the Supervisor was able to report that he had already advertised for farming all the lands of Rajshahi under his supervision. However, since he feared that Rani Bhabani's influence might deter people from giving in proposals at Nator he asked the Council to issue similar advertisements at Murshidabad.³ He reported that the Rani herself had offered no proposal of substance for making good her arrears, and had only given vague assurances that the balance would be recovered from future collections.⁴ Under such circumstances he believed that if responsible outside farmers could be procured, they would be better security than the zamindar's servants, who were notorious for their embezzlement of the revenues. If farmers could not be found he was ready himself to take over the collections khas, if the Council/^{so}approved.⁵

1. M.C.R. 11 May, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3.

2. Ibid.

3. Rouse to M.C.R., 26 May, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3, 30 May, 1771.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

The Council refused to give any outright approval to the Supervisor's plans until they had discussed their merits with the Naib Diwan,¹ but on 17 June Rouse nevertheless proceeded to direct management of the revenues and submitted his assessment for the year 1771-72. He had based this upon materials he had been collecting since April.² He repeated his warnings about the havoc the famine had caused, and showed himself pessimistic about the possibility of recovering last year's arrears as many lands would remain uncultivated.³ He also renewed his complaint about the dangerous effect of the multiplication of mathauts upon the general economy of the district. He nevertheless assured the Council that he would spare no efforts to promote cultivation by giving every possible aid and encouragement, provided weather conditions were favourable.⁴ On 20 June he had to inform the Council that he had still not received any new proposals for farming Bhaturia, which had suffered severely from the floods of 1770, but he hoped that some increase of revenue might be secured from the unaffected high lands of Bhusna and Pukhuria.⁵

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1. Rouse to M.C.R. 26 May, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3, 30 May, 1771.
 2. M.C.R. 13 June, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3.
 3. Rouse to M.C.R. 17 June, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3, 20 June, 1771.
 4. Rouse to M.C.R. 20 June 1771, M.F.R. vol.3, 15 July, 1771.
 5. Ibid.

Reza Khan, the Naib Diwan had from the first shown himself opposed to the plan of giving English Supervisors controlling powers over revenue administration in the districts. In April he had opined that "the salutary purposes would never be effected, nor will cultivation or agriculture be promoted till the affairs of the country are committed to the management of the natives...".¹ Now, when Rouse voiced his doubts about the outcome of the 1771-72 settlement, made more uncertain by the lateness of the rains for the Aus crop in July, the Naib Diwan renewed his criticism. Rouse had been vested with power to conclude the settlement of Rajshahi, he said, but he himself had been pessimistic about its success from the beginning. As it was ^{he} apprehended that the government would suffer greatly in the long run.² Meantime, in view of the transfer of collections into the Supervisor's control he asked that Rani Bhabani be compensated with an allowance of Rs.2,50,000 per annum. The Council felt obliged to agree.³

Despite the Naib Diwan's gloomy prophecies, on 2 September, 1771, the Murshidabad Council finally approved

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1. Quoted in M. Huq, op.cit., p.136.
 2. M.C.R. 8 August, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3.
 3. Ibid.

the farming system Rouse had proposed. They believed that it would relieve the Company of all risks of loss by unfavourable seasons,¹ and that as the monsoon had improved there would be no dearth of persons who would be willing to take farms on better terms than hitherto for the remainder of the year.² The collections had been making steady progress under Rouse, so that even if suitable farmers with substantial security were not available, collection could continue under his management. To assist him in Bhusna, much mis-^{(which had suffered from} management in 1770-71, Francis Gladwin was appointed as his assistant.

On 13 August Rouse had suggested that the Rani's Bazi Zamin or nankar lands should be put up to auction, to discover their true value and to unearth the frauds and collusion of the zamindari servants. This, too, the Council now agreed to, asking Rouse to take effective steps to prevent the Rani influencing people against bidding for the lands.³ If she offered better terms than the Council would not, of course, object to her becoming the farmer.⁴ Rouse hoped to secure an additional Rs.56,000 by auctioning the

1. M.C.R. 2 Sept., 1771, M.F.R. vol.3.

2. Ibid.

3. Rouse to M.C.R. 13 August, 1771, M.F.R. vol.3; 20 August, 1771.

4. Rouse to M.C.R., 16 Sept. 1771, M.F.R. vol.4, 30 Sept. 1771.

Bazi Zamin, but on 16 September, he had to admit that despite wide publicity and his personal efforts he had been unable to secure farmers for the Rani's lands. This was not because the lands had been overrated by him, but because of their long attachment to the zamindar, her prestige and force of tradition.¹ The supervisor's proposal had indeed been a social affront to the zamindar, whose son, Ramkrishna when told of the Council's decision had exclaimed that "it would be less disgraceful to relinquish their lands than to farm them at a public sale." Disgrace was avoided, and the Company satisfied, however, by the Rani offering to farm the lands at an increase of Rs.30,000.²

Meanwhile, Rouse had continued his search for responsible farmers for the district, for direct management proved too troublesome at this early stage. On 10 October, 1771 he was able to inform the Murshidabad Council of the final details of the settlement for the year.³ He had discharged many farmers - such as those of Islampur, Dooldy, Amirabad and Qasimnagar because of their oppressive and extortionate demands on the ryots, and because they had

1. Rouse to M.C.R.: 16 Sept., 1771, M.F.R. vol.4. 30 Sept., 1771.

2. M.C.R. 25 November, 1771, M.F.R. vol.4.

3. Rouse to M.C.R. 10 October, 1771, M.F.R. vol.4, 24 October, 1771.

failed to produce reliable security for the current year.¹ He held that the decline in these parganahs, once amongst the most flourishing and profitable in the district, had primarily been due to their rapacity. The government might suffer a loss of Rs.30,000 by their dismissal, but, he argued, "it is better to admit this loss at first than to suffer it to increase by the scandalous oppression and mismanagement of these men."² Rousé no less vigorously criticised the triennial settlement's working. He placed the blame for the present ruined state of Rajshahi upon the impolicy of the government which had collected revenues for the last three crises years on the hast-o-bud of 1766-67 ✓ formed when the zamindari was in a flourishing condition.³ He was particularly critical of the system of making those ryots who survived the famine pay revenues upon all the lands which had been assessed at the settlement, though they had fallen waste during the famine and floods, ^{under} a system called Najai.⁴ This had been a great injustice and

1. Rousé to M.C.R. 10 October, 1771, M.F.R. vol.4, 24 October, 1771.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. H.H. Wilson; "a tax formerly assessed in Bengal upon the cultivators present, to make up for any deficiency arising from the death or disappearance of their neighbours." Glossary of Judicial & Revenue Terms, p.363.

discouragement to the ryots, and in consequence the quantity of waste had increased as ryots had deserted to escape the unequal burden of taxation. In his settlement he had tried to obviate these defects and had granted abatements where the situation so demanded. By these measures, and by encouraging production of commercial crops such as mulberry trees which gave a better return,¹ he hoped to restore agriculture, give relief to the ryots, and avoid any future decrease of revenue such as had occurred during the last two years.²

Rousé's settlement was approved at Murshidabad, and he made great and conscientious efforts to safeguard the government revenues. Yet at the close of the revenue year in 1772 the district was Rs.1,58,161 in default.³ The Murshidabad Council expressed its dissatisfaction and called for an explanation of so large a balance.⁴ Rousé in his reply, summed up the difficulties from which Rajshahi had suffered in the last few years. He pointed again to the dire

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1. The mulberry ensured supplies of raw silk to the Company's factories in Boalia, Kumar Khali, Malda and Qasimbazar.
 2. Rousé to M.C.R. 10 October, 1771, M.F.R. vol.4, 24 October, 1771.
 3. B.M. Add.MSS 29086, p.44.
 4. M.C.R. 8 June, 1772, M.F.R. vol.71.

effect on revenues of the famine which had left vast areas depopulated and uncultivated. He reminded the Council of the further distress caused by inundations in August 1771: "had not the province of Bhaturia this year suffered so great a detriment by inundation", he declared, "his efforts would have been more successful in preventing any considerable balance."¹ Finally he referred to the extraordinary abundant crops in other parts of the district which had brought prices tumbling down. The cultivators, who had purchased seed at abnormally high prices, now found themselves with a most abundant early rice crop. Because so many had died, demand had been considerably reduced, and prices fell. As a consequence the ryots were unable to sell their crops to pay their rents. In many parganahs the ryots had even offered to relinquish their lands, covered as they were with flourishing crops.² It was thus with another deficit, and the extraordinary paradox of some areas unable to pay because their crops had been destroyed by flood and others because crops were too abundant/^{that} the ill-starred experiment of the triennial settlement ended in Rajshahi.

1. Rouse to M.C.R., 20 April, 1772, M.F.R. vol.6, 23 April, 1772.

2. Ibid.

The triennial settlement had been inaugurated by Becher in collaboration with Verelst to get rid of the shortcomings of the previous annual settlements. The aim was sound, but the coming of famine made all previous expectations of revenue utterly inaccurate, laid waste much of the countryside and brought ruin to the ryots. The unjust system of Najai by which those present paid for those were absent by death or desertion, led to further depopulation. Considerable numbers of cultivators were driven to join the marauding bands of fakirs and sannyasis as Rouse reported in 1771: "Numbers of ryots, who have hitherto borne the first of characters among their neighbours, pursue this last resource to procure themselves a subsistence."¹ Yet, despite the social and economic breakdown, the revenues were collected at a very high pitch, so preventing any rapid recovery of the distressed districts. In Rajshahi the collection figures were as follows:²

1768-69	Rs. 26,94,602
1769-70	Rs. 24,38,342
1770-71	Rs. 21,46,247
1771-72	Rs. 26,12,391

1. Rouse to M.C.R. 9 April, 1771, M.F.R. vol.2. 15 April, 1771.
 2. B.M. Add. MSS 29086, p.44.

Any good intentions with which the settlement had been inaugurated had clearly been lost sight of by its close.

The other experiment of these years, that of sending English supervisors into the districts may also be thought to have failed. Becher had denounced the evasion/^{of}responsibility by which the Company as Diwan had worked through Muhammad Reza Khan, and through various Indian agents, zamindars, amils and revenue farmers. He had argued for a better revenue administration based upon knowledge, and had secured the appointment of supervisors who should check abuse and collect information. Too much was asked of them: "Having been ordered to perform far more than they could possibly execute, they finished by performing much less than they might have done."¹ Yet Rouse had not/^{so}entirely failed in Rajshahi. He had exposed the iniquities of the amils' over-collections, he had protested against the growth of mathauts, he had pressed for abatements after the famine, for the grant of tagavi loans and for acceptance of responsibility for the repair of the vital flood embankments.² He pressed for long term instead of annual leases, and he pressed for moderate assessments, and did not hesitate to

1. N.L. Chatterjee, Verelst Rule in India, p.258.

2. M.C.R. 9 Dec., 1771, M.F.R. vol.4.

attack as impolitic the Company's pressure for increased revenues. Rouse had begun to acquire in the field a real understanding of Rajshahi such as James Grant as Keeper of Records never did acquire.

In April 1772, however, Warren Hastings took office as Governor of Bengal, and a few days later a letter from the Court of Directors arrived ordering him to "stand forth as Diwan".¹ Rajshahi was about to come under the influence of a new man and of new measures.

1. M. Huq, op.cit., p.144.

CHAPTER III

THE FARMING SYSTEM. (1772-1777)

In 1772, the Court of Directors decided to stand forth as Diwan, and through the agency of the Company's servants, to take upon themselves the entire care and management of the revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.¹ This decision of the Company did not come unexpectedly. The establishment of Supervisors in the district and Controlling Council of Revenue at Murshidabad and Patna had prepared the ground. Economic and administrative considerations largely expedited it. The Company required large sums of money for its administrative and military needs in the country, as well as for its investment. But under the chaotic Diwani administration the economic condition of the country had greatly deteriorated and the ryots had been subjected to a multiplicity of taxes and various other financial oppressions.² Moreover, the success of direct revenue administration under the Company's own servants in the ceded districts had encouraged the Home Authorities to think that a similar success could be attained in the Diwani lands as well.³ The Court of Directors further suspected that "the diminution

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1. Dispatches to Bengal, 28 August, 1771, CR.O. vol.6, pp.103-4.
 2. General Letters Received, from Fort William. 3 Nov., 1772.
 3. P.S.C., 8 July, 1769. R.A. vol.9.

of the Diwani revenues must have been owing to the misconduct or malversation of those who had the superintendency of the collections".¹ They had also received information that such persons as were connected with the collection of revenue had been guilty of misuse of power and oppression during the famine, which the Court "determined never to permit, whilst it is in our power to prevent it, nor to spare the offenders whenever we may be able to detect them."² They therefore appointed Warren Hastings as governor to inaugurate the new policy of direct management of the Diwani. He was directed to enquire into and punish abuses in the famine years, to abolish the post of Naib Diwans, and to take such measures as would "ensure to the Company every possible advantage, and free the ryots from oppressions of zamindars and petty tyrants."³

Hastings proceeded on 11 May, 1772 to dismiss the two Naib Diwans, Muhammad Reza Khan at Murshidabad and Shitab Roy at Patna. Their dismissal did not, however, create an administrative vacuum, for ever since the establishment of the Controlling Councils of Revenue at Murshidabad and Patna in September, 1770, their position had become an

1. Dispatches to Bengal, 28 August, 1771, vol.6.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

anachronism and they had been reduced to being mere consultants to the Councils. Real responsibility for revenue administration rested with the Councils in collaboration with the Supervisors already posted in the districts.¹

His next step was to dissolve the Controlling Councils of Revenue at Murshidabad and Patna, together with the Controlling Committee of Revenue at Calcutta, replacing them with a newly constituted Board of Revenue, functioning at Calcutta.² Hastings, who was initially prejudiced against them, had been tempted to recall the Supervisors, but on closer acquaintance decided to retain them in the Districts under the new designation of Collectors. To check the corrupt practices of their banians, an Indian Diwan was attached to each Collectorate, who was to maintain an independent account of all receipts and disbursements.³ As Hastings had also directed the transfer of the Khalsa or Exchequer from Murshidabad to Calcutta,⁴ his measures effected a centralization of all revenue activities under the direct control of the Governor and Council acting as the Board of Revenue, whose agents were the Collectors in the Districts.

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1. C.C. at Krishnagar & Kasimbazar, 11 July, 1772, p.44 and M.F.R. vol.7, 28 May, 1772.
 2. The Board of Revenue consisted of W. Hastings; W.Aldersey; R. Barwell & J. Harris.
 3. P.C.R. 14 May, 1772, R.67, vol.54.
 4. C.C. 28 July, 1772, p.85.

Having been given a free hand in revenue matters by the Court of Directors, after his assumption of the governorship Hastings immediately proceeded with different revenue experiments in tax gathering. The system of revenue settlement which he first introduced came to be known as the Quinquennial Settlement. On 14 May, 1772, in conjunction with the Controlling Committee of Revenue, he decided to launch a new revenue settlement based on "long leases for five years".¹ The Committee argued that "farming the lands upon long leases is a measure in which not only the prosperity of the country and interest of government will be found materially to consist but also inconformity to the orders of the Court of Directors."² They realized that a short lease for a year or so was attended with numerous disadvantages. It led unavoidably to oppression, for what was left uncollected from the ryots at the end of the year was lost to the farmer. The farmer would therefore be tempted to exceed the bounds of right and augment his income by irregular exactions.³ The Committee hoped that under long leases these defects would be avoided. Furthermore, long leases would help to stabilise the rural economy, assist it to recover from the dreadful

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1. P.C.R. 14 May, 1772, R.67, vol.54 & M.F.R. 28 May, 1772, vol.7.
 2. Dispatches to Bengal, 30 June, 1769, para. 21.
 3. P.C.R. 14 May, 1772. R.67, vol.54.

effects of the famine, and give sufficient time to both farmers and ryots to recoup their losses and thus help to build up the economic foundation of the Province. The idea of leases for a term of years was not new in Rajshahi, for Richard Becher, as Resident at Murshidabad had introduced a triennial settlement there, as has been stated, as well as in Nadia and Birbhum.¹ In March 1771, before that settlement had expired, Boughton Rouse had written to Murshidabad Council pleading for an extension in view of the famine and the need for stability. His views had been shared by the Council.² This experience may well have influenced Hastings in adopting the Quinquennial Settlement.

On 14 May, 1772, the President and Committee at Calcutta issued regulations by which a Committee of Circuit was set up, consisting of Hastings and four other members of his Council,³ which was to take over the work of the dismissed Naib Diwans and go on circuit of the districts to form a five year revenue settlement with the zamindars and farmers on the spot.⁴ The Committee first visited Krishnagar in

1. P.S.C. 8 July, 1769, R.A. vol.9.

2. M.C.R. 11 March, 1771. M.F.R. vol.3.

3. E.C.R. 14 May, 1772, R. 67. vol.54.

4. "A part of the administration itself being on the spot will run less hazard of being deceived in their intelligence or disappointed in their investigations, they will be better able to hear and redress any grievances which the inhabitants may prefer to them, and to form such particular Regulations as may be necessary for the exigencies of each District." Preface to the Committee of Circuit Krishnagar & Kasimbazar, p.ii.

June to make a settlement of Nadia, and that done, moved on to deal with the Western division of Rajshahi, along with the adjacent districts of Murshidabad called the Huzur Zilas.

When the Committee of Circuit arrived in mid July, Samuel Middleton, the Resident at Murshidabad and Collector of the Rajshahi division since 1771, submitted a report on the condition of the Zamindari. He pointed out that the division had greatly suffered during the 1770 famine by the death and desertion of the ryots. He acknowledged also that the government had been too rigid in its contract with the farmers, so that the latter, in order to make up their losses due to the failure of cultivation, had imposed many illegal cesses on the surviving population.¹ The Zamindari had thus been deprived of the aid and indulgence which it had badly needed for its recovery. He added that the evils resulting from the famine, "instead of being alleviated by time, continued yearly to operate, and its resources being now greatly exhausted and diminished its demands some temporary remission in the exactions of government."² But, he explained, as the relevant papers of the Eastern division of the Zamindari, which was the worst affected part of the District, had not yet been received, he was not able to suggest the precise

1. C.C., 16 July, 1772, p.49.

2. Ibid., p.50.

amount which should be remitted from the current settlement of the entire Zamindari so as to make it just and equitable.¹ In order to form a rough estimate for the new settlement, Middleton therefore suggested that the Zamindari should be advertised on the basis of a five year farm. The proposals of would-be farmers and the papers already procured would then enable the Committee to determine on a settlement adequate to the value of the district.² Accordingly on 16 July 1772, the Committee advertised the farming of the western division of Rajshahi. The Zamindari was divided into 14 lots and the value of each division was notified in the Khalsa, the Committee announcing that it would accept sealed proposals for each of these. Since the regulation of May, 1772 had abolished taxes on marriage, zamindari chavkis and other illegal cesses, the bidders were strictly ordered to abide by these limitations. They were to receive no money for saranjami except 5 per cent ijaradari. The government also reserved the right to inspect the farmers qabuliyats which were to be kept open for inspection at the Khalsa.³ Bidders were given one week to send in their proposals. Later on the time for submitting the proposals was extended to 3 August, and the Zamindar offered her proposals. With

1. C.C. 16 July, 1772. p.50.
 2. Ibid., p.50.
 3. Ibid., p.51.

them she sent a petition in which she held the government responsible for the ruin of the zamindari by wadahdars who by their irregular and oppressive exactions had caused the ryots to desert their lands, as a result of which the government revenues had fallen considerably in arrears. The Rani herself warned the authorities that "the farming out the District, to other people, will increase their present calamities and impoverished state, the realization of the revenue will hereafter be an impossibility, and the complaints of the ryots will daily be more ^{and more}"¹ The Rani requested the committee to settle the entire Zamindari with her on "one collective and uniform plan", so that by protecting the ryots from exactions and encouraging them to cultivation, she could save the Zamindari from ruin.² She also assured the government that she would pay its revenue punctually. The Zamindar after making necessary deductions for the taxes abolished by the government made the following proposals for the Western division.³

For 1772-73 - 1179 B.S.	Rs. 9,41,399 = 8=4=0
1773-74 - 1180 B.S.	Rs. 9,91,399 = 8=4=0 i.e. an increase of 50,000 rupees.
1774-75 - 1181 B.S.	Rs. 10,66,399 = 8=4=0 i.e. an addition of 75,000 rupees.

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1. C.C., 28 July, 1772, p.88.
 2. Ibid.
 3. C.C. 3 August, 1772, p.92.

For 1775-76 - 1182 B.S.	Rs.11,41,399 = 8=4=0 i.e. an addition of 75,000 rupees.
1776-77 - 1183 B.S.	Rs.11,41,399 = 8=4=0
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Total for five years	Rs.52,81,997 = 9=0=0
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Besides Rani Bhabani the following people offered to become farmers. After deducting 5 per cent ijaradari instead of saranjami the respective farmers offered the following sums in five years.¹

Gobind Chund, six and three Zamindars....	Rs. 47,84,910
Hararam and Nepal Chund.....	Rs. 46,85[...]
Ramkant.....	Rs. 46,14,283
Sundries.....	Rs. 50,30,972

On examining the proposals, the Committee found that the Rani had offered two and a half lakhs more than the next highest bidder.² They noted that she had agreed to divide her zamindari into fourteen lots, and commented that her long held "responsibility and fair character" convinced them that there would be little risk of any deficiency in the revenues or oppression of the ryots.³ Since they believed

1. C.C., 3 August, 1772, p.91.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid., p.93.

that a settlement with such hereditary collectors of the revenue would best serve the interests of the Company and the welfare of the ryots, the Rani's bid was accepted.¹ It is interesting to note that at the outset, Hastings showed none of the opposition to a settlement with such hereditary zamindars as those of Rajshahi and Burdwan which he was later to show. His subsequent objection to them must be attributed to their failure to satisfy the Company's increasing demands.

After the settlement of Rajshahi had been concluded, the Committee of Circuit and the Rani executed and exchanged their deeds of agreement. The committee then fixed the kistbandi or instalments of the Zamindar's payment according to the produce and period of the harvests.² The under-farmers also made agreements with the Zamindar, containing the same terms and conditions, and entered the rent-roll of their respective farms on the forms supplied by the Committee.³ Finally, it was agreed that the Zamindar would be collateral security for the punctual payment of government revenues.

1. Sixth Report from the Committee of Secrecy on the Affairs of the East India Company, 26 April, 1775, p.303.

2. Ibid., p.303.

3. The highlights of the farmers' conditions were as follows: that the farms should not normally exceed one lakh of rupees. That the farmers should not be interfered with except for the maintenance of peace and order. That the farmers under no circumstances might demand more from the ryots than was stipulated in their patta; no abwabs should be exacted by them in any form. The repeated violation of these clauses would annul their farm. Regulations of the Hon'ble President & Council, 26 May, 1772. Fort William, &M.F.R. 28 May, 1772, vol.7.

On 29 August, 1772, the Committee took up the settlement of the Eastern division of Rajshahi. The Rani offered to pay in five years Rs. 89,55,451, i.e. an average of 17,91,090 rupees for each year.¹ As there was no alternative bid for that division, the Committee had to accept the Zamindar's proposal. The Rani thus succeeded in outbidding all her competitors. Next the committee agreed to pay to Rani Bhabani, under the denomination of malikana, an annual allowance of Rs. 2,50,000.² This amount was payable directly to the Zamindar. After thus concluding the settlement of Rajshahi, Hastings wrote to the Court of Directors: "We doubt not but that we shall realize the whole of the revenue from this extensive and important district, which will receive an additional advantage, besides a reduction of the

1. C.C., 29 August, 1772, p.180. The proposal was as follows:

<u>Hastabud</u> collection of 1178 excluding <u>saranjami</u>	Rs. 18,58,807 = 2=14=2.
Deduct <u>mathant</u>	Rs. 87,716 =13= 9=2
	<hr/>
	Rs. 17,71,090 = 5= 5=0
Add <u>Ezafa</u>	Rs. 2,00,000 = 0 = 0
	<hr/>
	Rs. 19,71,090 = 5= 5=0
Deduct <u>rusud</u>	Rs. 3,00,000 = 0 = 0
	<hr/>
<u>Jama</u> 1179	Rs. 16,71,090 = 5= 5= 0
" 1180	Rs. 17,21,090 = 5= 5= 0
" 1181	Rs. 17,71,090 = 5= 5= 0
" 1182	Rs. 18,21,090 = 5= 5= 0
" 1183	Rs. 19,71,090 = 5= 5= 0
	<hr/>
Total of the five years	Rs. 89,55,451 =10= 5

2. Sixth Report, p.303.

collections, in being thus united under their hereditary and ancient proprietor."¹

For the better management of the revenue collection and of their silk investment, the Council finally resolved to unify the whole of the Rajshahi Zamindari into one collectorship. Samuel Middleton was thus simultaneously put in charge of the Residency at the Nawab's Darbar and of the Rajshahi Collectorate.² John Shore and Nathaniel Middleton³ were appointed to assist him, together with a host of country officials headed by Raja Dulal Roy as Diwan. Exclusive of Samuel Middleton who received his allowance as Resident, the total Company establishment in Rajshahi was paid Rs.3,664 per month.⁴ In April, 1773, the court wrote to Hastings, about the work of the Committee of Circuit, "Your attention to the settlement of the Revenues has our entire approbation, and it is with the utmost satisfaction we observe that the farming system will be generally adopted."⁵ But this

1. Sixth Report, p.303.

2. C.C. 3 Sept. 1772, p.198.

3. Nathaniel Middleton, who owed his appointment to the influence of his brother Samuel, was later on in 1773 appointed Hastings' representative with Shuja-ud-daula, Wazir of Oudh. P.J. Marshall, in The Impeachment of Warren Hastings, p.111, comments of Nathaniel, "It is difficult to see either what talents he possessed which fitted him for a post of such importance, or why he kept Hastings's confidence for so long."

4. C.C., 9 Sept. 1772, pp.215-16.

5. Quoted in Ramsbotham's Studies in the Land Revenue History of Bengal, 1769-1787, p.26.

optimism was not equally shared by all the collectors in the mufassil. Edward Baber, then Resident at Midnapur had objected to a five year settlement on the ground of ignorance of the real facts, such as the actual payments made by the ryots and the scanty basis for any settlement.¹ Charles Bentley, the collector of Chittagong, showed little enthusiasm for the Committee's settlement. He was sceptical whether the auction system would reveal the resources of Chittagong or increase the revenue.² In actual practice Hastings' high hopes soon received a setback and by March 1775, he himself admitted that the revenue demanded from the farmers was too high.

Hardly one year of the operation of the farming settlement had expired when disturbing reports began to pour into the Presidency regarding the heavy arrears of revenue. In Rajshahi by the end of the first year of the current system, that is by April, 1773 the revenue had suffered a deficit of Rs. 1,82,583.³ Against these large arrears the Zamindar set a claim of Rs. 2,39,911 on various heads. After a thorough perusal of the different claims, the Council agreed to some deductions which appeared to them genuine,

1. Ramsbotham, op.cit., p.26.

2. See A.M. Serajuddin, op.cit., pp.97-103.

3. B.M. Add. MSS No. 29086, p.44; & M.F.R. vol.15. Appendix.

but as the rest seemed to them either exaggerated or fictitious, these were rejected.¹ In the second year the situation instead of improving turned even worse. By the end of November, after seven months of the revenue year had expired, only some Rs. 4,56,053 of the total demand of Rs.26,74,759 had been collected. To the Council, on 29 October, 1773 the Collector Middleton gave the disturbing news that in spite of his utmost efforts to realize the revenues of the district up to the current kist he had failed miserably. His repeated warnings to the Zamindar and her servants that government would show no mercy to insolvent zamindars, had produced no result.² The Rani only promised that she would be more punctual in fulfilling her contract as well as liquidating her balances incurred. In view of the Zamindar's constant failures, Middleton declared himself very sceptical that the Rani would fulfill her engagements.³ As for the Council of Revenue, when they heard of these staggering arrears, they expressed their exceeding displeasure with the Rani and ordered the Collector to inform her that "unless she pays up full the/balance due, together with the growing kists, she shall be dispossessed of the Zamindary."⁴ The Council also empowered

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1. B.R.C., 13 July, 1773, R.49, vol.40. The Zamindar had asked for deductions on account of the following items: sair chalanta, expenses for the deputation of amins, poolbandi, qanungo; seabandi, daria shikasti, Rusud muzkurian and depredations by Sannyassis.
 2. B.R.C., 2 November, 1773, R.49, vol.42.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

Middleton to put under arrest the Zamindar's diwan and such other officers of collection as he considered to be responsible for neglect or embezzlement of the revenues.¹

Meanwhile, on the orders of the Court of Directors, changes had been taking place in the general revenue administration of the country. The collectors were recalled from the districts, and the three provinces, divided into six grand divisions, were entrusted to six provincial councils, to which most of the collectors were recalled.² To take over the work in the interior of the districts Indian naibs were appointed by the Provincial Councils. Samuel Middleton, the Resident at Murshidabad who had been Collector of Rajshahi, now became the chief of the Murshidabad Provincial Council. Ramsbotham/^{has} severely criticised this change. According to him "the main effect was to weaken considerably the control, feeble as it already was, of the European officer over the collections. The change was entirely for the bad: it checked a growing public spirit among the younger officers of the Company: it definitely deprived the Company of that increasing knowledge of the state of the revenue and the methods of collecting it."³ For this retrogressive step he blamed the

1. B.R.C., 2 November, 1773, R.49, vol.42.

2. Home Misc., 7 April, 1773, vol.351. f.15. The Divisions were Calcutta, Murshidabad, Dacca, Burdwan, Dinajpur and Patna.

3. R.B. Ramsbotham, op.cit., pp.37-38. Both Rousé and Shore at Rajshahi, had shown themselves to be conscious of their duty to the District.

Directors.

But the collections of revenue under the new arrangement did not improve materially. Towards the close of 1773, the Chief of the Provincial Council informed the members of his Council of the steps he had taken to compel the Rani to fulfill her contract for the current year and also to liquidate the old arrears.¹ Keeping in view the forthcoming heavy instalments on account of the November and December harvest, the chief resolved to take the collections of revenues out of the Zamindar's control. Furthermore, in order to ascertain the actual state of the collections, he next asked for the mufassil papers and accounts and suspended all collections by the Zamindar's servants.² To smooth the business of collection and to curb the undue influence of the Zamindar on the under-farmers, he asked them to pay their revenues direct to Motijal in Murshidabad, instead of to the Zamindar's kachari at Barnagar.³ The Council of Revenue fully endorsed these steps, and further urged the Provincial Council to be on guard that no payments were secretly made to the Rani and thus misappropriated by her. They also stopped payment of the Zamindar's malikana allowance to make good her deficiencies.

1. B.R.C., 16 November, 1773, R.49, vol.42.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Realizing the grave danger ahead, the Rani summoned all her energy and resources in an attempt to fulfil her agreements. Of the current arrears of Rs. 2,04,007¹, the Zamindar agreed to pay in as follows:¹

By the end of November	Rs. 2,20,000,
" December	Rs. 6,40,000,
" January	Rs. 6,00,000,
" February	Rs. 3,25,000,
" March-April	Rs. 25,507 ¹
	<hr/>
	Rs. 2,04,007 ¹
	<hr/>

The instalments had been adjusted to the main harvest season so as to make their payment easy, but even so the Provincial Council thought it necessary to appoint Dulal Roy as sazawal to safeguard their interests.² In order to assist the Rani, however, Dayaram Roy her old diwan was allowed to superintend the mufassil business on her behalf.³ Middleton was in fact unwilling to deprive the Rani of the control of her zamindari altogether, for he hoped that her influence and position with the peasantry, and her personal security would still be sufficient to make good the arrears.⁴ However he turned down

1. M.F.R. 14 Dec., 1773. vol.8 & B.R.C. 18 Jan. 1774, R.49, vol.44.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

all her prayers for remission on the grounds of overassessment, began an investigation of her miscellaneous revenues denominated Bazi Taluqs,¹ and pointed out that if the present scheme also failed, the government would have the absolute right to dispossess her at the close of the year. His measures were undoubtedly severe, but the Provincial Council justified them as likely to induce the Rani to exert all her influence to fulfil her agreements, and the Council of Revenue fully approved Middleton's action.

Despite these new arrangements and repeated threats from the Council of Revenue, the Zamindar once again failed to accomplish what she had promised. At the beginning of 1774 the Council discovered a deficiency of nearly eleven lakhs of rupees against the Rani.² They now began to attribute this outstanding balance to the Zamindar's mismanagement and the embezzlement of her servants. They refused to consider any excuses and began seriously to think of ejecting the Rani and letting out her estate to farmers for the ensuing year. As a preparation they ordered the Provincial Council to furnish them with complete accounts of the collections and balances of Rajshahi.³ Since they also suspected that the zamindari had not been leased to competent farmers, but

1. M.F.R. 14 Dec., 1773. vol.8 & B.R.C., 18 Jan., 1774, R.49, vol.44.

2. B.R.C. 18 January, 1774, R.49, vol.44.

3. Ibid., 29 March 1774, R.49, vol.44.

had been let to the Rani's servants and dependents at under value, they directed the Provincial Council to suspend payment of the Zamindar's allowances, to arrest her principal officials, to investigate their conduct and to seize their property to indemnify government.¹ They decided also to oust the Rani from the management of her private talugs which they thought were a great source of profit to her. In March and April the Council of Revenue issued instructions as to the manner in which Rajshahi was to be leased out for the next three years. They laid down that the zamindari was to be let out by parganahs, so that no farm exceeded one lakh or fell below half a lakh in value.² Preference was to be given to resident farmers, as likely to manage the collections most efficiently, and up to four responsible farmers might be allowed to bid jointly. But no bania, mutasaddi or pehshcar of any European, or of the diwan of the district was to be eligible as a farmer, and the Rani and her servants were likewise debarred from offering proposals.³ The Rani was thus totally excluded from management and reduced to the status of a pensioner.

1. B.R.C. 5 April, 1774, R.49, vol.45.

2. M.F.R., 28 April, 1774, vol.8 & B.R.C. 29 March, 1774, R.49, vol.44.

3. M.F.R. 28 April, 1774, vol.8.

The Provincial Council, however, had begun to have doubts about the real cause of the Rajshahi deficit, and the Rani's responsibility for it. In May, in order to discover the real value and the resources of the district and the amount actually paid by the ryots, they deputed amins into the zamindari.¹ On 24 May they even went so far as to state "We do not hesitate to declare our opinion that the district was overrated."² The Rani also repeated her protest that her estate was overassessed. She maintained that even by selling her household goods she had hardly been able to collect more than Rs.24,50,000 in 1772-73, and in the following year, when the revenue demand rose to Rs.26,25,000, by the end of the year she had only realized ~~to~~ Rs.20,00,000.³ When she heard that she was to be dispossessed of her zamindari she wrote in the most pathetic terms to the Provincial Council, imploring their sympathy and representing to them the harm her prestige and reputation would suffer should the zamindari be taken from her. She agreed to comply with the Council's order to clear up her balances, promising to pay immediately Rs. 4,29,438 of the total deficit of Rs. 6,29,438, and the remaining two lakhs in the succeeding two years.⁴ (The Rani

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1. B.R.C. 5 April, 1774, R.49, vol.45.
 2. Ibid., 31 May, 1774, R.49, vol. 45.
 3. Ibid., 5 April, 1774, R.49, vol.45.
 4. Ibid., 28 June, 1774, R.49, vol.46.

probably intended to fall back on her private resources, her stipends, income from Bazi Zamin, and loans which, as an old Zamindar of great repute, she could reasonably hope to raise). She ended by urging the Provincial Council to use their good offices on her behalf, and at the very least secure her retention as nominal farmer of the zamindari.¹ These proposals the Provincial Council did forward to the Council of Revenue for their favourable consideration. They admitted that there were no fixed standards by which to ascertain what proportion of the District was cultivated and how far there were cultivators available to work it, and agreed that the revenues of Rajshahi had suffered greatly during and after the famine, though they refused to believe that the current deficit was solely due to that calamity and to overassessment.²

The Council of Revenue betrayed no such uncertainty and offered no sympathy. They readily accepted the Rani's proposals for liquidating her balances, but refused to accept her even as nominal farmer.³ According to them any indulgence to the Rani would be artfully misrepresented by her and by her servants so as to regain their influence, which would be highly detrimental to the government revenues as well as to

1. B.R.C., 28 June, 1774, R.49, vol.46.
 2. Ibid., 5 April, 1774, R.49, vol.45.
 3. Ibid., 28 June, 1774, R.49, vol.46.

the prosperity of the District.¹ They summarily rejected the Zamindar's contention that her estate was over-assessed. The Council argued that the Rani, knowing full well the revenue yield of her estate, had voluntarily and enthusiastically offered to become farmer; any request for a reduction of revenue was therefore unjustifiable and without any foundation.² So, holding the Rani responsible for the failure of the Rajshahi settlement, they intimated their resolve to oust her from the Zamindari in favour of Gouri Prasad, a distant claimant to the estate belonging to a junior line³ ~~for~~ (he was the son of Devi Prasad who had contested the zamindari with the Rani's husband Ramkanta).

Being repeatedly pressed by the Rani, the Provincial Council, on 7 July, 1774, requested the Council to reconsider their decision on the ejection of the Zamindar from her property. They observed: "Waiving ... every public plea which might be urged in favour of her present claim, we wish to connect her cause as much as possible with that of humanity."⁴ The Council replied in the negative and censured the Provincial Council for their sympathy for the old Rani and their request for remission on no other ground but that of

1. B.R.C., 28 June, 1774, R.49, vol.46.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. B.R.C., 12 July, 1774, R.49, vol.46.

humanitarian consideration. They termed it ill-judged and misplaced and alleged that the deficit was solely due to the extravagance and mismanagement of the Rani.¹

On 30 June, 1774, the Provincial Council submitted the list of farmers and their securities along with the terms and proposals offered by them. The names of the farmers who offered proposals jointly were as follows: Ramkanta, Becharam, Gouri Prasad and Bejoynath. The securities were Dulal Roy and Khoja Abraham.² Regarding the farmers' past experiences and callings nothing is known. But their securities were familiar figures. Dulal Roy, as we have seen, was an amil of Rajshahi under the Diwani administration. Again in early 1774 when the Provincial Council at Murshidabad divided Rajshahi into three naib diwanis, he was appointed naib of Rajshahi proper. Khoja Abraham belonged to the Armenian merchant community, and had varied trade interests in the country. The terms of the farmers were as follows:³ They were ready to pay Rs. 23,05,000 inclusive of the Rani's allowance for 1774-75; besides Rs. 69,000 for maintenance of the zamindari establishments - in the different parganahs. For the remaining two years of the farming system they were

1. B.R.C., 12 July, 1774, R.49, vol.46.

2. B.R.C., 5 July, 1774, R.49, vol.46.

3. Ibid.

prepared to increase their offer by a suitable sum after the investigation of the amins which was currently in progress under the instruction of the Provincial Council.¹ They also promised to encourage cultivation and also to inform the government of any lands secreted by the Zamindar. The farmers also requested the Council to allow them a free hand to employ their own people instead of the existing farmers who refused to accept their terms.²

The Provincial Council in forwarding the farmers' proposals reserved their comments on the merits of the offer. But in view of the advanced season for cultivation they did not reject them outright, though they were far below the revenues settled with the Zamindar.³ They explained to the Council of Revenue that the alternative to farming would be to manage Rajshahi directly. But to take the lands khas, when they extended from Birbhum to Dacca, and when the Council was ignorant of the amount paid by the ryots was a daunting prospect.⁴ They realised that it would be impossible to control and guide all the collecting agents, who would take selfish advantage of any lack of supervision, especially by entering into collusion with the zamindari servants.⁵ The

1. B.R.C., 5 July, 1774, R.49, vol.46.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., &M.F.R. 30 June, 1774, vol.8.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

burden of work would also be very heavy for the Provincial Council, as it also had judicial duties to perform in the Provincial Court of Diwani Adalat. They also pointed out that if the farmers' proposals were accepted, this would give them adequate time in which to study the forthcoming reports of their amins, and so to master the complex revenue problem of the District which would be of considerable value in future settlements.¹

The Council of Revenue thought the arguments of the Provincial Council sound and sensible and accordingly they agreed to accept the farmers' offer for the first year i.e. 1774-75.² As regards the remaining two years, however, they insisted on a fixed increase of one lakh for each year. The Council was unwilling to leave the advance as a matter of speculation, to be decided on the basis of the amins reports.³ In fact the Council distrusted the amins and the veracity of their reports. On 16 July, 1774 the Provincial Council informed the Council of Revenue that in spite of their best efforts to secure the increase fixed by them, they had failed to persuade the farmers. The farmers had merely agreed to

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1. B.R.C. 5 July, 1774, R.49, vol.46 & M.F.R., 30 June, 1774, vol.8.
 2. B.R.C. 19 July, 1774, R.49, vol.46.
 3. Ibid.

pay an increase of Rs. 50,000 for 1775-76 and of Rs. 70,000 for the final year.¹ At first the Council hesitated to accept these proposals on the ground that these terms would prejudice their claim on the Zamindar but as no better offers were forthcoming, the Council at last agreed to the proposals of Dulal Roy on the above terms.² The other security Khoja Abraham was found to be 'a man of no responsibility', and involved in debt so his offer as security was rejected. Ironically, the members of the Council who had refused all pleas and protests of the Zamindar that her estate was over-rated, thus finally accepted a much reduced settlement with the farmers.

In 1774-75 the zamindari was let to Dulal Roy as farmer with Pran Bose as junior partner. This experiment proved to be disastrous for the zamindari. It deprived the ancient Zamindar of her right to the management of her own estate and at the same time introduced an adventurer in her place. Dulal Roy and his agents were all outsiders, having no concern for the welfare of the estate and the ryots, but only intent on fulfilling their contract and making a substantial profit out of the revenues. On becoming the farmer

1. B.R.C., 19 July, 1774, R.49, vol.46.

2. Ibid.

Dulal Roy appointed various agents: Deviram Majumdar and Krishna Charan Misra in Bhaturia, Surendra Mitra in Rajshahi proper and Chaitaynya Sing in Pukhuria.¹

Soon after their taking over the zamindari Dulal Roy and Pran Bose imposed many additional taxes on the ryots. The ryots protested against these illegal exactions but without any remedy.² As a result of the farmers' policy of rackrenting and plunder, many ryots were reduced to beggary, forced to leave their habitations, and take to dacoity. In view of the wretched condition of the zamindari the Rani submitted a number of representations to the Council requesting them to take immediate action to check the great deficiency which was likely to fall upon the future revenues, if these exactions were allowed to go unhindered.³ She observed that Dulal Roy, being a temporary farmer, would be the person least affected by the desertion of the peasants whereas she, being the permanent Zamindar, would suffer from the depopulation of the zamindari. She alleged that her estate was on the brink of ruin.⁴ Dulal Roy, Pran Bose and the other agents of the farmers occupied much the same position in Rajshahi, and acted in much the same ways, as

1. B.R.C., 1 March, 1775, R.49, vol.51.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 28 April, 1775, R.49, vol.52.

4. Ibid.

other speculators and auction-bidders let loose upon Bengal by the Quinquennial Settlement. To the Rani's complaints there now came to be added those of the various Provincial Councils about the illegal exaction of other farmers, and reports of the misery to which the ryots of other districts were being reduced. Nor was Rajshahi alone in being in arrears, the proceedings of the Council of Revenue were filled with the petitions of farmers and zamindars who could not fulfil their agreements.¹ The difficulties became so widespread and so serious that on 24 October, 1774 the Council of Revenue felt compelled to issue a circular letter to all Provincial Councils asking them to report on the state of agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and population in their divisions, and to offer their explanation of the diminution in the revenues.²

Just before this, under the Regulating Act of 1773, considerable changes had taken place in the Supreme Council, over which Hastings presided as Governor-General, with Richard Barwell, General Clavering, Colonel Monson and Philip Francis as members. In the field of revenue, the function of the new council was to examine the principles on which the

1. The Cambridge History of India, vol.V, p.419.

2. M. Huq, op.cit., p.159, & Rambootham, op.cit., p.43.

country was taxed, the mode of collecting the revenues and the amount of the collections.¹ The three newcomers, Clavering, Monson and Francis arrived on 19 October, and on 1 November 1774 the Council of Revenue met for the first time. Unfortunately dissension quickly broke out between Hastings and Barwell on the one side and Clavering, Monson and Francis on the other, for the latter were obsessed by the idea that all that had been done by the Council before their arrival must be wrong and that their duty was to right these wrongs.² According to Barwell, the three therefore started a "pre-concerted system of opposition", without ever going deeply into the merits of the 1772 settlement. How far their opposition was based on genuine differences of principle, and how far on personal rivalries, it is difficult to decide. What is certain is that the violence of the conflict was particularly unfortunate since by the end of 1774 Hastings's experiment had clearly broken down, and there was urgent need of clear thought about a new method of settling the revenue problem. As it was the difficulties in Rajshahi and in other districts became material for personal conflict

1. R.B. Ramsbotham, op.cit., p.51.

2. L.S.S. O'Malley, History of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa Under British Rule, pp.216-17 & R. Muir, The Making of British India, 1756-1858; pp.130-32.

rather than for dispassionate thought.

Early in 1775, the Rani of Rajshahi, in yet another petition, placed before the divided Council a detailed picture of the miserable state of the zamindari since the introduction of the Five Year Settlement. She wrote: "In 1179 B.S. [1772-73] the English Gentlemen of the Sircar did blend all the old rents of my land together and did make the Zilladary mathots and other temporary rents perpetual, making no deduction for the great desertion of the ryots. I received from them the Country in this Condition and gave tahood or agreement for the revenues. I am an old Zamindar and not being able to see the griefs of my ryots I agreed to take the country as a farmer. I soon found that there was not enough in it to pay the rents. In 1179 B.S. I borrowed money and paid the revenues. In 1180 B.S. [1773-74] former deficiencies from desertion and the Zilladary mathot above mentioned with the additional rusud or increase fell heavy on me together and I could not collect as much as the demand on me. The high ground of Raurh yielded nothing for want of water and in Bhaturia which is very low the gentlemen took the poolbundi into their own hands and made the banks and in August, 1773 the banks broke and the ryots' ground and their crops failed by being overflowed with water. I am a Zamindar, so was obliged to keep the ryots from ruin and

gave what ease to them I could by giving them time to make up their payments and requested the gentlemen would in the same manner give me time when I would pay up the revenues but not crediting me they were pleased to employ Dulol Roy as a Sezawal to collect the revenues from the country. This sezawal, wishing to make me odious and for his own profit did collect by robbing the ryots of all the money he could. Then my house was surrounded and all my property equivalent to what collections I had made as farmer and zamindar was taken, what money I borrowed and my monthly allowances all were taken and made together Rs.22,58,674. In the year 1181 [1774-75] for the amount of Rs. 22,27,847, the country was given in farm to Dulol Roy, taking from me all authority. Then Dulol Roy and Paran Bose, a low person, put on the country more taxes, another Zilladar's mutote and assay Izaffa [najai] etc. The two men issued the orders and took from the ryots all their effects and even seed, grain, ploughs, bullocks, and have depopulated and destroyed the country. I am an old Zamindar. I hope I have committed no fault. My country is plundered and the ryots are full of complaint. For these reasons I make my petition that as Rs. 22,27,817 is become the revenue which Dulol Roy is to pay for this year I am ready [to offer the same amount] and will take care that the Sircar suffers no loss."¹ In another

1. B.R.C., 1 March, 1775. R.49, vol.51.

petition she requested the Council to entrust her once more with the management of the zamindari on more moderate terms. She also assured the Council that she would spare no efforts to promote cultivation by encouragement to the peasantry. In case of any balance at the end of the year she promised to pay it from her stipends, and she also offered security for the punctual payment of revenue dues.¹

The ryots of Rajshahi also submitted many representations, alleging that various oppressions and exactions were being committed on them by Dulal Roy's people and urging the Council to save them by restoring the zamindari to Rani Bhabani. To substantiate their case they enclosed an account of the extortions by Dulal Roy and Pran Bose in the two years 1774 and 1775.

By Dulal Roy - sums embezzled out of the collections at the Sadar Kachari..... Rs. 52,000

Sums extorted privately in different parganahs and never brought to the Kachari or otherwise accounted for..... Rs. 1,48,000

Rs. 2,00,000

1. B.R.C., 1 March, 1775. R.49, vol.51.

Sums exacted by Dulal Roy's agents:-

Deviram Majumdar in Bhaturia in 1180 B.S.	Rs.	3,000,
Krishna Charan Misra in Bhaturia:	Rs.	6,000,
Phani Sing (Dulal Roy's son-in-law):	Rs.	5,000,
Shurendra Mitra in Rajshahi proper:	Rs.	3,500,
Kittu at Nator:	Rs.	1,100,
		<u>Rs. 18,601</u>

Sums taken by Pran Bose:

in Bhaturia:	Rs.	47,366,
in Bhusna:	Rs.	82,131,
in Bhaturia under the heads of <u>Mathaut</u> :	Rs.	38,000,
		<u>Rs. 1,67,497</u>

Sums taken by Chaitayanya Sing

Dulal Roy's agent in Pukhuria as <u>mathant</u> :	Rs.	17,500
		<u>Rs. 4,03,598</u>

Total extortions:¹

It may be questioned whether these petitions and the alleged charges of extortions that had been submitted by the ryots were at all reliable, and whether they had been presented at the instigation of the zamindari servants. But there is no denying to the fact that about 500 ryots of Rajshahi

1. B.R.C., 1 March 1775, R.49, vol.51.

walked all the way from Rajshahi to Calcutta to submit a petition in favour of the Rani, and that no ryot felt any concern for Dulal Roy when he was dismissed from his contract.

Raja Ramkrishna, the Rani's adopted son also complained of the miserable plight of the ryots under Dulal Roy. In support of his allegation he produced the accounts of the following ryots to the Council.¹

1. B.R.C., 7 April, 1775, R.49, vol.52.

Raja Ramkrishna then applied to the Council for permission to come down to Calcutta to substantiate his ^{hearing of} charges and also to plead for the restoration of Rani Bhabani to the zamindari. But Edward Baber, who had been appointed to succeed Middleton as chief of the Murshidabad Provincial Council, forcefully argued against granting any such indulgence to the Raja. He argued that neither the Raja nor Dulal Roy had any real interest in the welfare of the ryots, and that both strove merely to promote their own ends. As his task was to safeguard the Company's revenue, he opposed any bearing of charges until the present year's lease with the farmer had been completed, and urged the Council to defer any decision about future settlements. His plea was accepted by the majority in the Council and the Raja was refused permission to come to Calcutta.¹

Shortly afterwards, however, Raja Ramkrishna produced further charges of corruption, this time against the agents of leading servants of the Company, who had extorted large sums from him for their private use in the name of the Company. He informed the Council that he had had to pay Rs. 1,25,001 to Kantu Babu, Hastings' banian; Rs. 2,00,000 to Shantiram Sinha, Samuel Middleton's diwan, and Rs.1,15,000

1. B.R.C., 1 April 1775, R.49, vol.51.

to Bhabani Mitra, Graham's diwan - in all Rs.4,40,001.¹ This was a period of internal crisis in the Council, when every report coming from the mufassil for decision became a party matter, when Dulal Roy now defaulted - though only after having "crushed the seeds of fertility and prosperity in the country, and collected with patient cruelty the scanty fruits of industry and labour"² - the majority in the Council took up the question of Rajshahi as an item in their attack upon Hastings. They violently criticised the policy of Hastings towards Rani Bhabani and her adopted son. They declared that it was the exorbitant demand for revenues by the Committee which had made it impossible for her to fulfil her contract and had thus provided nonfulfilment of her engagements as a pretext to deprive her of her zamindari.³ Both Hastings and Barwell protested against these charges, and Barwell retorted that the sole object of Ramkrishna was to get control of the estate by ousting the farmer from its management.⁴ Colonel Monson retorted by pointing out that as the Raja was recognised by Rani Bhabani as her adopted son it was not surprising that he should wish to recover his zamindari from the present farmer. Dulal Roy held it at an annual rent of several lakhs of rupees less than that being paid when the Rani was

1. B.R.C., 7 April 1775, R.49, vol.52.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 28 April, 1775, R.49, vol.52.

4. Ibid.

dispossessed, and moreover he was ruining the estate by his ill-calculated policy of plundering the ryots in order to satisfy his greed and the government demand.¹ The majority, headed by Clavering, therefore proposed to dismiss Dulal Roy on the charge of violating his contract by illegal exactions.²

On 12 May, Ramkrishna's accusations against the banians of Hastings, Middleton and Graham were taken up, and witnesses were examined who deposed that they had given Kantu Babu Rs. 40,452. There the matter ended, the point against Hastings perhaps having been made, for no further investigation was attempted. Instead, on 19 May the majority attacked Hastings on a wider front.

By that date three very important reports from George Vansittart, P.A. Dacres and Samuel Middleton had reached the Council. Their reports are remarkable for their fullness of detail and their clear analysis of the land revenue problem. Vansittart, the late chief of the Burdwan Council reported that in the affected north-western part of the division, the great famine of 1770 was the main cause for the decline in land revenue and in manufactures. Over-assessment and the bad management of revenue farmers were other general factors in the decline, and he proposed a reduction in demand and

1. B.R.C., 28 April, 1775, R.49, vol.52.

2. Ibid., 19 May, 1775, R.49, vol.53.

long term settlements with the zamindars as remedy.¹ Dacres, who was in charge of the Calcutta Provincial Council, had little to say about the famine, but blamed the method of putting the revenues up to public auction for the oppression of the ryots and the failures in the collections. He too urged the abolition of the accumulated additional taxes, and a permanent settlement with the zamindars.² Middleton, the late chief of the Murshidabad Council, naturally laid more emphasis upon the effect of the famine, but he too saw the remedy in remission of revenue and settlement with the zamindars.³ Since much of his argument was based upon his experience of Rajshahi, his report needs to be quoted at more length.

Middleton admitted that Rajshahi had suffered a tremendous loss of population during the famine and that the present thinness of population manifested very clearly the effects of that calamity.⁴ As a result, a much smaller portion of the land was cultivated than before and manufactures also had suffered a great decline; and, as he commented,

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1. See Vansittart's Report, 27 January, 1775. [Published in Ramsbotham, op.cit., pp.59-62].
 2. Dacres' Report, 7 April, 1775. [Published in Ramsbotham, op.cit., pp.67-69].
 3. Middleton's Report, 7 April, 1775. [Published in Ramsbotham, op.cit., pp.62-67].
 4. Ibid., & H. Misc., 5 February, 1775, vol.206, & B.R.C., 7 April, 1775, R.49, vol.53.

"When the manufactures suffer, it is needless to say commerce must languish".¹ As regards the defalcation of revenues, he wrote, "I must again revert to the famine as the real and genuine source from which the actual defalcation has originated."² He observed that if the government had taken proper measures immediately after the famine, the effects would have been made less dangerous, but too much emphasis by the government on realizing the revenues in full had aggravated the situation: "Had an adequate remission been made in the revenues, and every other suitable encouragement been afforded to agriculture, inhabitants would have come into cultivate our lands from the neighbouring countries, where they suffered the oppressions usual in the black government, and population and agriculture would have recovered. Instead of which, when a very considerable portion, supposed over a third of the whole inhabitants had perished, the remaining two-thirds were obliged to pay for the lands now left without cultivators, and thus the native ryots being oppressed, and no particular encouragement given to foreign ryots to come in ... on the contrary the oppression on the others, as it were, held out to deter them, the country has languished

1. H. Misc., 5 February, 1775, vol. 206. B.R.C., 7 April, 1775, R.49, vol.52.

2. Ibid.

ever since and the evil continues enhancing every day."¹ On Rajshahi he commented in revealing fashion, that the settlement made by the Committee of Circuit had been unavoidably arbitrary, since it was based on conjecture for lack of any standard measurement or reliable mufassil papers.² He regretted that the Council, though completely aware that the revenues were falling short by two to four lakhs a year, sufficient proof that the settlement was more than the district could bear, had persisted in their demands. In such circumstances either the revenue collection must suffer, or, if realized the district must be ruined.³ Middleton then added two particular causes for the decline of Rajshahi: the oppressive conduct of Amrat Sing who farmed the western division in 1771, and the frauds of the zamindari servants who had taken advantage of the old age of Rani Bhabani and her religious disposition, to follow their private ends at the expense of her fortune and of her estate.⁴ He then went on to propose remedies for the growing evils, "These evils being such as will require all the wisdom of government, with an unremitting attention to the minutest circumstances

1. H. Misc., 5 February, 1775, vol.206 & B.R.C., 7 April, 1775, R.49, vol.52.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

and effects of every measure adopted to obviate them."¹ The first remedy, according to Middleton, was a universal remission of a considerable sum of revenues throughout the district,² with steps being taken to make sure the effects of the remission reached the poor cultivators. Secondly, he strongly advocated that all future settlement should be made with the Zamindars, in preference to farmers. "The zamindar is indeed in every light the properest and the only person to whom the government can, consistently with the welfare of the country, let the lands. The ryots look towards him as their natural master. Remission of revenues and leaving the lands as much as possible in possession of the zamindars appear to be the primary and most necessary measures."³

The authoritative reports of Vansittart, Dacres and Middleton greatly impressed the Council and undoubtedly helped to mould opinion, particularly that of Francis, in favour of a permanent settlement of the revenues with the zamindars of Bengal. More immediately, however, they served to support the case of the Rani against Hastings and against Dulal Roy. On 19 May, when Middleton's suggestions for

1. H. Misc., 5 February, 1775, & B.R.C., 7 April, 1775, R.49, vol.52.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

remedying the situation in Murshidabad division came before the Council, the accusations of Ramkrishna against Dulal Roy and the petitions of the Rani also came up. The majority in the Council, accepting the truths of the complaints against Dulal Roy, and noting that he had not fulfilled his contract, decided to discharge him and reinstate Rani Bhabani.¹ They accused the Governor-General of having brought a once flourishing country to the point of ruin and disorder by his irresponsible gambling with public auctions. He had been quite unjustified in depriving the Rani of the management of her estate, for had the very advantageous terms allowed to the farmer been granted to the Rani in the first place, she could have paid her revenues in full.² Hastings and Barwell replied to this attack and opposed the majority's resolution by declaring that the charges against the farmer were not adequately supported by proper evidence. The farmer strongly denied the accusation of extortion, and Hastings pointed out that the extra imposition had actually been levied by Ramkrishna when he was in charge of the zamindari on behalf of the Rani.³ Moreover, Hastings argued, even if the extortions were proved after thorough investigation,

1. B.R.C., 19 May, 1775, R.49, vol.53.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Dulal Roy could at most be compelled to pay double the revenue as fine, Dulal Roy had almost fulfilled his agreements and it would be an act of injustice to dismiss him unless he had been guilty of repeated violations of his contract.¹

Hastings also protested against the restoration of the zamindari to Rani Bhabani on the ground that she was too old to manage it efficiently. And whereas Monson had supported the right of Raja Ramkrishna to the zamindari, declaring him "the properest person to be entrusted with the zamindary as he will esteem it his inheritance and treat the ryots, in a suitable manner",² Hastings totally rejected the Raja's claim to succeed. He declared that Ramkrishna and Dulal Roy were both farmers, with identical interests, and Ramkrishna was not entitled to claim any extra privilege or superiority in treatment because of his relationship with the Rani. This last statement the majority controverted, pointing out that since Hindu law accepted the right of adoption the Raja, as

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1. B.R.C., 19 May, 1775, R.49, vol.53. On 14 June Clavering recorded a further rejoinder to Hastings on the question of mathauts. He argued that had these additional cesses been normal charges the ryots would have had no occasion to complain. But since the taxes had been created and raised by the farmer oppressively, the Council must regard this as a violation of his contract. They had thus fairly and justly dismissed the farmer without having shown the slightest favour to the Rani. (B.R.C. 14 June, 1775, R.49, vol.54).
 2. Ibid.

the adopted son of Rani Bhabani, was the natural heir to the zamindari. Despite Hastings' protests the majority proceeded to dismiss Dulal Roy and to reinstate the Rani. The question of Raja Ramkrishna's rights the Council agreed to remit to the Court of Directors for their decision.¹ It was not until 1788, however, that the Directors decided that the Raja should succeed Rani Bhabani as the zamindar during her lifetime.

After the farmer had been deposed, a fresh controversy arose in the Council about the terms of the settlement with the Rani. The majority were in favour of granting some remission of revenues. In support of their contention they put forward the views of Middleton, Dacres and Vansittart who pleaded for general remission on the ground of over-assessment in 1772. They quoted the opinion of Middleton that "the zamindari could bear no increase", Hastings upheld an opposite view, maintaining that the zamindari was quite capable of yielding the revenues fixed for Dulal Roy provided proper persons were employed to help the Rani in the general superintendence of the collection.² Eventually the Council agreed that for the remaining two years of the farming system, the Zamindari should be restored to Rani Bhabani on

1. B.R.C., 19 May, 1775, R.49, vol.53.

2. Ibid.

condition that she paid the sum of Rs.23,80,000 agreed with Dulal Roy for 1775-76, with an increase of one lakh in 1776-77.¹ In due course Raja Ramkrishna executed an agreement on these terms on behalf of the Rani.² The Council ordered the farmer to submit his papers and adjust his collection accounts with the Rani immediately. They also asked the Rani to transfer her Sadar Kachari from Baranagar to Motijeel at Murshidabad so as to allow closer supervision by the Provincial Council and to prevent any embezzlement by the zamindari servants.³

The restoration of Rajshahi to the Zamindar's management started reasonably smoothly. Despite an initial setback caused by drought, the desertion of some taluqdars and ryots, and the depredations of sannyassis in certain parganahs, the Rani fulfilled her contract for the year. Realizing the consequences of defaulting in her payments, the Rani raised money by selling household effects and borrowing from merchants so as to pay in time.⁴

Early in the second year of the settlement, however, the Murshidabad Council reported that collections in the zamindari had been impeded by drought and other calamities.⁵

1. B.R.C., 19 May 1775, R.49, vol.53; M.F.R., . 25 May 1775.
 2. M.F.R., 17 August 1775. vol.10. vol.9.
 3. Ibid., 23 October 1775.
 4. B.R.C., 16 April 1776, R.49, vol.61.
 5. Ibid.

By June 1776 the Rani was appealing fervently to the Provincial Council to exempt her from any increase in the revenues in view of the severe drought followed by inundation in Bhaturia which had caused considerable damage to the crops.¹ In August she flung herself upon the mercy of the Council. "It is impossible", she declared, "to describe the particulars of my ill fortune. Since you are the rulers and guardians of the country, and the ryots and myself dependent upon government, we are hopeful that you will please^w take into consideration the complaints."² The Provincial Council forwarded the Rani's plea for remission of the increase, declaring that in the circumstances the present arrears could only be realized by recourse to severe measures. Such action, they urged, should be avoided, since it must ultimately affect the welfare of the peasants and the future interest of the government. The Council of Revenue accordingly agreed to a remission of Rs. 1,40,000 to the Zamindar of Rajshahi, for the final year, and granted corresponding remissions to other zamindars of the division.³ Though in February 1777 the Rani was 2,70,002 in default by the end of 1776-77 only a nominal balance of Rs. 15,000 stood against

1. M.F.R., 10 June, 1776, vol.11.

2. B.R.C., 9 August, 1776, R.49, vol.63.

3. Ibid.

the Zamindar. Against this claim the Rani set a demand of Rs. 53,547 on various heads.¹

Pools (embankments) given away....	Rs. 27,552=14=12=2
Due to flood.....	" 7,495=12=19=3
Boundary disputes.....	" 7,753=15= 4=0
Charges for <u>Chaugan</u> for two years. "	4,764= 1= 4=0
Encroachment by rivers.....	" 4,547= 0= 0=0
	<hr/>
	Rs. 53,547= 1=15=2

The Rani also alleged that collections had suffered on account of the outrages and other extortions committed by the contractors who were building embankments in the district under the superintendence of Thomas Burgess, and that the deputation of Amins to the parganahs in the middle of 1776, had created fresh confusion in the mufassil. Though on examining the Zamindar's claims the Provincial Council termed them grossly exaggerated,² on 20 May 1777, the Council of Revenue gave a further remission of Rs. 15,000 to the Zamindar.

1. B.R.C., 20 May, 1777, R.49, vol.71.

2. Ibid.

On 4 April, 1777 the Council of Revenue at Calcutta ordered the Provincial Councils to recall all the revenue farmers by 14 April 1777, that is by the end of the current financial year.¹ This was the end of the ill-starred farming experiment of the Quinquennial Settlement. It had been started by Hastings in 1772 with high hopes, very much as his personal solution to the defects of the existing annual settlements. He wrote with some pride in 1772. "I found the farming system already established throughout the country. All the orders of the Company, all without exception enjoined it. I made it general and received their commendation. I lengthened the period of the leases which before was annual to five years. This was considered by many as a bold innovation."² It was in the face of doubts and of the warnings and opposition of Muhammad Reza Khan, that Hastings introduced the system of public auction and five year leases. He did so because the Supervisors had failed to find out the value of the lands, though this was why they had been appointed, and he felt that their presence in the districts, with their powerful bantias and gomustas must lead to abuses. Farming at auction was then most hopeful way remaining of finding the true value of the lands after the confusion of

1. B.R.C., 4 April, 1777, R.49, vol.70.

2. Proc. GG & Council - Revenue - vol.20, quoted in N.K. Sinha, op.cit., vol.II, p.71.

the famine. As M.N. Gupta has put it: "It was thought that the 'natives' coming up to bid would know more about the yields of an estate than what the Company's official could find out."¹ But by making the leases run for five years the temptation to extract revenue without regard for the future prosperity of the district would be avoided. This continuity had, in fact, been a feature of the Mughal system in Bengal, for although the punyah at Murshidabad had been an annual event at which the zamindars and talugdars had renewed their revenue engagements year by year, it had always been understood that they had a right to engage and that only very exceptionally would they be displaced.²

The outcome of the experiment, however, was disastrous. The Company, with its debt in India rapidly growing wanted to maximise revenues despite the famine. Many farmers, strangers to the districts, over-estimated the likely profits. "Estates were knocked down to speculators at a revenue which, as the old zamindars knew, the estates were unable to bear. The only hope of the new farmers was to extort what they could from the cultivators during the terms of the lease, and leave the estate ruined and deserted. Such was often the

1. M.N. Gupta, op.cit., p.119.

2. See M. Huq, op.cit., p.149.

result".¹ Malice also sometimes led men to make bids with the intention of harassing or evicting the established zamindars and taluqdars. Equally zamindars anxious to maintain possession of their ancestral property bid high to make sure of success. The system of public auction thus led to a general over-assessment. By the end of the five years the country had suffered a sharp decline not only in its land revenues but also in trade, manufacture and commerce.² The government of Hastings had intended to protect the cultivators by stipulating the amount of revenue which they were to pay to the farmers and by requiring the farmers to issue pattas recording this. But there was no supervisory machinery to secure that this was done, especially after the withdrawal of the collectors in 1773.³

Financially the Quinquennial Settlement was not hoped for ^{the} success. Even the figures of gross collections which show a rise in the early years, reveal also a sharp fall in the last two years.⁴ The net gain to the Company was in any case less, for when zamindars who failed to comply with the Company's growing demands were dispossessed, they had to be

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1. F.D. Ascoli, Early Revenue History of Bengal, p.33.
 2. See Reports of G. Vansittart, B.R.C., 27 January, 1775, and of S. Middleton, B.R.C., 7 April, 1775.
 3. See N.K. Sinha, op.cit., vol.II, p.87.
 4. M. Huq, op.cit., p.173.

granted moshaira at 5 or 10 per cent of the assessment.¹ Again of the money taken from the ryots too little reached the Company, too much was pocketed by the revenue farmers. A number of the banias of Englishmen became farmers of profitable parganahs sometimes on collusively favourable terms: Kantu Babu, Hastings' bania held several important Rajshahi parganahs on unduly easy conditions,² though when challenged by the majority in the Council, Hastings at once transferred them to the zamindari control. There were also further demands in the form of presents to the Company's servants who were responsible for allotting the farms. Clavering commented: "It is but too well known how many farmers who took farms from the Committee of Circuit have been ruined by such extortions and balances I am afraid, forever lost to the Company."³ In this even Hastings shared, though Francis's accusation that he secured Rs.17,75,000 seems much exaggerated.⁴ The majority's denunciation of the Quinquennial Settlement as a source of corruption and fraud, does, however, seem deserved.

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1. N.K. Sinha, op.cit., vol.II, p.73 and pp.83-85.
 2. B.R.C., 14 June, 1775, R.49, vol.54.
 3. Ibid., 7 April, 1775, R.49, vol.52.
 4. Public and Private Letters of P. Francis, quoted in N.K. Sinha, op.cit., vol.II, pp.97-8; also see P.J. Marshall's article 'The Personal fortune of Warren Hastings', Economic History Review, Second Ser., XVII, 2, 1964, pp.284-300.

Of all these mistakes in the Settlement, Rajshahi gave examples. The famine hit the District very hard, and in Bhaturia the famine was followed by flood damage. Yet the reports of the loss of population and revenues were ignored, and by the evil practice of najai, collections were kept up. While the Rani was prepared to show consideration to the ryots, the government showed little to her. When the Rani asked for relief in the terms of her lease, the Council of Revenue's reply was that she had entered willingly into the contract knowing what the zamindari could produce. There was no understanding of the fact that the Rani, like other respectable zamindari families, was driven by social forces to try, by bidding high, "to keep her estate safe from the auctioneer's hammer".¹ As Raja Ramkrishna's outburst made clear, fear of social disgrace drove the Rani, and probably the hope of future adjustment in her favour when it was seen that the demand was too heavy. The substitution of the farmer Dulal Roy for the established zamindar involved the ryots in further hardship. It also destroyed the machinery for policing the countryside,² and maintaining protective embankments. The result was that the District was exposed to

1. R. Guha, op.cit., p.58.

2. See J.M. Ghosh, Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal, for a general picture of organised dacoity.

dacoity and floods, for which eventually allowance had to be made. The majority's charge that the Settlement fostered corruption certainly seems to have applied in Rajshahi. If Hastings, Middleton and Graham's banias made levies upon the farmer, the Rani seems to have practised benami or under-cover control, leasing out parts of her estate to her son and dependents while herself retaining the actual control.¹ The one fruitful result of the farming experiment was that it did reveal the social importance to the countryside of the zamindars. Middleton's experience of the power of the Rani and of the popular respect which she enjoyed undoubtedly influenced him in writing his report recommending a more permanent zamindari settlement. And his report, like those of Dacres and Vansittart led the Council of Revenue and the Court of Directors towards that goal.

1. R. Guha, op.cit., p.59.

CHAPTER IVREVENUE EXPERIMENT FROM 1777 to 1781

From 1775 onwards it must have been increasingly apparent to Hastings that his experiment, the Quinquennial Settlement introduced in 1772, was heading towards disastrous failure.¹ While farmers and zamindars were failing in their engagements, he himself was exposed to the bitter criticism of his hostile colleagues, the 'triumvirate' headed by General Clavering. With the settlement due to expire in April 1777,² it thus became Hastings's foremost concern to decide upon the future pattern of settlement. On 11 March, 1775, therefore, he invited fresh suggestions from the members of his council. On 22 April he and Barwell submitted their joint plan, a pragmatic reform of the Quinquennial System, which recommended that the future settlement should be made with the zamindars for one or two generations, in all cases where they agreed to pay an adequate revenue, in line with the sum which farmers were prepared to pay.³ The notion that the state could ultimately dispose of the lands of Bengal was still present, but also the recognition, born

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1. Appendix No.12 to the Sixth Report, Select Committee, 1782. Hastings's and Barwell's Plan, 28 March 1775.
 2. B.R.C. 4 April 1777. R.49, vol.70.
 3. Appendix No.12 to the Sixth Report. Select Committee, 1782.

of experience, that the best agents for the collection of the revenue from land were the zamindars. Once government knew what the lands would yield, it would be an advantage to give its agents the ^{security of} long leases, while the interests of the government could be protected, as the plan proposed, by the power to sell portions of the zamindari~~s~~ of those who failed to meet their revenue obligations.

To this plan Francis, the ablest of Hastings's critics in the Council, replied with a rival plan in January 1776, "the deliberate result of all the enquiry, observation and judgement", he had devoted to the subject since his arrival.¹ As Ranjit Guha has shown, this plan was more than a solution to the immediate problem of land revenue, being rather an attempt to provide a philosophic basis for permanent British rule in India. For our purposes, however, the important features of Francis's proposals were

the limitation of government demand and the settlement of the revenues with the zamindars, as proprietors of the lands in perpetuity. It will be observed, however, that the central feature of both the plans as submitted to the Court of Directors for their final decision, was a preference for

1. See App. 14 to the Sixth Report, Select Committee, 1782, and Francis to C. D'Oyly and Roberts, 22 January 1776 Francis MS. 47(36) 76 and 77.

a settlement with the zamindars for a long term of years.

While the decision of the Directors was awaited, Hastings went ahead with a measure designed to give him that detailed knowledge of revenue resources which the Provincial Councils had failed to provide, but which was essential to his plan. This was the establishment of the Amini Commission, under David Anderson and George Bogle, two of the most senior servants of the Company in Bengal. Set up in November 1776, despite the angry opposition of Clavering and Francis,¹ its purpose was to gather systematic and comprehensive information about the land tenures and the rent rolls of the various districts, through the agency of a body of selected amins. These amins, from an investigation of local records would ascertain the exact resources of the land, and they would also be in a position to protect the ryots from arbitrary impositions and keep a check on the farmers' accounts. Their reports would be the basis for a more stable and realistic settlement, on the lines of his 1775 Plan.²

The task entrusted to the Commission was very burdensome and exacting, and even with the addition of a

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1. Francis declared, "The information cannot be obtained without a vexatious inquisition; nor is it necessary, unless we mean to rack the country," quoted in R. Guha, op.cit., p.117.
 2. B.R.C., 1 November 1776, R.49, vol.65. See Selections from East India House Records, 1820, I.I, p.436.

third member, Charles Crofts, it took almost two years for them to produce a useful report. Meanwhile the ill-fated Quinquennial Settlement had expired, and Hastings was left anxiously awaiting the Court of Directors' decision on his plan. Their decision did not reach Bengal until July 1777. Hastings had therefore on 4 April to issue instructions to the Provincial Councils making temporary arrangements for revenue management.¹ He directed that the farmers and their agents should be recalled on 13 April, and that the districts should be placed under the management of their zamindars and talugdars, wherever they were capable of handling their affairs efficiently. He supplied a draft agreement, or muchalka, which the zamindars were to execute, by which in place of securities, their lands were made liable to make good any default in revenue. Where the zamindars were unable to manage their estates, the Provincial Councils were directed to administer them through subordinate diwans, or to appoint sazawals on fixed salaries which would be charged against the collections.²

Responsibility for deciding upon terms with the zamindars and talugdars, or where necessary, for superseding them was thus left with the Provincial Councils. But in the

1. B.R.C. 4 April, 1777, R.49, vol.70.

2. Ibid.

unique case of the zamindari of Rajshahi, the Governor-General himself decided upon the fitness of the zamindar.¹ He argued that Rajshahi was too vast for the aged Rani to manage herself, and that she lacked any capable diwan to manage the revenue collection and other zamindari affairs efficiently. Accordingly he directed the Provincial Council at Murshidabad either to appoint a sazawal or to depute a member of their Council to manage the estate until a new settlement was formed.²

The reasons assigned by the Governor-General for this exceptional intervention seem at first sight convincing. But in view of the earlier conflict over the treatment of the Rani and of the farmer Dulal Roy, the doubt must arise whether the move was not inspired by the spirit of faction rather than by consideration of the situation in Rajshahi. It will be recalled that in 1774 the Rani had been deprived of her zamindari for large arrears of revenue, and Dulal Roy installed as farmer. That experiment had failed and in 1775 the majority in the Supreme Council, overriding Hastings's and Barwell's strong opposition had dismissed Dulal Roy, had entertained accusations of corrupt practices by Hastings, and had restored Rajshahi to the Rani.³ But

1. B.R.C. 4 April, 1777, R.49, vol.70.

2. Ibid.

3. See Supra, Chapter III, pp. 131-34.

since the death of Colonel Monson in September 1776, the Governor-General by virtue of his casting vote had regained control of the Council.¹ It was in the exercise of this regained power that Hastings now ordered the dispossession of the Rani, refused to recognise her adopted son, Ramkrishna's right to the succession, supporting instead the claims of Gouri-Prasad, and ordered that all the Rani's zamindari servants and the farmers devoted to her be removed from their kacharies with the loss of their rent-free lands.

Clavering, in a strong minute of 4 April 1777 supported by Francis, denounced the action of the Governor-General, declaring that "to take the Province of Rajshahi from the management of Rajah Ramkrishna, the adopted son of the Ranny, without alleg^ding any reason for it, is so unjust, that I ~~shall~~^{will} not allow myself to assign it the epithet it deserves."² On 29 April, Clavering returned to the attack. He criticised the grant of discretionary powers to the sazawais on the ground that these might well be abused by them. And he denounced as false the argument of Hastings that the new arrangements were necessary because the Rani

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1. S. Weitzman, quoted in Warren Hastings and Philip Francis, "It leaves Clavering and me, and all our friends at the mercy of H & B." p.92.
 2. B.R.C. 4 April 1777, R.49, vol.70.

was in deficit in the payment of her revenues. Clavering pointed out that since the majority had restored the zamindari to the Rani two years ago, she had paid the revenues almost in full. This despite the fact that they were years of acute economic crisis due to drought and other natural calamities, as could be gathered from the various reports of the Provincial Council.¹ The Rani, being anxious to retain the management of her estates had even paid the revenues of the current year before the stipulated time, and Clavering went on to quote the petition of Rani Bhabani: "Notwithstanding the many disadvantages ... to oppose my payment of the revenues, I entered upon the task with the greatest application; and although I saw little prospect of success, I have by means of the greatest exertion and in regard to my honour and character what from the produce of country and what by loans and sale of my effects and furniture, paid every fraction which government has to demand from me ... You will find that there is not an instance of the revenues having been paid at so early a period, for fifty or ^{an} hundred years back. To gain your good will and approbation I have fully discharged my engagements though at the expense of leaving myself bare of everything."²

1. B.R.C., 29 April 1777, R.49, vol.71.

2. Ibid.

Francis, too, stressed that the Rani, since her restoration, had paid almost in full, and promised to continue to do so if continued in the management of her zamindari.¹ In spite of the appeal of the Rani and the opposition of Clavering and Francis, the Governor-General, supported by Barwell, proceeded with his own plan for Rajshahi.

When the Provincial Council at Murshidabad were clear that Hastings was determined to oust the Rani, they decided against the appointment of native diwans or sazawals to manage so vast and important estate. Instead they gave their second member William Hosea² charge of Bhaturia, Bhusna and the Bazi Mahals, with his headquarters at Nator,³ keeping the revenue administration of Rajshahi proper under their own immediate jurisdiction. Hosea was asked to visit the various parganah cutcheries so as to acquaint himself with their activities, and to establish his authority over the zamindari servants.⁴ To ensure that the zamindar retained no influence in the coming settlement, Hosea was also authorized to remove all the Rani's servants

1. B.R.C., 29 April 1777, R.49, vol.71.

2. William Hosea, a nephew of historian Orme, perished with his family in the wreck of the Grosvenor.

3. Orme MSS. 165(2). 14 April 1777.

& B.R.C., 10 October 1777, R.50, vol.4.

4. Orme MSS. 165(2) 14 April 1777.

and under-farmers connected with revenue collection.

Hosea reached Nator on 14 April 1777 and assumed charge of his new assignment. He at once summoned the principal officers of the Rani and ordered them to furnish him with up to date and correct accounts of the zamindari revenues.¹ Next he issued a proclamation, at the beat of drums, throughout the parganahs under his supervision, informing the amlahs, ijaradars, katkinadars, talugdars and ryots of the change that was to follow the expiration of the Quinquennial Settlement.² The notice announced that from 14 April, 1 Baisakh, 1777, ^{The} entire chakla of Bhaturia, Bhusna, the Bazi Mahals and parganah Haveli which had been held in farm by Rani Bhabani in 1776, was transferred to khas management under Hosea. Orders were dispatched to the Naibs of Bhusna and other remote parganahs to fix notices and give publicity in their cutcheries to the change to khas collection in Rajshahi. Instructions were also issued to the amins, and to the ryots, that no orders but those of Hosea should be accepted.³ To avoid any alarm or confusion due to the sudden change of authority, Hosea also issued assurances to the ryots that the government would

1. Orme MSS. 165(2). 23 April 1777.

2. Ibid., 27 April 1777.

3. Ibid.

protect them from every injustice and oppression, provided that they cultivated their lands diligently and submitted their accounts to the Provincial Council for examination.¹ Hosea, from the outset, was beset with the problem of selecting the right type of officers to work under him. He complained that it was difficult to find people who were not attached either to the zamindar or to Dulal Roy the ex-farmer.² On the whole, however, despite the Rani's assurances of co-operation, he seems to have feared that the Rani would try to deceive him by suppressing information about
/the real condition and resources of her lands, thus frustrating his mission. He therefore rejected the zamindar's offer, warning her that if he detected any intrigues, opposition or misrepresentation by her officials they would be severely punished and she would be deprived of the zamindari.³

Hosea appointed Lala Ram Chauth, a former mutasaddi of Dulal Roy, well known for his integrity and sound knowledge of revenue matters, as his diwan.⁴ He then appointed sazawals for the various revenue units of the

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1. Orme MSS 165(2), 27 April 1777.
 2. Ibid., 19 April 1777.
 3. Ibid., 24 April 1777.
 4. Ibid., 14 April 1777.

district whose names and charges are given in an appendix to this chapter. It would seem that in choosing them he thought it wise to rely upon Dulal Roy's people in the main, as being most likely to acquaint him with the real state of the zamindari. Nothing is known of the past experience of the sazawals, or of the salaries attached to their office. They were obliged, like the old farmer, to execute muchalkas, promising to protect the ryots and encourage cultivation in every possible way.¹ They also agreed to bring to the notice of government the various resources of their districts and to report the increase or decrease of the revenues in the past few years. They would inform the council of the various allowances enjoyed by the patwaris in the villages, and would be accountable for any embezzlement by the patwaris and other subordinates as a result of their negligence. They agreed not to spend any money without the previous sanction of the Council, and to make good any loss of revenue caused by their mismanagement.²

The Sazawals were next given parwanas so that they might command obedience and respect from the parganah

1. Orme MSS. 165(2), 29 April 1777.

2. Ibid.

officials. They were empowered to dismiss the existing cutchery servants and appoint their own nominees in their place,¹ since it was felt that otherwise it would be difficult to procure correct hast-o-budaccounts of the parganahs. The one official whom they were not allowed to remove was the sheristahdar, who as head of the local office, alone could explain the whereabouts of the different accounts.² The sazawabs presumably with the sheristahdar's help,³ ^{were} to acquaint themselves with the jama-wasil and baki accounts of the collections of the Quinquennial Settlement.³ Then the mazkúri taluqdars were to be summoned to their respective sadar cutcheries, to submit their accounts for the previous year, and were either to be dismissed or confirmed in their farms or if honest and ready to execute fresh agreements, granted new ones, as the sazawal thought fit.⁴ The sazawals were also to enquire which taluqdars the Rani had unduly favoured by remitting revenues or had unjustly ejected, and to right either abuse. Where taluqdars would not make new agreements and provide security for the punctual payment of their revenues, their taluqs were to

1. Orme MSS. 165(2). 29 April 1777.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

be held khas and they should be given a 10 per cent maintenance allowance for the support of their families.¹ In accordance with their muchalkas the sazawals were to encourage agriculture and they were therefore empowered to grant agricultural loans, taqavi, to deserving ryots, under proper security from the patwaris and village headmen or mandals.² Finally they were to be vigilant in seeing that the miscellaneous sair revenues, mainly gathered from the hāts, bazars and ghāts were duly collected, without embezzlement by men chosen for their character and efficiency.³ Of all these activities records were to be kept, and sent to Hosea at Nator. In carrying out these varied tasks, and in rendering assistance to the amins of the Amini Commission, the sazawals were assured of unstinted support. They were allowed to appoint subordinate sazawals in the remote parganahs, for whose conduct they were responsible, and both were promised military aid should they meet opposition from zamindars, talugdars or unruly ryots. Those sazawals who discharged their duties with honesty and integrity would be rewarded.⁴

1. Orme Mss. 165(2). 29 April 1777.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Having proclaimed the change from farming to khas management, and having appointed and instructed his new officials in their duties, Hosea was faced with the problem of what should be done with the discharged servants of the zamindar, now without duties. His first impulse was to resume their chakran lands, granted to them in lieu of wages, and so destroy their influence throughout Bhaturia and other divisions under him.¹ He held the servants particularly responsible for the strained relations between the Rani and the government, caused by resisting the authority vested in the administration. On reflection, however, he felt that resumption would be imprudent. It would be bound to rouse resistance in the mufassil, and since the zamindari servants had long been in possession, would cause further confusion in village administration. He therefore issued a cautious proclamation that those zamindari servants who promised good behaviour and co-operation with government, would not be disturbed in the enjoyment of their chakran lands.²

On 6 May 1777, the Governor General signified his approval of Hosea's proclamation, his appointment of sazawals and instructions to them. He stressed that Hosea

1. Orme MSs 165(2). 25 May 1777.

2. Ibid.

should be very particular in the selection of the sazawals since the success of the temporary arrangement would largely depend upon the honesty and abilities of these men.¹ With the policy of superintending individual parganahs by government servants, Hastings expressed himself dissatisfied, however. Hosea's plan had been to select from every six or ten villages one of the karmacharies to act as superintendent of the rest. Hastings thought it would be difficult to select the right men, very difficult once the temporary revenue management ended to demote them, and difficult also to find substitutes for them in their own villages.²

The temporary management of Rajshahi under William Hosea lasted until September 1777. By that time the vital despatch of the Court of Directors upon the rival plans of Hastings and Francis had reached Bengal. Unhappily, after examining the two rival plans, the Court had failed to reach any final decision at all: "Having considered the different circumstances of letting out lands on leases for lives or in perpetuity, we do not for many weighty reasons think it at present advisable to adopt either of these modes."³ They therefore ordered that "the lands be let for the successive year on the most advantageous terms, and

1. Orme MSS 165(2). 12 May, 1777.

2. Ibid.

3. Despatches to Bengal, 24 Dec. 1776, para. 41.

that none be in future let by public auction," preference being given "to the natives resident on the spot." Neither the plea made by Francis for a fixed moderate demand, nor that by Francis and Hastings for a long term settlement had been accepted. The only positive advance, as a result of experience of the Quinquennial Settlement, was the direction that the prejudicial system of public actions be abandoned, and regard shown to the zamindars, "the natives resident on the spot."¹

The Directors' letter re-opened the question of whether Rani Bhabani should be excluded from her zamindari. In mid-August the Provincial Council at Murshidabad had expressed themselves in favour of settlement with the zamindars the Rani included, after allowing them a reasonable adjustment of their past balances.² They regarded any long term khas management of so vast a zamindari as Rajshahi as hazardous, and urged that the Rani be again given charge on agreeing to pay the average of the collections of the last three years, which should be accepted as the standard valuation of the lands.³ As regards the arrears of 1773-74 outstanding against the Rani, they argued that as the Rani

1. Despatches to Bengal, 24 Dec., 1776, para.41. Also Ibid., 5 Feb., 1777, para.12.
 2. B.R.C., 26 August 1777, R.50, vol.2.
 3. Ibid.

had been removed in the following year and thus prevented from collecting the arrears from the ryots, these should be written off - a relief which had been allowed to many other zamindars of Bengal. In Council, Francis strongly upheld these views.¹ He was opposed to the direct management of zamindari~~s~~s, since he regarded the zamindars as proprietors of the soil. He argued that direct management by the Provincial Council was particularly difficult, since the Rajshahi estate formed five-ninths of the entire division, and was widely scattered across it. Khas management, by and large, required a degree of local knowledge and experience which the Company's servants had scarcely attained. To continue such an uncertain experiment beyond the four months which had already elapsed, must cause the Company greater loss, he was sure, than would an equitable adjustment with the Rani. He therefore supported the remitting of the old balances and a settlement with the Rani. Her dispossession, merely to satisfy the personal vengeance of "certain people" could not be justified.²

Hastings and Barwell rejected the proposals of the Murshidabad Council and the arguments of Francis. Hastings reiterated his point that the Rani was very old and quite

1. B.R.C., 26 August 1777, R.50, vol.2; also 24 October, 1777, R.50, vol.4.
2. B.R.C., 24 October 1777, R.50, vol.4.

incapable of managing her lands and moreover she had caused him enormous trouble in the past.¹ He rejected the Provincial Council's plea for the writing off of the Rani's old balances, and ordered them to take the management of Rajshahi into their own hands immediately.² Barwell supported the plan for khas collection, arguing that as the Rani had not agreed to pay the average of the last three years' collections, the government was quite justified in retaining her lands under direct management. He opposed any remission of arrears, and even criticised the late majority for the reductions granted in 1776.³ He charged the Rani with unfair dealings, complaining that she had withheld revenues on a variety of pretences, and had deducted her stipend from whatever she had paid to government. Barwell argued that the average of the last three years' sadar receipts was well within her capacity to pay and in support of this contention he cited the collections made under Boughton Rous, which was much higher than that now demanded. If the Provincial Council exerted themselves with equal fidelity, a revenue equal to that might be made good,⁴ while the present revenue demand on Rajshahi was extremely moderate. Barwell then went over to the attack, pressing the claim of

1. Orme MSS 165(1), 3 May 1777.

2. B.R.C., 24 October 1777, R.50, vol.4.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Dulal Roy, who was willing to pay the amount fixed by government, and criticising again the procedure by which the farmer had been dismissed by the majority in the council in 1775.¹ In view of the great controversy centered upon Dulal Roy and the Rani, he would not press his claim to the farm of Rajshahi. But in the absence of any ^{other} suitable farmer, he believed that the decision of the Governor-General to continue direct management of Rajshahi was in the best interests of the Company.² Since by this date both Monson and Clavering were dead, Hastings was able to push his measure through.

Nevertheless in one of his strongest minutes, of 24 October 1777, Francis set forth for the Court of Directors the arguments in favour of the Rani of Rajshahi. He first recounted, "the rank and quality of the zamindar, her defenceless condition as a woman; the original offences which have made her an object of persecution; the measures taken first to distress her in the management of her Estate; and at last to divest her of it entirely."³ He

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1. B.R.C., 24 October 1777, R.50, vol.4.
 2. It is astonishing to find Barwell an experienced member of the Council ignoring the effects of the famine on Rajshahi by talking back to the collection under Boughton Rous. In so doing he also conveniently forgot that the Regulation of 14 May 1772 had abolished many taxes or mathauts, such as that on marriage, which had earlier been collected.
 3. B.R.C., 24 October, 1777. R.50, vol.4 & H. Misc., 24 October 1777, vol.215.

charged the Governor-General with plotting the ruin of the Rani by sending Amins with extraordinary powers into her estate in December - January 1777, when the Rani and her servants ought to have been left undisturbed in the preparation for the next season of cultivation. The excuse was that the Amins were to find out the real value of the lands but he refused to believe that the estate, situated so close to the Murshidabad Council, had not been sufficiently investigated during the last twelve years. The real object, he declared, was not the collection of accurate hastoband accounts, but to distress the Rani and her servants, and if possible to lay hands on the title deeds and other important documents of the zamindari.¹ In proof he referred to several petitions of the Rani against the oppression of the Amins.² Francis then criticised the introduction of the scheme of direct management by William Hosea, on the specious ground of the incapacity of the Rani and her servants.³ (He might have pointed out that the Rani, had managed her estate since the death of her husband in 1748, and that Hastings's objection to her as a woman was scarcely in agreement with his choice of Munny Begum as

1. H. Misc. 24 October 1777, vol. 215.

2. B.R.C. 21 Feb., 1777, R.49, vol.68.

3. H. Misc. 24 October 1777, vol.215.

guardian of the Nawab's household).¹ The Council had dis-
 possessed the Rani without proving any offence or mis-
 appropriation of revenues against her, and with no more
 ground than her supposed incapacity. This was an act of
 Hastings's unparalleled in its violence and oppression.²
 But, he concluded, "I have no expectation that any arguments
 of mine will contribute to the immediate redress or relief
 of the Ranny; much less to restore her to the enjoyment of
 those rights, which Mr. Hastings and the Committee of
 Circuit once thought it consistent with justice and humanity
 to preserve inviolate."³

Francis doubtless overstated the entire case against
 Hastings in order to discredit his rival with the Court of
 Directors. Nevertheless the evidence does point to unfair
 dealings towards Rani Bhabani by Hastings. Hastings
 himself admitted, 20 May 1777 that the Rani had been "an
 object of party contest", and his decision to use the clause
 in the proclamation of 4 April 1777 about only "capable"
 zamindars being entrusted with the administration of their
 lands against the Rani alone, cannot but be seen as a move
 in such a contest, especially when all other zamindars,

1. Cambridge History of India, vol.V, p.210.
 2. H. Misc., 24 October 1777, vol.215.
 3. Ibid.

even those of the 24 Parganahs, were restored to their rights.¹ Again after the management of Rajshahi had been kept in the government's hands for four or five months, it was unreasonable to expect the Rani to agree to pay as much as had been collected on average in the previous three years. The Rani well knew that after the lapse of a third of the year it would be very difficult to collect arrears from the peasants and that by accepting terms which it was absolutely impossible to fulfil, she would hazard the forfeiture of her zamindari.² Again when Francis criticised Hastings for rejecting the recommendation of the Provincial Council that the arrears of 1773-74 be remitted, since with Dulal Roy in possession the Rani could not collect them, Hastings had countered with the accusation that the Rani had withheld large sums which she had collected in 1773-74.³ This accusation the Governor-General entirely failed to substantiate, and there is nothing in the records to suggest that this was so. On the other hand Francis's claim that the arrears of 1773-74 were caused by the exactions of the Governor-General's banian and other English agents, and that had the sums so misappropriated been brought to the

1. H. Misc., 24 October, 1777. vol.215.

2. B.R.C., 24 October, 1777, R.50, vol.4.

3. Ibid.

credit of the Rani she would not have been in deficit do seem to have some probability in them.¹ Hastings's other accusation against the zamindar was that she exercised no authority herself but had given entire charge to Pran Chakrabatty, her guru or domestic priest, who was scarcely better qualified than herself as an administrator, and that she had no diwan of the least degree of credit "either for integrity or incapacity."² That the Rani was pious and over-lavish in her charity may be true, but in fact she had appointed a diwan, Ram Kishore Roy who was experienced and of good ability, and though Hastings ignores him, she was helped in the administration of the estate by her adopted son Ramkrishna.

The hostility towards the Rani displayed by Hastings and Barwell led to their decision to continue the direct, khas management of Rajshahi. The Provincial Council was aware of the manifold problems arising in khas management and had therefore in August 1776 suggested a compromise settlement with the Rani. Hastings had reprimanded the council for their unwanted suggestion.³ Yet he had been a member of the Controlling Committee of Revenue at Calcutta

1. H. Misc., 24 October 1777, vol.215.
2. B.R.C., 24 October 1777, R.50, vol.4.
3. Ibid.

which on 14 May 1772, had introduced the farming system instead of direct management by government, because the Company "cannot enter into the detail and minutiae of the collections." The Committee had seen that under direct management the interest of the state and property of the people would be at the mercy of their agents, and that "Any mode of agency, ... is liable to uncertainty, to perplexed and inextricable accounts, to an infinity of little balances and embezzlements."¹ In 1774 it was the Provincial Council, aware of the extensive knowledge of local customs and the peculiarities of land tenures, differing from village to village, which khas management required, which had opposed the introduction of any such system. Now Francis voiced his objections. "In this system", he wrote, "it is a material inconvenience that the farmers and ryots are subject immediately to the officers of Government, and those of the lowest order. These men, being under no specific engagements similar to those of the farmer or zamindar and unanswerable for nothing but the amount of their collections, have no interest to do their duty to Government, and maybe open to corruption, which it would be very difficult if not impossible to prove against them. If, on the other hand, any expedient could be found to interest them in the amount

1. P.C.R. 14 May 1772, R.67, vol.54.

of the collections, it must create a considerable expense, and the country would be fleeced without mercy. The revenue in this footing could not be raised even for one year, without distress and oppression to the people, which would undoubtedly be **felt** in the revenue of succeeding years. Temporary agents can have no possible concern for the prosperity of the country, and whether their immediate interest be to ransack or spare it. Government must either way sooner or later suffer by their misconduct."¹ But neither the arguments of the Controlling Committee of Revenue and of the Provincial Council, nor those of Francis were heeded. The Council of Revenue went ahead with their plan of khas management of the Rajshahi Zamindari, and on 5 September 1777 informed the Provincial Council at Murshidabad of their decision.² Following this resolution, Edward Baber, the chief of the Provincial Council submitted on 23 October, 1777 for the management of Rajshahi District. The extensive size of the estate led him to propose that it be managed in the following six divisions.³

Rajshahi proper; Rajapur; Bhaturia; Bhusna;
Pukhuria and Sharulpur.

1. H. Misc., 24 October 1777, vol.215.

2. B.R.C., 5 September, 1777, R.50, vol.2.

3. M.F.R., 23 October, 1777, vol.14.

Next he recommended that a diwan should be appointed to reside at the Sadar Kachari at Murshidabad and that there should be a naib and a poddar or treasurer for each division. The naib and poddars would be required to furnish security for the honest discharge of their duties, while the naibs would be held responsible for any arrears of revenue which accrued and also for paying in whatever surplus they might collect beyond the sum rated in the hast-o-bud or rent roll.¹ As regards the farms held by Chand Chakrabatty, the miscellaneous talugs belonging to the Rani and Dayaram Roy, and the Khas Mahals, Baber suggested that these be let out in farms worth from Rs.5,000 to Rs.10,000 for one year only, while such parts of the zamindari as could not be let in this manner should be placed in the hands of the naibs, suitable agreements and securities being taken.² The chief also advocated that the diwan and naibs should have discretionary power to dismiss or imprison any of the zamindar's servants whom they considered to be untrustworthy and an obstruction to the establishment of their authority.³ But they were not to remove the existing patwariés, because they were the backbone of village accounts. The naibs should

1. M.F.R., 23 October, 1777, vol.14.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

abide by all orders of the chief and diwan and keep them regularly informed of the up-to-date affairs of their divisions and monthly instalments.¹ The diwan should also in turn communicate to the chief all important transactions between himself and the naibs so that the chief could give him such assistance as might be required.¹ Finally Baber proposed that an Amini Daftar should be established in Rajshahi, whose officials could check embezzlement, examining the revenue demand, receipts, treasury accounts and balances, and so provide for the better security of the revenue collections.²

Edward Baber then recommended the name of Nandalal Roy as diwan of Rajshahi. Why he did so is not known, but as Baber is known to have received Rs.10,000 from Bateman, Collector of Manghyr who farmed parganahs in the fictitious name of Kriparam-Roy,³ while Nandalal was later dismissed for illegal dealings with Kantu Babu, Warren Hastings's banian, one cannot but wonder whether the recommendation was bought. On his appointment as diwan, Nandalal suggested the following persons for the posts of naib:⁴

Girud lal Mullick Rajshahi Proper;

Prankrishna Bose Bhaturia;

1. M.F.R., 23 October, 1777, vol. 14.

2. Ibid.

3. N.K. Sinha, op.cit., vol.II, p.81.

4. M.F.R., 23 October, 1777, vol.14.

Chaitanya Das Bhusna;
 Kishore Chaudhury Rajapur;
 Dulal Sing Pukhuria;
 Kanu Majumdar Sharubpur.

Of the six naibs Pran Bose had some experience in revenue administration in Bhusna, but of the past careers of the others nothing is known. The Council of Revenue after a thorough perusal of the plan ordered its immediate implementation.

The management of so vast a zamindari as Rajshahi would have been in itself a Herculean task, even had all gone smoothly. But within a very short time of the implementation of the scheme, accusations and counter-accusations between the diwan and naibs on the one hand and the zamindari officials on the other piled up in the Council, each side accusing the other of violence and oppression.¹ The ryots of Rajshahi also brought several allegations of extortion against Nandalal Roy and Pran Bose. In one of their petitions to the Council, on 28 April, 1778 they alleged that the two naibs had exacted considerable sums, over and above the revenue dues, and had employed armed peons in the mufassil to plunder their effects and subject

1. B.R.C., 28 April, 1778, R.50, vol.9.

them to torture. As a result cultivation had almost stopped in several parganahs, for no fewer than four thousand families had been forced to run away to neighbouring districts.¹ These irregularities were brought to the notice of the Provincial Council but without effect. They also represented their distress to the Diwan of the Council Ganga Gobinda Singh with a request to redress their grievances. But the latter being the chief protector of Roy and Bose took no action. Failing to secure justice, the peasants marched to Calcutta to lay their grievances personally before the Council. They concluded: "Your petitioners being poor and helpless inhabitants, utterly ruined, under the yoke of the said zilladers, most humbly beg leave to lay their hardships before this Hon'ble Board, imploring justice and assistance."² They requested the Council to examine the conduct of Nandalal and Pran Bose and restore such sums of money as they had unjustly extorted from them.³ Allegations were also received from the amils of different parganahs such as Kaliganj, Kussumby, Kusufshahi, Amrul and Pukhuria. They claimed that the zamindari servants and rebellious ryots, acting in collusion, had expelled many of them from

1. B.R.C., 28 April, 1778, R.50, vol.9.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

their parganahs using such violence against the amil of Kuttermal that his life was in danger. In consequence, the collection of revenues had been greatly hampered.¹ Hastings, who had ignored the petitions of the ryots, accepted the complaints of the amils. His displeasure with the Rani was further aggravated and he immediately warned her that if the revenues were affected by the obstruction of her servants she would be held responsible and her allowances would be forfeited to make up the Company's revenues.²

The strictness of the government was but a sign that all was not well with the khas Collection. Towards the end of 1777 the Provincial Council had to admit that their efforts were proving unavailing. They pointed out that "the year was so far advanced before this plan could effectually be carried into force", and that this had been attended with many inconveniences as a result.³ They also stressed that four lakhs of rupees had already been remitted to the khalsa, and that another three lakhs was soon expected from the diwan.⁴ But the accounts they submitted for the period from mid April to the end of December 1777 were very alarming.⁵

1. B.R.C., 10 March, 1778, R.50, vol.8.

2. M.F.R., 22 April, 1778, vol.15.

3. B.R.C., 9 January, 1778, R.50, vol.7.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Four kists, mid April to August..... Rs. 6,98,449

Four kists, September to December Rs. 8,25,032

Total due Rs.15,23,481

Collected by the Council through
Hosea and Rani Rs. 7,32,468
-8 annas

Collected by diwan Nandalal..... Rs. 4,00,000

Total collected Rs.11,32,469-8

Balance remaining Rs. 3,91,011-8.

The Council of Revenue were highly dissatisfied with the slow progress of collection of revenues by the diwan and on 9 January 1778, they pressed the Provincial Council to be more active and punctual. But the collection of revenues instead of improving sadly deteriorated and by the end of February the arrears had risen to Rs.7,74,227.¹ This staggering deficit thoroughly alarmed Hastings and his council. For the poor collections, as usual he blamed the zamindar and made her the scapegoat for the failure of his plan. He charged Rani Bhabani with collecting a sum of Rs.12,87,002 to the end of September, 1777, of which she had paid only Rs.7,32,469-8 to the treasury, while the rest,

1. B.R.C., 10 March, 1778, R.50, vol.8, & M.F.R., 16 March, 1778, vol.15.

5,54,532 rupees, was unaccounted for, although she had received her monthly stipend as usual to the end of January, 1778.¹ Hastings also accused the zamindar's servants with keeping control of many kacharies and with violent obstruction of the government revenue Collectors. To stop such impediments to revenue collection and also to discover the real causes of so huge a deficiency, he directed the Provincial Council to proceed to a thorough investigation. They should examine forthwith the accounts, with their vouchers, produced by the amils, of the collections made by the zamindar and the balance due from her.² Meanwhile they should suspend payments of the zamindar's allowance until it was proved that she was entitled to it by the adjustment of her accounts with the government.³ They were also to enquire into the complaints against the zamindar's servants and after proper investigation should bring the persons concerned to trial. When these motions were discussed in Council, Francis protested against them.⁴ He argued that if there had been any irregularities on the part of the

1. B.R.C., 10 March, 1778, R.50, vol.8, & M.F.R., 16 March, 1778, vol.15.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

zamindar's servants, the Provincial Council would certainly have brought them to the Council's notice. He believed that the accusations of the amils were not supported by proper evidence. It was the complaints of the Rani's servants and ryots which were likely to be genuine, for while the amils had wide powers of coercion in their hands, the Rani had been divested of all power and influence.¹ As regards the allegation that her servants had maintained possession of several kacharies, Francis correctly remarked that if this charge were true, the fault rested with the Provincial Council who ought to have ejected them earlier.² Hastings's other charges, such as that the zamindar had continued the collection of revenues from the expiration of last settlement to the middle of the current year, Francis denounced as equally unfounded. The Provincial Council would surely have informed the Council had such been the case. But the evidence and the orders of the Governor-General proved otherwise. Immediately after the conclusion of the Quinquennial Settlement, on 14 April 1777 Hosea was put in charge of the revenue collection of Rajshahi.³ In the light

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1. B.R.C., 10 March, 1778, R.50, vol.8 & M.F.R., 16 March, 1778, vol.15.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Orme MSS, 165(2), 14 April, 1777.

of these facts Francis agreed to the proposal for an enquiry into the accounts of both the zamindar and the amils with their respective vouchers. But he opposed the other measures. He requested Hastings to desist from his endeavour to invite accusations against the zamindar's servants, since there had been no public accusations.¹ He pointed out that if the Governor General was determined, it would not be difficult for him to fabricate accusations, especially against the servants of the Rani who laboured under so many disadvantages.² Hastings should be more humane and considerate in his treatment of Rani Bhabani; because the policy of the government was largely responsible for the ruin of her estate. Edward Wheeler who had recently succeeded Colonel Monson in the Council also agreed with Francis. But all the appeals of Francis fell through, Hastings supported by Barwell, remained resolute to his plan for an enquiry into the conduct of the zamindar's servants.³

But neither the strictness of Hastings nor high handedness on the part of the diwan and the naibs could secure a full collection. In 1777-1778 the total sum collected in Rajshahi did not exceed Rs.19,00,000.⁴ "Love

1. B.R.C., 10 March, 1778, R.50, vol.8.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 2 June, 1778, R.50, vol.10.

of innovation" and personal dislike of the Rani had led Hastings's government to divest her of the management of her estate on the pretext of incapacity. In place of her single authority they had given Hosea charge of the eastern and the Provincial Council at Murshidabad charge of the western divisions of the zamindari - a division of authority which did not work well. Hastings's order to remove all the zamindar's servants and replace them by temporary sazawals was equally ill conceived. The new sazawals lacked revenue experience, they were appointed after the revenue season had begun, and since their posts were temporary they had little real interest in the business entrusted to them. The extraordinary powers given to the Amins deputed to the countryside had created much unrest: clashes with the zamindar; amlahs, and flight by the ryots. The idea of khas management had been initially resisted as unworkable by the Murshidabad Council, and in the event it proved beyond the powers of the English administrators of the day. It is interesting to observe that as late as 1789, John Shore, the Company's revenue expert and then President of the Board of Revenue opposed any attempt at direct management of the revenues. Francis certainly believed that the whole

1. See W.K. Firminger, The Fifth Report, vol.II, for Shore's minutes of 18 June, 1789.

policy had been foolish and the direct cause of the large arrears.¹

On 28 April the Council decided that the collections for the year 1777-78 should be closed on 10 May, 1778.² The successive failures of the revenues both under the Quinquennial Settlement and now under khas management had been a great blow to Hastings, and he was very anxious about the future settlement of Rajshahi. On 30 April, 1778, however, the Provincial Council forwarded an unexpected and generous offer by Rani Bhabani. They submitted it with ^{the} comment that it seemed to them to be reasonable and advantageous to the Company. The Rani's proposal was as follows: "A settlement being concluded with me for the years 1185 [1778-79] and 1186 [1779-80], I do engage that I will pay to the Gentlemen of the Murshidabad Council the sum of 23,00,000 Rupees for each year. What balance may turn out due upon the settlement of 1184, [1777-78] being 23,00,000 after the close of the Collections. I will discharge without evasion by kistabandi that is, one half the amount in 1185 and the other half in 1186. Be the Wasilat³ of 1184 what they may, the half of the amount ~~of the amount~~ of the balance stipulated as above

1. B.R.C., 24 October, 1777, R.50, vol.4.

2. Ibid., 28 April, 1778, R.50, vol.9.

3. Account of revenue collected from every head of receipt, the proceeds of an estate.

to be discharged in 1185 shall independent of that be made good."¹ The Rani further agreed that any arrears in her payments might be made good by the sale of her zamindari. As Hastings summed up, the Rani in fact proposed to pay twenty-three lakhs for 1185 and the same amount in 1186, and to pay the difference between the actual collections of 1184 and the sum of twenty-three lakhs of rupees. He very thankfully agreed to accept these proposals, and instructed the Provincial Council to put her into immediate possession of her zamindari.²

Hastings had hoped in 1777 to push up the revenues of Rajshahi to twenty-six lakhs of rupees and at the same time to humble the authority of the Rani. He had therefore rejected her offer of twenty-two and a half lakh of rupees and had embarked upon the gamble of khas collection.³ It had failed miserably. The huge balance against the zamindari had brought him discredit in the Council and the censure of the Court of Directors. In their despatch of 5 February 1777 they had indicated their preference for a settlement with the zamindars. In their subsequent despatch of 4 March 1778 they were more emphatic: "We must observe, that whilst

1. B.R.C., 5 May, 1778, R.50, vol.9.
 2. Ibid., & M.F.R., 14 May, 1778, vol.15.
 3. B.R.C., 26 May, 1778, R.50, vol.10.

the zamindars and other inhabitants behave themselves peacefully, and are not deficient in the payment of their rents to the Company, we disapprove every mode of vexatious interference in their private concerns and utterly abhor the idea of disturbing them in the quiet enjoyment of their possessions."¹ The reproof to Hastings could scarcely have been more direct. Hastings could do no more than eat humble pie, and restore the zamindari to Rani Bhabani.

The zamindari was placed under the Rani initially for the two years 1778 and 1779, but in 1780 the lease was extended for another year on the same terms. Under her management the collections for the first two years were Rs. 22,43,014 and Rs. 22,84,500 respectively.² The balance of Rs. 56,986 in the year 1778-79 was attributed by the Rani firstly to the separation from the district of two important Parganahs, Sultanabad and Amrul. placed for strategic reasons under Captain Brown, and secondly to the rebelliousness of the ryots in Parganah Sharubpur.³ In the following year, when the Parganahs under Brown were restored the deficiency fell to a mere Rs. 15,500. In the

1. Despatches to Bengal, 4 March, 1778, vol.9.

2. B.R.C., 11 January, 1786, R.50, vol.63. [Accounts of eight years collection of revenues were supplied by Collector George Dallas in 1786].

3. B.R.C., 9 November, 1779, R.50, vol.20.

third year, the final year before Hastings's Permanent Plan was introduced in 1781, the deficiency grew again to some 1,40,918 rupees.¹ This was in the main due to the permanent transfer of the two parganahs to the collectorship of Bhagalpur, to boundary disputes with the zamindars of Taherpur, Nadia and Rajmahal, and to the illegal occupation of some Rajshahi lands by the servants of Nawab Mobarak-uddaulah.² Despite all these difficulties the total shortfall in the three years combined had been very much less than that incurred in the single year of khas experiment. The Rani's success was a direct refutation of all the charges Hastings had preferred against her.

1. B.R.C., 11 January, 1786, R.50, vol.63.
2. Ibid., 14 November, 1780, R.50, vol.29.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV

William Hosea appointed the following sazawals for the various revenue units under him:-

Anandaram Chaudhury	to	Pukhuria
Haradev	"	Beterbund
Bhabani Prasad	"	Ambarī
Ram Prasad Saniyal	"	Amrul
Nava Kundu Mukherjee	"	Jyasīn
Krishna Jevan Bose	"	Sonabazu
Hari Prasad Chaudhury	"	Ganga, rampur & Huriyal
Nandalal Roy	"	Dega
Dev Narain	"	Govindapur & Shujanagur
Nara Sing Saniyal	"	Isawnasur
Brijoo Sarkar	"	Momen Shahi
Jugal Sarkar	"	Bazurast Mahabhatpur
		Bazupass
Pran Krishna Majumdar	"	Ibrahimpur
Nehal Sarkar	"	Mohammadpur

Narain Mitra	to	Arunnagur.
Mohindra Majumdar	"	Kasimnagur.
Nemai Chaudhury	"	Byasi.
Jugal Majumdar	"	Islampur, Nazirpur, Amirabad,
Kirty Dutt	"	Banganj Khas Mahal
Haranath Sarkar	"	Kaliganj.
Udainarain	"	Bhusna.
Krishnananda Roy	"	Shah Ojeal.
Ram ram Chaudhury	"	Havily.
Krishnanda Majumdar	"	Patladah.
Gangadhar Sarkar	"	Kutwali.
Chandranarain	"	Bandole and, Fatehpur.
Ganga ram	"	Chapaleah.
Shuda Krishna	"	Juar, Sharabpur.

In view of the fact that the zamindari of Rajshahi was predominantly Muslim in population; it is strange to note that from the vast list of sazawals not a Muslim could be found. Was it because the traditional apathy of the Muslims towards revenue collection, dating back to Murshid Quli Khan's time when all revenue collections were managed through Hindus, or was it the calculated policy of the Company to keep the Muslims out of the important posts of revenue collection which was the mainstay of the Company's survival in Bengal?

CHAPTER VREVENUE ADMINISTRATION - FROM 1781 to 1785.

With the departure of Philip Francis, Hastings's most bitter critic and rival, the Governor-General was left with undisputed authority in the Council. He now felt free to implement his 'Permanent Plan for the Administration of the Revenues of Bengal' which he had been maturing since 1773.¹ The central theme of the Plan was that "the collections of the Province should be brought down to the Presidency and be there administered by a committee of the most able and experienced of the covenanted servants of the Company, to be under the immediate inspection of, and with the opportunity of instant reference for instruction to, the Governor-General and Council."² Accordingly at the beginning of February 1781, Hastings appointed a Committee of Revenue consisting of four senior servants of the Company, David Anderson,³ President, and John Shore, Samuel Charters and Charles Croftes, members. To them were entrusted the powers and functions previously given to the Provincial Councils of Revenue, now dissolved, the management of revenue collection and the

1. Sixth Report, Select Committee, 1782, App.2. P.P. 3-4.

2. H. Misc., vol. 351.

3. David Anderson, with George Bogle, had been in charge of the Anini Commission and was thus particularly well-informed.

formulation of policy. They were paid by a commission of one per cent. on the net collections.

The new arrangement, which was in line with the Court of Directors' earlier orders to withdraw the Collectors and to curb the rising cost of administration (unmatched by rising revenues), was expected to yield useful savings. With the burden of war with the Marathas, Haider Ali and the French pressing upon Bengal, economy was urgently needed, and this was clearly in Hastings's mind. "By the plan", he said, "we hope to bring the whole administration of revenue to Calcutta without any intermediate charge or agency and to effect a saving of lacks to the Company."¹ Not all intermediate agency was in fact withdrawn, for the chiefs at Burdwan, Murshidabad, Denaajpur, Dacca and Patna, acted as Collectors after the Provincial Councils were withdrawn, and some other Collectors were allowed to remain at their posts,² though they lost their judicial functions and like the Indian naibs in other districts were responsible only for revenue business. Nevertheless there was a great reduction in English agency, and this coupled with the provision that zamindars and taluqdars would normally pay

1. Sixth Report, Sel. Com., 1782, App. 8.
Hastings to Major Scott, 15 May, 1781.

2. H. Misc., vol.351 & B.R.C., 30 March, 1781, R.50, vol.32.

their revenues direct to the Calcutta treasury was expected to cut the cost of collection from ^{some} fifty to only twenty lakhs of rupees a year.¹

The loss of direct English supervision was expected to be made good by the information newly available from the Amini Commission reports as to the value and internal arrangements of the various districts. The appointment of Ganga Govind Singh, the diwan to the Amini Commission, as diwan to the new committee strengthened the position of Anderson who, as has been seen, had also served on the Amini Commission. As a further safeguard the office of Qanungo, which had ceased to function after 1772, was revived.² The Amini Commission had commented on the Qanungos' potential usefulness, and they were now reinstated in their duties as recorders.

The first task of the Committee of Revenue was to make a fresh settlement for the year 1781-82. They took note of the following directive given by the Supreme Council, that they were "to take the highest actual collections that have been made in any one year from 1178 [1771-72] to the present time, and from ^{an} examination of remissions which have

1. B.B. Misra, op.cit., p.124, & H. Misc., 2 March, 1781, vol.351.
 2. H. Misc., vol.351.

since been granted and a comparison of the hast o bud accounts and ^{the} receipts of other years, to form a judgement as to the cause of the decrease of the Juma which has since appeared, and to pass a decision whether that amount should be continued, decreased or increased, and with regard to the mode of the settlement to leave the lands generally with ~~the~~ zamindars making the settlement with them, particularly in the larger zamindaries."¹ The Council also impressed upon them the need for a settlement of the revenues with the zamindars and talugdars, provided that there was no objection to them on the grounds of their being minors, of past mismanagement or oppression, or inefficiency in their collections.² The Committee, when they turned to the settlement of Rajshahi which along with other Huzur Zilas had been placed directly under their control, accordingly first sought an agreement with Rani Bhabani. They proposed a revenue demand of twenty-five lakhs, or two lakhs more than the Rani had paid in the previous year, 1780-81.³ In support of their assessment the Committee argued that according to the reports of the Amini Commission, the original revenue of Rajshahi had been Rs.29,64,331. This

1. H. Misc., vol.351 & Sixth Report, Sel. Com., 1782, p.5.

2. H. Misc., vol.351.

3. P.C.R., 2 May, 1781, R.68, vol.7.

from excluded the profits/the zamindars bazi taluqs. After deduction of Rs. 2,27,107 for charges of collection, the highest net revenue had amounted to Rs. 27,37,224.¹ The Committee therefore thought that the revenue fixed by them was most reasonable and moderate. It certainly was in accordance with Hastings's urgent desire to improve the figures of collection for Bengal,² which by this date had fallen to their lowest point since the Company's acquisition of the Diwani.

In March 1781 the Committee summoned Ram Kishore, the Rani's diwan to Calcutta to secure his agreement to these terms.³ The diwan, however, delayed his reply. Probably he thought that as no reliable and suitable candidate was available, other than the zamindar, the Committee could be induced to reduce their demand. Finally, after being repeatedly pressed by the Committee, he informed them that the most the Rani would offer was an increase of one and a half lakhs upon the previous settlement.⁴ The Committee, however, was determined not to give way. They warned the

1. P.C.R., 2 May, 1781, R.68, vol.7.

2. R.C. Dutt, Economic History of India, vol.I, p.43.

3. P.C.R., 4 May, 1781, R.68, vol.7.

4. Ibid.

Rani that they would let out her estate to farmers if her diwan did not comply with their demands, within the stipulated time. If that happened, her position would be no better than it had been in 1774-75.¹ When no reply was received within the time set, they took it that the zamindar had rejected their terms and proceeded to accept the proposals of Nandalal Roy to farm Rajshahi for two years at an annual revenue of twenty-five and a half lakhs of rupees.² No sooner had the settlement been concluded than the Committee received the following letter from the Rani's diwan. "In settling the bandobust of the Parganah of Rajshahi etc., you were pleased to inform me there would be an increase of two lakhs of rupees, ... although the affairs of the mufassil do not admit of such an increase, nevertheless I am obedient to your pleasure, and therefore consent to your demand."³ The Committee firmly rejected his proposal, pointing out that despite their indulgence the Rani had failed to respond to their demands in due time.

The bluff of the Rani had been called; for doubtless she did not relish the thought of a repetition of the

1. P.C.R., 4 May, 1781, R.68, vol.7.
 2. Ibid., 2 May, 1781, R.68, vol.7.
 3. Ibid., 4 May, 1781, R.68, vol.7.

Quinquennial Settlement. But it may be asked whether the Committee had been wise in acting as they did. They had settled the estate with a farmer who had a previous record of mismanagement and embezzlement of the Company's revenue.¹ They also totally ignored the depressed economic condition of the zamindari after the famine of 1770, and the assertions of Ramkishore, the Rani's diwan, that the experiment of the five year farming system had proved detrimental to both the ryots and the zamindars. They also ignored the fact, which was well known, that both the Quinquennial Settlement and khas management had failed.² Unfortunately, in striving for an increase of revenue the Committee of Revenue, although far more able and experienced than their predecessors in the Committee of Circuit, repeated in 1781 the mistake of 1772.

On 7 May 1781 the Committee of Revenue notified the ryots and all persons concerned with the settlement of the change of revenue management in Rajshahi. To the Rani they wrote, "Ram Kishore your Naib not appearing before us, and not having consented to the settlement of the revenues of your Zamindari agreeable to the increase which it will

1. See supra, chapter IV, p.
2. See supra, chapter III, p.

admit of, we have therefore, thought proper to give the said mahal in farm to Nandalal for the term of two years."¹ She was ordered to instruct her servants of both the Sadar and Parganah (Kacharis) to co-operate with the farmer and to submit to him all their papers and accounts.² To the farmer they granted a yearly allowance of Rs.25,200 for the maintenance of barkandazes or matchlook men, and Rs. 25,968 for his amlahs or agents, the same sums as had previously been given to the Rani. But apprehending serious trouble in the mufassil from the Rani's influence over the ryots, they also agreed to place a company of sepoys at the farmer's disposal.³ These were stationed at Nator under Lt. Alexander ~~Kin~~lock, with the dual function of maintaining law and order and assisting the farmer in the collection of revenues.

The Committee decided that the zamindari allowance of Rs. 2,50,000 to the Rani and the Qanungoes' rusum or commission of Rs. 11,595 should be paid from the khalsa.⁴ They also gladly accepted Nandalal's request to pay his revenues at Calcutta rather than at Murshidabad, for as has

1. P.C.R., 7 May, 1781, R.68, vol.7.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

been seen it was government policy to encourage the payment of revenues direct to the Calcutta treasury. William Hosea, the chief at Murshidabad was accordingly instructed to remove Rajshahi from his revenue roll.¹

Once these details had been settled, Nandalal proceeded to take charge of Rajshahi and set up his Sadar Cutchery at Aminbazar, close to Murshidabad city. For important parganahs he appointed under-farmers and placed lesser ones to the naibs. In Rajshahi division he farmed parganah Rajshahi and Kuarpratab to Bhabani Prasad and those of Qutubpur and Fatehpur to Brijoynath Roy and that of Rajapur to Rashiklal Mullick; and appointed naibs on his part over the other parganahs.² These naibs and under-farmers were ordered to pay their revenues to Nandakishore Mitra who was appointed chakladar³ for the whole division. Similar arrangements were made for the divisions of Bhaturia, Bhusna and the Bazi Mahals.⁴ To supervise the collection of revenues of the whole zamindari, Nandalal further appointed a sazawal, Lokenath.

Despite these elaborate arrangements for revenue collection and/^{the}repeated assurances of help from the Committee,

1. P.C.R., 7 May, 1781, R.68, vol.7.
2. Ibid., 19 August, 1784, R.68, vol.34.
3. The superintendent or renter of a chakla.
4. P.C.R., 19 August, 1784, R.68, vol.34.

the task before the farmer was by no means easy. The zamindari was of enormous extent and he could expect the superceded Rani to be hostile and anxious to see the farming plan fail. By the end of July the revenues were already in arrears to the extent of Rs.60,698,¹ and the Committee was soon pressing for the balance to be cleared. Nandalal replied by asking for time, promising reasonably enough that he could realize the revenues from the ryots without unduly harassing them after the harvest. If government insisted on payment at the specified time it would be difficult to keep the ryots and the district in a flourishing condition.² The Committee was not convinced by his pleas and ordered him to pay the amount in arrears to the Resident at the Darbar. (As part of the Rajshahi revenues were payable to the Resident for his expenses, he was well placed to assess the progress of the farmer).³ However, by the first week of September, when the main harvest was in, John Shore, then acting President of the Committee had to report that the arrears had risen to Rs. 1,52,685.⁴

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1. P.C.R., 2 August, 1781, R.68, vol.8.
 2. Ibid., 25 July, 1781, R.68, vol.8.
 3. Ibid., 2 August, 1781, R.68, vol.8.
 4. Ibid., 7 September, 1781, R.68, vol.8.

Shore was not unsympathetic to the farmer, and on 8 November commented that he had been tolerably punctual in his payments up to the end of October, despite much obstruction from the zamindari servants who had "caused great consternation amongst the ryots and all the payers of revenue".¹ There had been, in fact, a constant succession of charges and counter charges between the farmer and the Rani. In July Pramananda, the wakil of Rani Bhabani, brought charges of high-handedness and oppression by the farmer and his agents towards the ryots and zamindari servants.² In particular he accused the farmer of the illegal confinement of Ramkishore, the Rani's diwan, while on his way from Calcutta to Barnagar, the zamindar's headquarters. A further complaint was that Nandalal had encroached upon the Rani's Dheri-taluqs, which she had enjoyed since 1765, and had been guilty of discourteous behaviour towards the womenfolk of the Rani's household.³ Still later Pramananda accused Mohunlal, the son of Nandalal in charge of Bhaturia, of violence and oppression exercised upon the peasants, many

1. P.C.R., 8 November, 1781, R.68, vol.11.

2. Ibid., 16 July, 1781, R.68, vol.8.

3. Ibid., 29 October, 1781, R.68, vol.10.

Dheri taluq: A piece or share of landed property in a joint-tenancy village.

of whom had absconded or been forced into rebellion, and of disgracing the Rani's brahmins by seizing their Brahmattra lands.¹ All these harassments, the Rani complained were meant to insult her and diminish her prestige and authority.

When the Committee asked Nandalal about these charges he rejected them as false and fabricated, denying that his son had confined Ramkishore or oppressed the peasants.² On the contrary, it was the zamindari servants who had been the mischief-makers. They had refused to submit the relevant papers and accounts of the district, in defiance of the Committee's orders, and had so greatly retarded the collections.³ He also accused the zamindar's people of collecting revenues from many parganahs without valid sanads. These parganahs, and particularly those of Chand Chakrabatty, the Rani's principal adviser, were held at very low rates: villages which yielded Rs.1000 to Rs.1500 were assessed at only Rs.25 or Rs.30, and by means of such collusive settlements as much as one lakh of rupees was

1. P.C.R., 24 December, 1781, R.68, vol.11.
Brahmattra: Lands granted to the Brahmins as rent-free for their subsistence.
2. P.C.R., 10 September, 1781, R.68, vol.9.
3. Ibid.

secured as profit and misappropriated.¹ Government was thus defrauded, for these were the very lands which could afford to pay an increase of revenue. He also argued that the zamindar's servants had destroyed the peace of the district by their past extortions from the peasants, and that Rudra Chakrabatty, the son of Chand Chakrabatty was even now instigating the ryots of Bhaturia to resist his agents and to abscond.² By interrupting the collection they hoped to make him fail in his contract and so ruin him since, as he put it, "I should prove a thorn in their side by being continued in the management of the affairs of Rajshahi."³

It was clear, as the Committee reported, that many of these charges and counter-charges contained a great deal of exaggeration,⁴ and until November, as has been seen, Shore was still ready to dismiss them and to accept that Nandalal was being tolerably punctual in his payments. But when in January 1782, Shore had to inform the Committee that the arrears against the farmer had risen to Rs.1,86,079,⁵ that the farmer had broken his promise to pay this

1. P.C.R., 22 November, 1781, R.68, vol.11.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., & Calendar of Persian Correspondence, 30 December, 1783, vol.VI, para. 934.

4. P.C.R., 10 September, 1781, R.68, vol.9.

5. Ibid., 21 January, 1782, R.68, vol.12.

sum to the Resident at Murshidabad, and that a still larger balance was probable at the end of the revenue year, the Committee became really alarmed. When the Committee now pressed Nandalal to liquidate these balances, he produced various reasons for his default.¹ He had already in May 1781 made
/a claim for deductions. This was for the Ramna lands which the people of Nawab Mubarak-ud-daulah had forcibly occupied, and for which the Rani had been granted a remission. Now he claimed that in many parganahs collections had been hampered by the raids of the Sanyasis and Fakirs under Majnu Shah.² In others such as Amrul, Kuttah, Aminnagar, Kaliganj, Ibrahimpur and Hakimpur, instigated by the zamindari servants, the ryots were rebellious and had violently resisted his agents in their collection of the revenues.³ The Diwani and Faujdari Adalats at Nator had created additional confusion in Bhaturia by issuing a parwana against his son Mohunlal, the principal supervisor of collections there, on a false charge of violence towards the ryots.⁴ Finally the cheapness of grain in several parganahs had hampered collections because the peasants

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1. P.C.R., 28 January, 1782, R.68, vol.12 &
B.R.C., 29 January, 1782, R.50, vol.37.
 2. P.C.R., 28 January, 1782, R.68, vol.12.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

could scarcely meet the revenue demand from the proceeds of the sale of their produce.¹ Nevertheless, he assured the Committee that he would spare no efforts to make good the arrears: "I shall always pursue by an unwearied attention to the revenues, which I will sooner or later realize in spite of all the oppositions."²

The Committee reporting these developments to the Supreme Council on 28 January 1782, discounted the farmer's allegation that the intrigues of the zamindar's servants were the root cause of all opposition to him in the mufassil. They pointed out that in some parganahs, as for example, in Ibrahimpur and Hakimpur, the ryots had always been refractory and had previously opposed the Rani's authority.³ Nevertheless, the Committee continued to give all the support they could to Nandalal. They warned the zamindar against the activities of her servants, threatening severe action if they hampered the farmer in future. They sent additional reinforcements to the body of troops at Nator to maintain peace and tranquility.⁴ In addition they despatched an Amin to investigate the cause of unrest in the parganahs

1. P.C.R., 28 January, 1782, R.68, vol.12.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

where arrears were heavy. He was given two hundred barkandazes to enforce his authority and establish that of the farmer, and was also authorised to hear complaints from the ryots.¹

Despite these vigorous efforts to assist the farmer the arrears of revenue continued to increase by leaps and bounds, and by early February they had risen to Rs.3,87,445.² To prevent further deficits and improper collections it was now decided to appoint John Evelyn, a provisional member of the Committee of Revenue, to supervise the revenue collections in Rajshahi.³ His instructions were to demand an explanation from Nandalal and to press him to clear up his arrears, encouraging him with offers of government protection, and threatening him with dismissal if he failed to fulfill his engagements.⁴ He was to see that the farmer's authority was firmly established, and investigate the charge that the various talugs possessed by Chand Chakrabatty were fraudulently undervalued, enforcing payment if the charge were true. Finally he was given authority to devise improved methods of revenue collection.⁵

1. P.C.R., 28 January, 1782, R.68, vol.12.

2. Ibid., 18 February, 1782, R.68, vol.12.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

It will be seen that the duties and functions assigned to Evelyn were almost identical with those previously allotted to the Collectors. The Committee had been driven by experience to acknowledge that local investigation and control by English servants of the Company were essential for the success of their plan. The idea of complete centralisation which was the keynote of the 1781 rearrangement thus gave way to that of local control by Collectors. This change of mind did not take place solely in relation to Rajshahi. John Shore expressed in vigorous words a belief that the revenue system of Bengal could only be made to work by appointing English collectors, armed with both revenue and judicial powers, in every district. Management by country agency had led, since 1771, to intricacy and confusion in the accounts. "I venture to pronounce", he said, "that the real state of the districts is now less known and revenue less understood than in 1774."¹ "In whom the rightful ownership of those broad bigahs was vested, ^{he went on to comment,} "we knew no more than we did of the landed property of the moon."² It was impossible for a single Committee in Calcutta to manage the revenue collection of all Bengal.

1. J.H. Harrington, op.cit., vol.2, P.P. 41-43.

2. Quoted from L.S.S. O'Malley, History of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa Under British Rule, p.201.

"They may and must get through the business, but to assert that they really execute it would be folly and falsehood."¹ As he pointed out and as the progress of the settlement with Nandalal showed again and again - it was impossible from Calcutta to know whether pleas of flood or of drought raised by the revenue farmer were true or false. If an amin were sent, it was again unknown whether his report was true. Only direct management could give certainty.²

On his appointment Evelyn called upon Nandalal Roy for an explanation of the serious arrears which had accrued despite all the assistance and indulgence given by the government.³ The farmer's reply consisted of a restatement of the reasons given to the Committee on 28 January, with an additional plea that breaches in the embankments in Bhaturia and Bhusna had caused flooding and much hardship to the ryots.⁴ Evelyn's enquiries, however, led him in a report of 7 March to discount many of the farmer's arguments as unfounded or at least exaggerated. Thus he pointed out that the disturbances raised by recalcitrant ryots in Amrul

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1. B.R.C., 18 May, 1785, R. 50, vol. 58.
 2. B.B. Misra, op.cit., pp.128-9.
 3. P.C.R., 11 March, 1782, R.68, vol.13.
 4. Ibid.

and other parganahs had been suppressed long ago, and that there had been no raids by Majnu Shah for a considerable time.¹ Indeed, when he offered his assistance to the farmer to establish his authority in the zamindari, the latter had declared that his power was fully established in the District, except in the Ramna lands and those of Chand Chakrabatty.² The Committee therefore rejected Nandalal's pleas, and though they asked Evelyn to summon Chand Chakrabatty and investigate the charges levelled against him, they made it clear that they intended to make Nandalal pay the whole revenue due from him.³

Neither the Committee's firm attitude nor the supervision of Evelyn secured an improvement. On 18 March Evelyn reported that the two lakhs promised by Nandalal for the end of February had not been paid, and that he apprehended that the deficiency would reach four lakhs of rupees.⁴ These arrears could only now be cleared by encroaching upon next year's collections. At the close of the revenue year 1781-2 it was found that Nandalal was in default, as Evelyn had predicted, to the amount of Rs.4,56,934.⁵ He had paid in only twenty-one lakhs, two lakhs less

1. P.C.R., 11 March, 1782, R.68, vol.13.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 25 March, 1782, R.68, vol.13.

5. Ibid., 19 August, 1784, R.68, vol.34.

than the revenue furnished by the Rani in the previous year and three and a half lakhs less than she had offered to pay.

The Committee, after making an allowance for the Ramna lands which had been taken by the Nawab, dealt with the remaining balance in two ways. First they discharged the farmer Nandalal from his contract for 1782-83, and imprisoning him and sold all his effects, including his house at Murshidabad at auction.¹ Then, ignoring all the evidence that the accusations of zamindari obstruction had been greatly exaggerated, and that the default was caused by the farmer's mismanagement and the embezzlements of his agents, they proceeded to sequester the private talugs of Rani Bhabani and her officers, and to declare forfeit the allowance of the Rani.² By these extraordinary, unjust measures they sought to make good the government's revenue and the failure of their own arrangements'.

1. P.C.R., 3 June, 1782, R.68, vol.15.

By his amalnama the farmer falling into arrears was "to make good the same by selling his substance and household effects together with those of his children and those of his relations who compose with him an undivided family." For a defaulting zamindar the penalty provided by his sanad was the sale of part of his lands.

See N.K. Sinha, op.cit., vol.II, p.103.

2. P.C.R., 3 June, 1782, R.68, vol.15.

Even after his dismissal and imprisonment Nandalal continued to ascribe his failure to the intrigues of his enemies, particularly Chand Chakrabatty and Ramkishore, the zamindar's diwan, who had sought his ruin.¹ He also blamed the Committee for deputing Evelyn as superintendent of collection, at the height of the collecting season. His enemies had used this to spread rumours in the mufassil that the Zamindari was going to be managed khas and/^{had}so occasioned a heavy loss in the collections.² In August 1784, however, the Committee received the report of an Amin deputed to investigate the whole case, and this showed that most of Nandalal's assertions were greatly magnified.³ It also showed how the revenues of Rajshahi had been embezzled and misappropriated by the farmer and his agents. The details of the extensive report showed the following misappropriation.⁴

By <u>naibs</u> and underfarmers...	Rs. 1,53,251
By <u>chakladars</u>	Rs. 46,352
By the farmer himself.....	Rs. 1,68,213
By other agents.....	Rs. 1,79,213
	<u>Rs. 5,47,029</u>

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1. Calendar of Persian Correspondence, 30 December, 1783, vol.VI, para. 934.
 2. P.C.R., 31 October, 1782, R.68, vol.18.
 3. Ibid., 19 August, 1784, R.68, vol.34.
 4. Ibid.

The revenue actually collected in 1781-82 according to the Amin had been Rs.29,61,374 - more than the amount of the contract.¹ It had obviously been collected with great oppression, so that the desertion and resistance of the ryots in some parganahs was easy to understand. Nevertheless it was not possible to recover the amounts misappropriated because the persons concerned had failed to appear to settle their accounts and had absconded.²

Having discharged Nandalal from the remainder of his contract, the Committee of Revenue turned to make a new settlement for the year 1782-83. They did not abandon the farming system, but disillusioned by the mismanagement of the vast zamindari by a single farmer, they divided Rajshahi into three broad divisions: Rajshahi proper; Bhaturia; Bhusna and the Bazi Mahals.³ Under this new system they hoped for efficient management and competition among the farmers to fulfill their contracts. Unfortunately only three men came forward with offers - Dulal Roy and Pram Bose, the two most controversial and unreliable men in the

1. P.C.R., 19 August, 1784, R.68, vol.34.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 13 May, 1782, R.68, vol.14.

Zamindari, and Ganga Prasad, the son of Gouri Prasad, the distant claimant to the estate.¹ Pran Bose offered to pay the current demand on condition that he was given a contract for a period of five years. Dulal Roy wanted a deduction of 1,35,000 rupees from the present revenue. Ganga Prasad agreed to pay the current revenue as well as the balances of the previous year in two years.² Having considered the merits of the proposals and the reliability of the persons involved, John Shore rejected them all.

The Committee therefore decided to retain the previous demand on Rajshahi, but to collect it through salaried amils or sazawals to the three divisions. The following persons were appointed: Jagu mohan Roy, Pran Bose, and Rupram.³ All three had fair experience of revenue administration in Rajshahi, but whether this was the only criterion for their selection is hard to determine. Pran Bose certainly was known to have been guilty of fraud and oppression on a number of past occasions, and one wonders what influence he possessed to secure appointment. The three men agreed to pay the following revenues for their

1. P.C.R., 13 May, 1782, R.68, vol.14.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

respective divisions.¹

Jagumohan Roy.....	Rs. 8,17,952-	7 annas, for Rajshahi proper
Pran Bose.....	Rs. 9,57,760-	11 annas, for Bhaturia
Rupram.....	Rs. 7,59,936-	7 annas, for Bhusna and the Bozi Mahals.

Rs. 25,35,649- 9 annas.

The amils each received a salary of Rs.200 per month and were allowed an office and collecting establishment, amounting to Rs. 1273-8 annas, Rs.1427-8 annas and Rs. 1699-8 annas respectively.

Jagumohan's establishment was made up as follows:²

<u>Amlah</u> or clerks of the <u>Sadar Cutchery</u> ...	Rs. 605	per month	
20 <u>Barkandazes</u> at Rs.4 each...	Rs. 80	"	"
A <u>Jamadar</u> , in charge of the matchlockmen...	Rs. 10	"	"
Peons.....	Rs. 70	"	"
<u>Qanungoes</u>	Rs. 120	"	"
With additional establishments			
for Rajapur.....	Rs. 242	"	"
and Kuar Pratab...	Rs. 146	"	"
	<hr/>		
	Rs.1273-8 annas	"	"

1. P.C.R., 13 May, 1782, R.68, vol.14.

2. Ibid., 16 May, 1782, R.68, vol.14.

On these terms the amils signed their agreements and the diwan of the Committee of Revenue issued parwanas to the mufassil officials announcing the new arrangements and ordering their compliance with them.¹ The amils then proceeded to organise the management of their divisions on lines similar to those of the farmer. They appointed naibs and underfarmers at their own discretion, taking muchalkas or bonds for due payment of their collections.² To supervise the whole of the revenue work of the Zamindari, however, Evelyn was retained by the Committee as Supervisor, and the amils were instructed to abide by his orders and to remit their collections to him at Muradbagh.³

Once again Rajshahi was thus subjected to a change of system and a change of men as a result of the Company's insatiable demand for money. Inevitably Evelyn was soon hearing accusations from the amils that the ex-farmer was withholding the relevant papers and accounts of the previous year, and that he even refused to hand over the papers which had been received from the zamindar for the year 1780-81.⁴ Jagumohan Roy also voiced a series of complaints at the

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1. P.C.R., 16 May, 1782, R.68, vol.14.
 2. Ibid., 19 August, 1784, R.68, vol.34.
 3. Ibid., 18 June, 1782, R.68, vol.15.
 4. Ibid., 2 July, 1782, R.68, vol.15.

beginning of July about the ruined state of Rajshahi proper, attributing this to the exaction of Nandalal which had led to much desertion by the ryots. He instanced the case of village Hutturah which should have paid Rs.2000 a year, but where at present no more than Rs.1400 could be raised.¹ He reported that instead of aggravating the distress by harshness he had ordered his servants to encourage the ryots to return to their habitations and extend cultivation; but that in view of their pitiable condition the ryots demanded a decrease in their rents. He pointed out that the low prices of grain had made a shortfall in their payments inevitable.² Two additional complaints made by Jagumohan were that the faujdari thanadars were misusing their power by making exactions from the villages and that the Poolbandi people, those repairing the embankments, were impressing the people for forced labour to the further ruin of agriculture.³

Evelyn was asked to verify these complaints, and he suggested that an Amin or other person of authority should be deputed to compel the farmer to deliver up the accounts, without exposing him to the harassment of the

1. P.C.R., 2 July, 1782, R.68, vol.15.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

amils, and recommended that Ramnarain would be suitable.¹ A month later, in August, Evelyn was able to report that many of the complaints were exaggerated, excuses prepared for any subsequent failure,² and in November that besides all the necessary papers and accounts he had requisitioned the services of some of the ex-farmer's servants and placed them at the disposal of the amils, so that they could have no excuse for default.³ He said nothing, however, about the level of the government's demand or the amils' complaint that the ryots had been overburdened by the farmer.

However, by mid-November arrears were already mounting, especially in Rajshahi proper, where they had reached Rs.90,463. For this deficiency Jagumohan pleaded that drought had affected his collections. Evelyn agreed to allow a reasonable deduction on that account, but with two major kists ahead, Rs. 2,46,900 for December and Rs.1,76,000 for January he feared even heavier deficiencies.⁴ As a precaution he suggested that an Amin should be sent to the mufassil to exert constant pressure upon the amil to clear up his deficits. The Committee was equally apprehensive,

1. P.C.R., 2 July, 1782, R.68, vol.15.
2. Ibid., 12 August, 1782, R.68, vol.16.
3. Ibid., 28 November, 1782, R.68, vol.19.
4. Ibid.

but wrote, "We are equally at a loss with yourself to provide a remedy".¹ They did not wish to discharge Jagumohan so late in the season as this would cause confusion at the end of the year. They therefore asked Evelyn to enquire into the amils' conduct and his pretension for a remission on account of drought so that they could distinguish between an accidental failure in the revenues and one caused by his inefficiency and misconduct.² Of the two other amils they had quite favourable opinion : "We entertain no doubts of their success, unless accidents should intervene to prevent it as we cannot at present foresee."³

By March 1783 the Committee was faced with a gross balance of Rs.2,96,572 against the amils of Rajshahi - Rs.1,73,025 against Jagumohan Roy, Rs.45,295 against Pran Bose and Rs. 78,252 against Rupram.⁴ Evelyn put the blame for the huge arrears in Rajshahi proper upon Jagumohan's incompetence and maladministration. The small deficit in Bhaturia was he believed, due to drought, for much of that division was Barendra land, high land dependent on the rains. As for the Rs. 78,252 outstanding in Bhusna, Evelyn reported

1. P.C.R., 28 November, 1782, R.68, vol.19.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 10 March, 1783, R.68, vol.21.

that he had now received Rs. 30,000 of this, while the remaining sum had been seized by deccits at Shamurdia, in parganah Shahujial, on the way to Murshidabad, the whole matter being under investigation by the magistrate of Jessore.¹ The real problem was still how to deal with Jagumohan Roy. Evelyn was still in a dilemma: if he sent amins into Rajshahi proper this would encourage the amil to make their interference the excuse for his deficit, and he would consider himself freed from all obligations under his contract.² On the other hand, if the enquiry was postponed it would be difficult to institute later, because then the succeeding revenue farmer would wish to keep Jagumohan's accounts engaged on the new settlement.³ Furthermore, if the amil was allowed to continue his collections while such heavy balances existed, it was certain, Evelyn thought, that substantial encroachments would be made upon the revenue of the ensuing year. He had already received complaints from the ryots of this, and if their grievances were not redressed there would be desertion of the ryots and chaos

1. P.C.R., 10 March, 1783, R.68, Vol.21.

2. Ibid., 17 March, 1783, R.68, vol.21.

3. Ibid.

in the division.¹ To prevent such oppression of the ryots and avert future arrears Evelyn therefore suggested, despite the Committee's dislike of the idea, that Jagumohan should be dismissed forthwith and an enquiry instituted before the current year had expired.²

In May Evelyn submitted his report on Rajshahi for the revenue year 1782-83. In this he reviewed the two experiments conducted by the Committee - collection by the farmer in 1781-82 and by salaried amils in 1782-83.³ The report was really an inditement of the Company's greed in attempting to push up the revenues unduly, and an acknowledgement that many of the excuses put forward by Jagumohan and the other amils, earlier declared to be exaggerated, were not infact groundless. The huge Rajshahi deficits he ascribed to the policy of the government. In 1781-82 the estate had been let out to a temporary farmer who, in order to fulfil his contract and make a substantial profit, had collected revenue arbitrarily, without regard to the district's resources. As a result the peasants had been subjected to severe oppression and had either resisted his authority or

1. P.C.R., 17 March, 1783, R. 68, vol. 21.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 26 May, 1783, R. 68. vol. 22.

deserted their homes. The people had been reduced to poverty, and the revenue-paying capacity of the estate severely reduced.¹

Thus, in the following year, Evelyn continued, the Committee still hoping for an increase in the revenues had tried a new experiment of appointing amils on a fixed salary. These temporary amils like the temporary farmer had no permanent interest in the welfare of the ryots or of the estate. They pursued the same rackrenting method as the farmer had done. They had collected the rents of the ryots who had deserted from those who had remained, and not content with this, had exacted more than was in total due. If inspite of this harsh treatment any parganah was still in arrears, Evelyn believed this was due solely to real inability to pay, though for want of reliable mufassil accounts it was difficult to be sure if any arrears were realizable.²

It is surprising that these repeated failures did not discourage the Committee from still further

1. P.C.R., 26 May, 1783, R. 68, vol. 22.

2. Ibid. The Committee nevertheless ordered Evelyn to examine the amils accounts in the hope of securing more from them.

experiments. Even after the failure of the amildari system, a thirst for higher revenues led the President of the Committee to write new suggestions for a settlement of Rajshahi.¹ He revealed that he had already had two proposals - one from the Rani offering Rs.24,00,000 for the current year with an increase of Rs.50,000 in each of the next two years,² and another from Pran Bose, the former amil of Bhaturia, offering to farm the whole zamindari at the present revenue, less a deduction on account of the drought affecting Rajshahi proper.³ But both proposals were rejected by the Committee. They held that the Rani's offer was far below the current yield of the zamindari and they refused to consider any such concession such as Bose demanded,⁴ holding that though parts of the district were affected by drought this was not sufficient ground for a reduction in the demand. Moreover Pran Bose they knew from past experience could not be trusted with so large a farm, and his security was inadequate.⁵

1. P.C.R., 14th April, 1783, R. 68, Vol. 22.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Farming by outsiders was bound to be a failure, for the interest of the zaminder was bound to clash with that of the farmer and eventually the Company would be the loser. In this respect the Committee's judgement was perfectly correct. In rejecting Rani's offer, however, the Committee was surely at fault: guided by the principle of maximum realization, they were prepared to ignore both past experience and the capacity of the lands and welfare of the ryots.

Having rejected these two proposals, the Committee turned again to khas collection.¹ They entrusted Evelyn, with his wide local experience, with the carrying out of the new settlement. He was given a free hand in deciding upon terms and the period of the settlement, and urged him to ascertain the real revenue-paying capacity of the district and to form an equitable assessment, designed to be advantageous to the country and the Company.² He was therefore to examine the complex land tenures of the district and the resources of the zamindari, including those of the Rani and her dependents. This new examination was

1. P.C.R., 14 April, 1783, R. 63, vol. 22.
2. Ibid. 14 April, 1783, R. 68, vol. 22.

necessary if the husbandman was to be relieved from overtaxation, as the Committee wished, while the decline in the revenue was at the same time halted.¹ From 1765 to 1770 the average yearly revenue receipts had been Rs. 27,02,400, from 1770 to 1777-78 the net Sadar receipt did not exceed Rs. 21,75,583. The staggering decline was in large part due to the 1769-70 famine and subsequent fall in grain prices, to government's abolition of many abwabs and taxes in 1772, and to locally unfavourable seasons. But the Committee suspected that other major causes existed. Lavish grants of land to government servants at nominal rates, and the alienation of lands under the name of Bazi Zamin and Chakaran lands by the Zamindar and her servants were believed to have fraudulently and unlawfully reduced the revenues.² Evelyn was ordered to investigate such abuses and to resume such lands, though to avoid popular hostility he was to do no more than examine the validity of the title deeds of lands allotted for charitable or religious purposes.³ With respect to the relief to be granted to the ryots the

1. P.C.R., 14 April, 1783, R. 68, vol. 22.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Committee laid down that relief "must depend on the state of the lands. When real inability to pay the Jama exists, it would be cruel to fix an assessment which can only be levied by distress".¹ They had found by experience that rackrenting the peasants led to desertions and ultimately to greater losses to the Company and that the welfare of the ryots was inseparably connected with that of the Company. They also asked Evelyn to enquire whether the ryots were still victims of any of the abwabs and mathauts they had declared illegal.² Here too personal investigation was vital, and Evelyn was asked to visit all parts of the zamindari to see conditions for himself. It was on the basis of his report that they could hope to reach an equitable settlement for the district.³

To enable Evelyn to spend time touring the different divisions of the zamindari, the Committee appointed an assistant, George Burrows, to Rajshahi.⁴ They also allowed the following establishment for the

1. P.C.R., 14 April, 1783, R. 68, vol. 22.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. H. Misc., 10 June, 1783, vol. 351

district: One diwan at Rs.300 per month, one naib at Rs.150 per month, Rs.100 for amins, and Rs.25,000 per annum for the pay of thanadars and barkandazes.¹

When Evelyn took charge of khas management at the beginning of June 1783, his first plan was to secure efficient administration by dividing the entire zamindari into smaller units under naibs. But by 20 June, having failed to find competent and trustworthy naibs, he turned to a partial farming plan.² He proposed that Rajshahi proper be given in farm to Balaram Sharma, Jai Narain Sen, Rudra Narain Sen, Ramkanta Sharma and Kamal Chaudhury who jointly agreed to farm the division paying a net revenue of eight lakhs of rupees without the right to claim any deductions in future.³ Evelyn pointed out that eight lakhs was very little less than the demand of the previous year, and that it was well worth settling for a lower figure to avoid the demands for deductions which farmers and amils had in the past raised whenever they were running deficits. More important still, the security for the farmers was the Zamindar herself, so that in case of failure in the revenues government could forfeit her allowances or sell her lands to make good the

1. P.C.R., 2 June, 1783, R. 68, vol. 23.
 2. Ibid., 3 July, 1783, R. 68, vol. 24.
 3. Ibid.

deficiency.¹ He summed up,

"I look upon the proposals as fair, and advantageous to government" Had I any prospect of increasing the revenues I would not recommend the proposals, but it does not appear to me, that so much can be realized by a Khas collection."²

The Committee agreed to his plan on 3 July and on 12 July he reported the conclusion of a farming settlement for three years, at Rs.8,00,001 and Rs.8,05,790 and Rs.8,11,576 respectively.³ The Committee having rejected the offer of the Rani to manage the whole zamindari had thus come to agree to her managing Rajshahi proper through a group of Katkinadars or underfarmers, for, as Evelyn had made clear, the farming proposal had come from the Rani, and it was the backing of the Rani which made the offer acceptable.

Rajshahi proper settled, Evelyn went on tour through Bhaturia and Bhusna. Here he could find no reliable farmers and he therefore suggested their management khas.⁴ Evelyn recognised that the success of this

1. P.C.R., 3 July, 1783, R. 68, vol. 24

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 21 July, 1783, R. 68, vol. 24

4. Ibid.

plan would depend on the fidelity and activity of the persons employed by government, but he hoped that Khas management might provide a clearer picture of the real assets of the two divisions.¹ Despite the hazards of direct management which had led the Provincial Council at Murshidabad to reject it in 1774, the Committee approved Evelyn's plan, which fixed the demand for the two divisions in 1783-84 at Rs.16,73,630. They sanctioned a yearly expenditure of Rs.21,216 for the carrying out of the plan.

For the whole zamindari the revenue demand for 1783-84 thus came to Rs.24,73,630² - little more than the sum offered by the Rani and rejected as inadequate by the Committee. Evelyn admitted that it was not an exact picture of the resources of Rajshahi for that would only be available after a general and minute investigation of all Bazi Zamin and other secreted lands.³ But he had been guided by the accounts and actual collections of the past three years, and had taken due note of the signs of exhaustion in the zamindari. He admitted that large

1. P.C.R., 21 July, 1783, R. 68, vol. 24.

2. Ibid., 16 October, 1783, R. 68, vol. 26.

3. Ibid.

number of ryots had deserted - "in some parganahs whole villages were empty" and his decision not to farm Bhaturia and Bhusna was based on his wish to restore stability and to promote confidence in the peasants.¹ He had likewise issued positive instructions to the naibs not to levy any illegal cesses or any rent on account of ryots who had deserted.² He recognised, and allowed for, some initial difficulty in introducing khas management. Some arrears were to be expected

"especially upon a new settlement, and from the unsettled state of the country; the people's want of confidence and the introduction of new men into mufassil a greater is to be apprehended this year, but as time and attention will remove these causes. I did not think them sufficient to justify a greater decrease in the Jama than what has been granted, and however this year's collection may fall short, I am in hopes that the whole Jama will be realized the next."³

However, Evelyn did not have the chance to justify his confidence in the combination of khas and farming which

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1. P.C.R., 16 October, 1783, R. 68, vol. 26.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

he had created for Rajshahi since in August he was recalled to the Revenue Committee on the orders of the Supreme Council.

In September 1783, after Dulal Roy as diwan had temporarily supervised collections upon Evelyn's departure, the Committee appointed George Dallas as supervisor of the Rajshahi collections, with Michael Atkinson and George Burrows as assistants. Dallas took charge in October 1783.¹ He had soon to report a deficit of over two lakhs which had accumulated since April.²

In Rajshahi proper	Rs.33,954=8=7
In Bhaturia	Rs.92,148=15=10
In Bhusna	Rs.57,388=12=15
In the Bazi Mahals	Rs.36,781=15=9
	Rs.2,20,274=4=1

For this he mainly blamed the severe drought which had already begun to affect the crops. On 18 November he confirmed that serious damage had been caused by drought

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1. P.C.R., 1 September, 1783, R. 68, vol. 25. Dallas was previously an assistant to Mr. Chapman, the collector of Rangpur. His allowance was fixed at Rs.1200 per month plus Rs. 300 for house rent.
 2. Ibid., 13 October, 1783, R. 68, vol. 26.

especially in the Barendra or high land parganahs and in Rajshahi proper.¹ By that date six high land parganahs of Bhaturia alone were in deficit to the tune of Rs.2,28,568.² Drought was the main cause, but the impoverishment of the ryots by excessive collections in the previous year was an additional cause: Dallas referred the Committee on this point to the representations of Girudlal Mullick the Chakladar of Bhaturia about the multitude of cesses collected there in 1782-83.³ Dallas promised however to ensure that the drought was not made the pretext for defrauding the government and that he would seek to discover the real causes of the poverty and chronic deficits in Rajshahi.⁴

The Committee, on receipt of this disturbing news, urged Dallas to investigate those parganahs where the deficit was heaviest and report on the causes, taking care that he did not rely entirely on the reports of the naibs and other agents who might try to cover up their own misdeeds and peculations.⁵ It is apparent, however, that the Committee was not unsympathetic towards the

1. P.C.R., 27 November, 1783, R. 68, vol. 27.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

distressed ryots, for they added,

"it is not our intention that the people be harassed by demands above their abilities to answer."¹

Dallas should guard them against over-assessment and offer relief to those who had suffered from the drought. Government also sought to mitigate the effects of crop failure by abolishing all duties on the movement of food stuffs and by ordering Dallas and other collectors to be vigilant against the activities of monopolists.² Dallas was even advised to fix food grain prices so as to protect the poorer classes, and was also asked to personally investigate the extent of the damage and the position of food reserves in the affected parganahs.³

By the first week of December the total collection showed a large, though reduced deficit of Rs.1,82,981.⁴ How far this was due to the famine was explained by Dallas in a report of his tour inspection submitted in January 1784. He admitted that crops had been extensively damaged particularly in the upland parganahs.⁵ In Bhaturia he thought that the Barendra

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1. P.C.R., 27 November, 1783, R. 68, vol. 27.
 2. Ibid., 10 November, 1783, R. 68, vol. 27.
 3. Ibid., 27 November, 1783, R. 68, vol. 27.
 4. Ibid. 11 December, 1783, R. 68, vol. 28.
 5. Ibid., 12 January, 1783, R. 68, vol. 29.

land crops had been only half the normal, and that for the whole division the yield was one third below that of a favourable season.¹ From Rajshahi proper there came in February a long statement from the revenue farmers of the damage caused there by the unfavourable season.

"You Gentlemen are well acquainted with the sums we have paid partly by borrowing without having distressed the people, but in consequence of the failure of the seasonable rains we are apprehensive the government revenues cannot be realised it is out of our power to remedy the drought, the ryots are already pressed for their khazna [revenue] and ready to abscond and if the present revenue is rigidly exacted from them they will desert the country, the present balance will be entirely lost and the country will be a desert without the light of a charack [lamp] in it."²

They implored the Committee's sympathy: Our lives and fortunes are at your disposal, we have no intention to take advantage of this unfavourable season to defraud government of its just revenues; but are ready to pay to the last dhan [grain in general] and derham [a coin] we have

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1. P.C.R. 12 January, 1784, R. 68, vol. 29.
 2. Ibid., 19 February, 1784, R. 68, vol. 30.

collected if upon the most rigid scrutiny it shall appear that we have collected more than we have paid we will forfeit double the sum."¹

The Committee, though they directed Dallas to make sure whether the farmers' pleas were justified by a personal inspection, evidently were ready to accept that the division had suffered. They wrote to Dallas:

"it will require your utmost prudence and discretion to temper your demands with a proper mixture of moderation and firmness so as not to encourage the farmers to withhold payment of the whole amount they have or can realize and yet not to compel them from despair to ruin the country by exacting too rigidly the whole rents from those ryots whose crops have been totally or mostly destroyed."²

After his tour Dallas did confirm that Rajshahi proper had suffered. He observed that though there was some exaggeration in the farmers' pleas he knew from his personal experience in Momenshahi which was typical of the upland parts of the division, that the farmers' account

1. P.C.R., 19 February, 1784, R. 68, vol. 30.
2. Ibid.

of the loss by drought was not far from the truth.¹

Dallas accepted, with minor reservations, the farmers' account of the crop failures in Rajshahi, but when, in response to his pressure to clear their deficits they submitted accounts showing that they had paid in Rs.6,89,595 but had collected only Rs.5,70,414 he was plainly sceptical.² He suggested to the Committee that Ramnarain, an experienced man, should be appointed to examine the whole matter. He also suggested that collections be suspended during the enquiry:³ if the farmers' assertions were correct any pressure on them would drive them to extreme measures such as encroaching on the next year's revenues, if they were false the Company could collect any arrears from their security.⁴ Clearly Dallas was anxious to prevent any possible aggravation of the ryots' distress. The Committee, however, believed that the deputation of an amin would achieve little, since at this point he would have to depend on the farmers' statements, and they totally rejected any suspension of the collections. If they were halted, the farmers would be encouraged to

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1. P.C.R., 19 February, 1784, R. 68, vol. 30.
 2. Ibid., 22 March, 1784, R. 68, vol. 30
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

demand remissions on that account and would withhold revenues already collected.¹ The Committee showed that they would not fully trust either the farmers' statement or their collector's report, though finally they did allow Dallas to exercise his discretion in the matter.

Dallas replied by restating his belief that the deputation of an amin was the only effective way of verifying the farmers' statements.² He was already exerting every pressure on them, short of confinement, to fulfil their contract. He refrained from adopting more extreme measures in the belief that these might force them to indiscriminate collection - the very thing to which the Committee on 19 March 1784 had expressed themselves opposed.³ But whether an amin was appointed, we know nothing. Reporting in August, 1784, Dallas, however, remarked that besides a nominal balance of Rs.11,008 in the hands of the farmers of Rajshahi proper, the entire revenues had been realized either from them or from their security⁴. Again the bulk of the deficits were accrued from the divisions that were directly managed

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1. P.C.R., 22 March, 1784, R. 68, vol. 30.
 2. Ibid., 5 April, 1784, R. 68, vol. 31.
 3. Ibid., 5 April, 1784, R. 68, vol. 31.
 4. Ibid., 26 August, 1784, R. 68, vol. 34.

The balance was stated by Dallas to be as follows:¹

In Bhaturia	Rs. 72,175= 0=16=1
In Bhusna	Rs. 18,758= 1= 7=1
In Bazi Mahals	Rs. 40,550=11= 8=2
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	Rs.1,31,483=13=12=0

Drought had been ascertained as the chief cause of their having been arrears, and moreover, from the causes assigned, this balance was considered to be irrecoverable.²

Despite all his personal exertions and his zeal, Dallas did not succeed in realizing the full revenue demand upon the zamindari for 1783-84. The total collection amounted to Rs.23,31,139, thus falling short by Rs. 1,42,491 from the stipulated revenue.³ Of this shortfall the farmers of Rajshahi proper, acting in effect for the Rani, were responsible for Rs.11,008 and the khas management of Bhaturia, Bhusna and Bazi Mahals together Rs.1,31,483. In comparison with the past three years however, the superiority of Dallas's methods was very evident, particularly as there were no subsequent complaints of gross fraud and the extortion of illegal

1. P.C.R., 29 July, 1784, R. 68, vol. 34.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

abwabs and mathauts. His success was more noticeable since the season 1783-84 had been unfavourable and he had to manage with inexperienced officials, a zamindari barely recovering from past mismanagement by the farmer and amils.¹ The Committee fully appreciated the efficiency and zeal exhibited by Dallas, and in their report of 29 July 1784 to the Supreme Council they commended ~~on~~ his active attention to his duties and his realization of revenues with greater success than they had expected.²

For the year 1784-85, the final year of Hastings's governor-generalship, the Committee did not continue with Dallas's mixed arrangement, but accepted a proposal from Rani Bhabani to pay Rs.24,00,000 for the whole zamindari.³ In support of their action the Committee pointed out to the Supreme Council that the new settlement was for a sum greater by Rs.2,37,600 than the average net collection of the last three years. Moreover it was free of any possible plea for future deductions by the terms of the

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1. P.C.R., 29 July, 1784, R. 68, vol. 34.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid., 15 April, 1784, R. 68, vol. 31.

agreement.¹ Undoubtedly the personal enquiries of Evelyn and Dallas had convinced them that nothing was to be gained from any further over assessment, while the success of the farming system in Rajshahi proper had convinced them of the Rani's ability to manage the collections. In effect Hastings's earlier opposition to the Rani had been overborne by experience.

The Committee accordingly wound up the Khas establishment of the previous year and ordered Dallas to put the Rani in immediate possession.² The Rani was ordered to pay her revenues through the collector who would give receipts for each payment. The collections for 1784-85 proceeded smoothly and with little incident, and by the close of the year arrears amounted to only Rs.36,107, as good a result ~~for~~ as had ever been achieved.³ The Rani pleaded for a remission of this sum - she had given her wholehearted attention to the collections, and her failure to achieve the desired goal was caused by matters beyond her control. Her servants had to face opposition and interruption from the officers of the Diwani

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1. P.C.R., 13 May, 1784, R. 68, vol. 32; and B.R.C.
27 May, 1784, R. 50, vol. 52.
 2. P.C.R., 29 April, 1784, R. 68, vol. 32.
 3. Ibid., 18 July, 1785, R. 68, vol. 43.

and Faujdari Adalts, a party of sepoys from Rangpur had carried off the naibs, amins and other servants of Sharubpur, Patladah and Kusumby parganahs, and though her claim to certain Ramna lands had been decided in her favour on investigation by Ramnarain she had not secured possession of them.¹ The Committee, however, refused to listen to these pleas, observing that this pretension was "wholly inadmissable from the express terms of the zamindar's qabuliyat or agreement."² Moreover the truth of her assertions appeared to them to be very dubious. They therefore ordered the Rani to liquidate her arrears immediately on pain of sale of parganah Shahujial. However, as in so many other cases government did not carry into execution the threat to take action to realize their demands.

It will be seen that in the years 1781 to 1785, roughly from the departure of Philip Francis to the resignation of Warren Hastings, four different experiments were tried in Rajshahi by the Committee of Revenue - farming, the amildari system, mixed Khas and farming

1. P.C.R., 18 July, 1785, R. 68, vol. 43.
 2. Ibid.

management and a final reversion to a zamindari settlement. These were indeed the years described by W.W. Hunter as "spent by the Company's servants in tentative efforts at administration."¹

The modest success of the last two years was the result of an abandonment of plans for centralising revenue administration in favour of dependence on English collectors in the district. It was the local knowledge and personal inspection of Evelyn and Dallas which prevented overtaxation and extortion. The Committee had come to realize that such local management was essential. From 1786 the district collectors definitely became the backbone of the whole system of revenue management in Bengal. At the same time, as provided for by Pitt's India Act of 1784 and the instructions issued to Lord Cornwallis as governor-general, the return to zamindari settlements, which had proved so successful in Rajshahi in 1784-85, became generally accepted a policy for all Bengal.

1. W. Hunter, Bengal MS Records, vol. 1, p. 13.

CHAPTER VI

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION (1785-93) TOWARDS THE
PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

While in Rajshahi the experiments of 1781 to 1785 were concluding in a settlement with Rani Bhabani, in London there was a great spate of Parliamentary discussion and proposals relating to the Company's management of Indian affairs, for India had become "one of the nuclear subjects of English politics" in these years.¹ By August 1784 four East India Bills had been before Parliament, of which the last, put forward by Pitt, was passed as India Act, 24 George III, Cap.XXV. The importance of this act, which fixed the shape of British Indian Government for many years, has been repeatedly emphasised.² For our purpose the importance lies in the fact that it was, as Hunter put it, "the starting-point of the Permanent Settlement directed indeed, that 'permanent rules' for the land rents and tributes should be made."³ The preamble to the Act (Section 39) runs,

"And whereas complaints have prevailed that divers rajas, zemindars, and other native landholders have

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1. C.H. Philips, Ed. Historians of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, p.218.
 2. P. Spear, India, p. 211
 3. W.W. Hunter, Op. Cit., vol. I, p. 25.

been unjustly deprived of their lands, jurisdictions, and privileges, or that the tribute, rents and services required to be by them paid or performed for their possessions to the Company; are become grievous and oppressive;"

and it was laid down that an enquiry should be made into these grievances and steps forthwith taken "for effectually redressing all injuries and wrongs which the said landlords may have sustained unjustly" and for settling and establishing the permanent rules by which their respective tributes, rents and services shall be in future rendered and paid to the Company."¹ Here was an open admission of the failure of Hastings's system and of the need for a radical change.²

Pitt's Ministry had offered no public support to Warren Hastings and their measure had not provided him with any means of controlling his Council such as he had long desired. In October 1784 the Board of Control, opening its attack on the Indian interest in the Directorate, opposed Sullivan's move to extend Hastings's term of office for a year and stated that it did not consider him a suitable

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1. G.W. Forrest, Selections from the State Papers of the Governor-General of India - Lord Cornwallis, vol. I, pp. 195-96. And also see R. Muir, op. cit. pp. 170-78 (for important sections of the India Act, George III, Cap. XXV)
 2. R. Guha, op. cit., p. 161.

person to carry out the policy of retrenchment urgently required in India.¹ Conscious that he could no longer expect support from home, Hastings on 13th January, 1785, announced his intention to resign, and on 1st February he formally made over charge to John Macpherson.

Macpherson contributed nothing to the formulation of a new revenue policy for Bengal. His administration was marked by caution and hesitation, by aversion to "any sudden or abrupt change" by vacillation and a complete absence of initiative and drive.² Decisions, therefore, came from below, from the Board of Revenue. This was one of four departments created by the order of the Court of Directors as part of a policy of decentralization.³ This was a reversal of Hastings's policy, and coupled with greater reliance upon the Collectors - whom he had distrusted - initiated the creation of a strong local administrative system.

Within two months of the departure of Hastings, the Committee of Revenue, as it still was, propounded as a general policy, settlement with the zamindars for an initial period of one year, "with an assurance, however

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1. C.H. Philips, The East India Company, 1784-1834, pp.41-42
 2. R. Guha, op. cit., p.p. 164-65.
 3. Letters Received, 22 Dec., 1785, Para. 30. The departments were: the Board of Council; a Military Board; a Board of Revenue; a Board of Trade.

that the duration of it would be extended from year to year so long as they continued to pay up their stipulated revenue".¹ Their aim was to extend zamindari settlement, not at the expense of farming, perhaps because there were vested interests involved there, but in place of khas collection directly under official management. The Committee accordingly renewed the settlement of Rajshahi with Rani Bhabani for 1785-86, 1192 B.S.. The previous year's settlement had been for Rs. 24,00,000 with the promise of an increase of Rs.25,000 in each subsequent year (up to 1788).² With the monthly stipend allowed to the Rani, and expenses for collection, the maintainance of law and order and for charitable and religious establishments, the net revenue payment due in 1785-86 came to Rs.20,80,732.³

The zamindari settlement with Rani Bhabani thus preceded the notable discussion in the Council and in Board of Revenue initiated in April 1785 by Charles Stuart, a member of the Governor-General's Council. Stuart's "Plan for Collecting the Revenues" was intended

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1. P.C.R., 31 March, 1785, R. 68, vol. 40-2, B.R.C., 22 April, 1785, R. 50, vol. 58
 2. Ibid., 15 April, 1784, R. 68, vol. 31.
 3. Ibid.

he said to put into effect the wishes of the India Act of 1784 regarding the zamindars.¹ Criticising the Plan of 1781 which had reduced the collectors to mere figure-heads by entrusting the task of revenue collection to the Presidency, he argued that over centralization had proved to be neither economic nor advantageous to the Company, and the zamindars. For rectifying these gross defects he proposed that the revenue should be settled with "every zamindar who is not totally incapable" and where the zamindar was a minor, female or otherwise incompetent, with a near relative or old servant of the family.² Further he proposed that the settlement should be permanent, allowing for a one year settlement in the first place only so as to permit the Court of Directors to give their sanctions.³ (It will be seen that the Committee of Revenues' proposal of 31 March in effect had provided for this). The demand should normally be based on the average for the years 1773-74 to 1775-76, generally held to have been a very reasonable assessment. He pointed out: "From the best information I have been

1. B.R.C., 10 May, 1785, R. 50, vol. 58.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

able to obtain this was considered a very equitable jumma."¹ However, he agreed to allow a certain amount of flexibility in the rate of assessment and added that the officers "need not be absolutely confined to the rate of assessment mentioned in the first part of the Plan". Only the three years' average was "to be taken for the basis of all their settlements".²

Finally any default in revenue payments should be made good by sale of part of the zamindar's estate.³ On the administrative side his recommendation included union of administrative and judicial powers to the collectors. He strongly advocated the appointment of English officers as Collectors, and the grant of adequate salaries for their duties. He observed: "Government benefitted more by the former system of employing collectors than they do by the present one."⁴

Stuart's Plan was completely in agreement with Shore's memorandum, which infact had been prepared as early as 1782, in Hastings's day.⁵ Macpherson, who was

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1. B.R.C., 10 May, 1785, R. 50, vol. 58.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid., 18 May, 1785, R. 50, vol. 58.

noted for his indecision and ambiguities, however, refused to commit himself to so definite a shift in favour of the zamindars, for there were also many voices in the Committee of Revenue, and from among the Collectors who continued to support the farming system.¹ Though those who favoured a zamindari settlement, rather on the lines Francis had proposed in 1776, could now speak out as they had not dared to do under Hastings, they had by no means won the day as yet. The zamindari settlement with the Rani Bhabani must be seen therefore, as more a following up of the successful settlement of 1784-85 than as a victory for the theory of zamindari rights.² The far from satisfactory outcome of settlement with the Rani in 1785-86 was to lead, infact, to a serious attack upon the zamindari settlement in Rajshahi.

The total revenue payment from Rajshahi for the year 1785-86 amounted to only Rs.20,18,753, thus leaving a deficit of Rs.4,06,247.³ The Rani again claimed a reduction on account of the Ramna lands occupied by the Nawab, which was disallowed, and also attributed the

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1. B.R.C., 18 May, 1785, R. 50, vol. 58.
On the question of unit ng responsibilities of justice and revenue collection in the collectors, Macpherser differed with both Shore and Stuart. In his characteristic way he remarked "I very much doubt whether we are as yet sufficiently advanced to risk the consequences of vesting so unchecked a power generally in the hands of our servants."
 2. P.C.R., 15 April, 1784, R. 68, vol. 31.
 3. B.R.P., 18 June, 1789, R. 71, vol. 10.

deficit to the destruction of crops by floods. There is little to doubt, however, that the estate was badly mismanaged by her men of business, especially Chand Thakur and his relatives, who took full advantage of the Rani's old age and charitable disposition. Peter Speke, who succeeded George Dallas as Collector of Rajshahi in February 1786, in a letter to Graham on 16 June, gave a picture at the end of the revenue year of a thoroughly disordered zamindari.¹ It would seem that the Committee of Revenue's decision to make a settlement for only one year at a time had revived uncertainty and had led the Rani's servants to join in plundering and rackrenting the ryots, much as the farmers had done, and with the same consequences of diminished cultivation and desertion of land by the ryots.²

Speke still believed that, despite the damage inflicted by the recent drought, the zamindari could yield the equitable demand of 1784-85 if the assets of the district were fairly assessed and the estate properly managed,. Government could "obtain a fair revenue without

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1. B.R.P., 20 October, 1786, R. 70, vol. 20.
By serving as an assistant to the Collector of Rangpur and then Secretary to the Dinajpur Provincial Council in the past, Speke had acquired considerable knowledge in the revenue administration. From 1778 to 1785 as a Resident he was in charge of the Company's silk factory at Jungypur.
 2. Ibid.

oppressing the ryots or depriving the zamindar of the means of support."¹ That it had not done so was due to the embezzlement and maladministration of Chand Thakur, the Rani's principal adviser, and of her diwan Ramkishore. He claimed that they had actually collected much more than the government demand, and that Chand Thakur and his dependents had misappropriated not less than two lakhs of rupees by sub-renting lands at low rates from the zamindar or by alienating them altogether from the revenue paying lands.² Speke argued that both the Rani and her son were powerless to check these illegal practices while Chand Thakur enjoyed real authority without responsibility. He therefore urged the Committee to save the zamindari from ruin either by investing Raja Ramkrishna with full authority over the zamindari or by taking it again under direct khas management.³ Either scheme would be far better than leaving the estate in the hands of the Rani.

In June the Board of Revenue took two measures to meet the situation.⁴ The one was to deprive the Rani of her stipend, the other was to appoint one of their

1. B.R.P., 20 October, 1786, R. 70, vol. 20

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3. Ibid.

4. The Board of Revenue came into existence on 1 June, 1786, to replace the Committee of Revenue. John Stable was appointed as President; and William Cowper, Thomas Graham, John Mackenzie, Richard Johnson and John Evelyn were members.

members, Thomas Graham to enquire into the real situation of the zamindari and make a settlement for the year 1786-87.¹ He reported on 21 June, raising as Speke had done the two vital questions of the destructive effect of Chand Thakur's influence on the aged Rani and the problem of succession to the Rani. He agreed with Speke in proposing to invest Raja Ramkrishna, the Rani's adopted son, with sole authority. Such a step would both check the growing oppression and exploitation of the peasants and give additional security to the public revenues.² It would also have been quite in line with Stuart's proposals of April 1785. Unfortunately the Committee was not unanimous in wishing to hand over the Rani's authority in this way, and in face of strong opposition of John Mackenzie who, like his mentor Francis, thought such a step would be harsh and premature, it was decided to make the settlement with Rani Bhabani for a further year.³ Graham did waive the increase of Rs.25,000 to which government was entitled under the agreement of 1783, however, expressing the hope that the settlement would then prove just and reasonable. With

1. B.R.P., 20 October, 1786, R. 70, vol. 20.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

tranquility in the country and the ryots' confidence restored he believed there would be no want of resources to meet the revenue demand.¹

Despite Grahar's hopes the actual collections were again mismanaged by the Rani and by the middle of October 1786, the district was nearly two and a half lakhs in default.² Speke, reporting on 3 November to the Board, maintained that under the present management these arrears could never be realized without resort to extreme measures.³ The Board agreed and authorized Speke to act as he thought expedient, either taking the zamindari under khas management or entrusting it to some other member of the family upon proper security.⁴ Early in December, however, the deficit still stood at Rs.2,32,000 and Speke reported to the Board that in view of the practical difficulties involved he had adopted none of their suggestions.⁵ He thought that the attachment of the Rani's private lands and those of her dependents was the most effective of the measures proposed, but even this would require a lengthy inquiry to ascertain and separate them from the revenue paying lands, would

1. B.R.P., 20 October, 1786, R. 70, vol. 20.

2. Ibid., 6 November, 1786, R. 70, vol. 21.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 14 December, 1786, R. 70, vol. 22.

necessarily arouse much opposition and would cause further confusion in the district.¹ He was still less enthusiastic about making a khas collection in such a vast zamindari. It would evoke even stronger resistance and he was not confident of being able to find a new body of revenue officials at brief notice for such a complicated collection.² Transfer at so odd a time would also imperil further collections since the zamindari was sure to stop further payments as soon as she received any hint of the new plan, and might act in collusion with refractory ryots to frustrate it.³ He therefore suggested that the most suitable plan would be to farm out the major divisions of Rajshahi, the farmers to pay their respective shares of the Sadar Jama after deducting what had already been realized by the zamindar.⁴ But they must be given a positive assurance that the settlement would be made with them for at least the two ensuing years. He ended with an attack upon the Rani for her maladministration of the zamindari.⁵

On 12 December, he renewed his attack upon the old Rani, holding that her continuance in charge benefitted no one but her protégé Chand Thakur, the cause of the

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1. B.R.P., 14 December, 1786, R. 70, vol. 22.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

estate's impending ruin. The obvious remedy, he declared, was to install Raja Ramkrishna in control of the zamindari and to grant the Rani a handsome pension for the rest of her life.¹ He had therefore issued a parwana to the zamindar threatening her that if she did not clear up her arrears immediately Ramkrishna would be called to Calcutta. This, Speke argued, was bound to induce Chand Thakur and his associates to speed up payment of the balance, since it was in their interest that the Rani should continue in possession to the exclusion of Ramkrishna. If the threat did not succeed then it was up to the Board to invest the Raja with sole authority in opposition to the Rani's advisors.²

With Speke's letter the Board had also to consider a petition from the Rani. She put forward her claim to the stipend agreed to in 1783, assuring the Board that if her allowance were restored she would have no difficulty in liquidating the current arrears.³ John Evelyn, a member of the Board, supported the Rani's appeal, arguing that the present settlement was nothing but a yearly renewal of that of 1783, with all its conditions.

1. B.R.P., 18 December, 1786, R. 70, vol. 22.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Thomas Graham, who had concluded the current settlement denied this, stating that neither the Rani nor her advisers had claimed the stipend when entering into the agreement with him. He remarked,

"I do not think that the plea now advanced for her non-payment of her revenues stipulated by her engagements for this year is admissable."

The majority agreed with Graham.¹

The Board, under Acting President William Cowper then turned to Speke's proposals for reform, and decided that Raja Ramkrishna should be given temporary charge of the zamindari for the current year, on furnishing security for the arrears already incurred as well as the remainder of the collections.² If he agreed, the collector should invest him with full authority and give him every assistance in fulfilling his contract.³ Against these proposals Mackenzie once more spoke out vigorously in defence of the Rani. He criticised Speke's report as ambiguous, since he did not state whether the Rani had failed to discharge the arrears of October-November, as the Board had ordered. He pointed out that the amount so far collected was encouraging

1. B.R.P., 18 December, 1786, R. 70, vol. 22.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

in comparison with the preceding year, and he described the belief of the President that the Rani would be in default as a "premature conclusion".¹ Moreover it would be an act of injustice to remove the Rani before it had been properly determined whether the balance was due to her mismanagement or to overassessment. If the lands were unequal to the demand upon them the Rani would merit consideration and indulgence, for she had probably accepted the present terms from dread of losing her zamindari. There should be unquestionable proof of fault before the fate of one of the principal and most ancient zamindars was decided by the Board.² Mackenzie also objected that the claims of Raja Ramkrishna to the zamindari were still sub-judice, and raised the question of maintenance for the Rani if she were ejected.³ He ended with a denunciation of the move proposed against the Rani as a punishment "severe, premature and violent" and requested the Board to inform the Governor-General in Council of his objection before they took any final decision. The majority however did not choose to alter their verdict but wrote to the collector authorizing him to invest the

1. B.R.P., 18 December, 1786, R. 70, vol. 22.

2. Ibid.

Raja with the charge of the zamindari.¹

The Board's instructions were issued on 18 December 1786, but Speke again chose to ignore instead of implementing them. By the end of December the arrears had reached three lakhs and Mackenzie proposed that Speke should be censured for his failure to realize the entire revenue, despite the wide powers granted to him.² By the end of February the arrears had mounted to five lakhs, and the revenue year closed with a deficit of Rs.4,48,863.³ In order to make this good the Board ordered the collector to advertise Sharubpur for sale and the Preparer of Reports not to entertain any excuse from the Rani unless she paid up in full. Speke's final comment, after he had claimed that he had done all in his power to obtain success, was that the balance was due to the restrictions of the Act of 1784 which had supported the continuance of the zamindar in all circumstances.⁴

Meanwhile, on 12 September, 1786, Lord Cornwallis had reached Bengal and had taken over the governor-generalship from Macpherson. He came out armed with

1. B.R.P., 18 December, 1786, R. 70, vol. 22

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. 14 August, 1787, R. 70, vol. 32.

The Rani had claimed Rs.1,40,000 on account of inundations in 1786, and Speke, endorsing the claim, had suggested that Rs.75,000 be allowed on that account. Her continued claim to Rs.2,50,000 as stipend was rejected.

4. Ibid. 13 April 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.

instructions to effect some permanent settlement of the revenues of Bengal.¹ The Court of Directors were thoroughly dissatisfied with the revenue administration. The search for higher revenues had led to the ejection of hereditary landholders to make room for farmers, sazawals and amins who had drained and impoverished the country.² The collectors had been converted into mere figure-heads, without any voice in the making of the settlements. They suggested that to avoid future loss there should be a permanent settlement of the revenues with the zamindars at an assessment based upon the average of actual collections. The demand once fixed upon the zamindars should be considered as unalterable.³ They concluded:

" A moderate jumma or assessment, regularly and punctually collected, unites the consideration of our interest with happiness of the natives and sincerity of the land holders, more rationally than any imperfect collection of an exaggerated jumma to be enforced with severity and vexation."⁴

The Court counselled, however, that the settlement in the first instance should be for only ten years.

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1. W.W. Hunter, Bengal MS Records, vol I (1782-1807) p.24.
 2. Despatches to Bengal, 12 April, 1786, vol. 15.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid., & also see Forrest's "Selections - Lord Cornwallis" vol.II, p. 198

The Court of Directors had assumed that the experience accumulated and investigations conducted in the twenty years since 1765 would form a sufficient basis for the Decennial Settlement.¹ But Cornwallis was not satisfied that he had the information he required and he postponed any long term settlement, reverting for the time being to a system of annual leases. At the same time he ordered new enquiries by the district officers into the the status and position of the zamindars. The Board of Revenue was directed to issue a circular to the collectors asking for the following information:² What new taxes had been imposed during the last three years, what oppression the ryots suffered from the zamindars and under-farmers in the course of the collections, and what government intervention was needed to protect them from illegal exactions; what were the defects in the existing system of collection and whether there was collusion between the zamindars, under-farmers and ryots; how far the government should resort to sale of zamindari lands for default and how far it should hold women or minors responsible for the actions of their agents; and finally, what was the fair and equitable demand upon their districts.

1. W.K. Firminger's - Fifth Report, vol. II, p. 20
2. B.R.P., 13 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.

The investigations took nearly two years to complete, but Speke submitted his first replies to the circular of 20 February as early as 31 March 1787.¹ They were almost universally hostile to the zamindari system. Speke reported that the zamindar constantly imposed new taxes - in the last three years to the extent of two lakhs of rupees.² The zamindar's need to give security for due payment of revenue, only ended by the Board in 1787, had been made an excuse for such extra taxes. He believed that the zamindars were in general oppressive in proportion to their power and arbitrary taxation was often accompanied by corporal punishment, imprisonment and sometimes by the sale of the ryots' ploughs, bullocks and seed grain. He had issued parwanas forbidding the putting of ryots in irons except for highway robbery, but the powers vested in him were insufficient to prevent oppression.³ He criticised the Act of 1784 for its excessive bias towards the zamindars, whose excesses and revenue defaulting were in consequence too leniently treated.⁴

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1. B.R.P., 13 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid., 17 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.
 4. Ibid.

He did not comment upon the hereditary rights of zamindars but observed that though by their sanads they were charged with extensive and important functions at present they confined themselves "to getting as much money as they can out of the country, and paying as little as they can to government."¹ He suggested a revision of the existing qabuliyats and muchalkas to bind penalties upon the zamindars and their agents for any breach or nonperformance of the agreements. He held that there was no effectual precaution against default in the payment of kists, and went on "a government so mild as ours must become in time totally inefficient, if the penalties it chooses to exact, do not inevitably follow the crime."² He could offer no general advice about governments' relations with minor or female zamindars and their diwans. But he pointed out that the Rani's diwan, in charge of one of the premier zamindaris of Bengal, enjoyed a unique position and was exempt from imprisonment for default.³ Since he was the pivot of all zamindari affairs, Speke recommended that government should take a strong attitude towards him and be ready at need to imprison him for the

1. B.R.P., 13 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

recovery of balance. A certain amount of coercion was essential to ensure punctual payment.¹

As regards the revenue demand Speke pointed out that the Rani had pleaded time and time again that her estate did not yield the amount fixed upon it. But in the absence of a regular survey and measurement he could not suggest an equitable revenue demand on Rajshahi.² He believed that there was much fraud and deception on the part of the under-farmers - were not so^y the accumulation of taxes since the Dewany must have depopulated the country." Their methods were two - either they held a greater quantity of lands than stated in the patta or they held them at less than their real value. Both these advantages were obtained by bribing the patwaris and outwals of the villages. As a result the zamindar found an excuse for oppression and illegal exactions; the threat of measurement always produced a nazaranah, jarib maucouf, either to the zamindar or to the amin deputed to make the survey.³ To prevent this the form of patta should be changed and a complete measurement of the land undertaken. Otherwise he could give ^{no} adequate

1. B.R.P., 13 April, 1787, vol. 26.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

relief from new taxes to the ryots.¹ He pointed out, however, that both zamindar and ryots would unite to defeat a survey, the surveyors and examiners could easily be bribed and he himself believed that no one but a zamindar could judge the quality and infinite variety of soil, while to take account of the further variations in value due to local circumstance was beyond the comprehension of anyone who had not made it his life study.²

While these enquiries were in progress and Speke was making his rather unhelpful report, the Board of Revenue was preparing to make settlements for the year 1787-88 A.D., 1194 B.S. For Rajshahi the Board decided to continue the settlement with the Rani, despite her heavy balance and inefficient management. But they laid down stringent conditions for her future conduct.³ She was to liquidate her arrears immediately and accept a raised demand of Rs.24,25,000 gross revenue, without deduction on account of stipend. Her expenditure on the revenue establishment should be fixed by government and her Sadar Kachari and staff of zamindari servants should be placed under the direct supervision of the collector.⁴

1. B.R.P., 13 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 17 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.

4. Ibid.

When the mufassil settlements had been arranged, the zamindar should deliver to the collector a list of the farmers and naibs and the amounts for which they had engaged. The sadar collection of revenues would be managed by the zamindar's servants but they would be responsible for performance of their duties to the collector.¹ At the Bhaturia and Bhusna Sadar Kacharis naibs would be posted to supervise the collections on his behalf. Should any dispute over the collections occur between the government and zamindar, an amin should be appointed, at the latter's expense.² If the ryots were found victim of any exactions or oppressions the collector should have full power to punish the offenders and compel restitution. All abwabs imposed by the zamindar during the past three years should be abolished and the zamindar was authorized to resume such remissions as might have been fraudulently obtained by the ryots during these years. Finally, the zamindar was held responsible for the full payment of the revenues to government.³

The Board thus supported a zamindari settlement in Rajshahi, being ready to give the Rani another chance to improve her record of administration. But they had

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1. B.R.P., 17 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

greatly enhanced the collector's powers, and they made it clear that the zamindar "as an officer of government" would be held liable not only for the regular payment of revenues but also for the prosperity and happiness of the ryots.¹ Further, they held that government had an absolute right to dispossess any zamindar incompetent to discharge his duties, and they warned the Rani that if she would not accept their terms, the collector would be authorized to take the collections out of her hands and manage the zamindari khas.¹ The alternative solution, of investing Raja Ramkrishna with the management of the estate they set aside for the time being, since his claim had still to be fully decided by the Governor-General in Council.²

The Board seemed to welcome the possibility of khas management of Rajshahi. They believed that ably run the estate was capable of yielding a much higher revenue than that paid by the zamindar and that khas collection would help them to ascertain the real value of the zamindari. The information would be very useful in preparing a permanent settlement with the zamindar.³ Moreover, they argued, "considering the situation of the zamindar, a temporary

1. B.R.P., 17 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

deprivation of the management of her lands, cannot be deemed an act of severity, infact it, may be considered as an act of humanity, since it releases her from the consequence of the actions of others, which she cannot regulate or control."¹

Such an attitude in the Board fitted well with Speke's distrust of or hostility towards the zamindar, and it is not surprising that on 12 May, 1787, Speke should have announced that he had suspended the authority of the zamindar and himself assumed direct control of Rajshahi.² He explained that though he had urged the Rani to preserve her authority and avoid the sale of additional lands by making good her deficiency, she was still over two lakhs in arrears, so that he was compelled to adopt khas management of the zamindari.³ As a preliminary step he had deputed amins to procure the mufassil accounts and to circulate government's orders for the relief of the ryots, so as to encourage deserters to return to the cultivation of their lands.⁴ The amins, he hoped, would detect the embezzlement of the zamindari servants, who in the past had submitted ready-made accounts, exhibiting the assets of the estate as only twenty three lakhs, without regard for any increase or decrease in the resources of the estate. They

1. B.R.P., 17 April, 1787, R. 70, vol. 26.

2. Ibid., 18 May, 1787, R. 70, vol. 28.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

might also discover resources from which the arrears could be paid off, without further land sales.¹ He himself intended to visit the various divisions of Rajshahi to ensure the equity and success of the settlement.

Speke started in June with Niz Rajshahi, Rajshahi proper, for which he had Evelyn's settlement as a model, appointing naibs instead of farming out the lands.² Bhaturia he put in charge of his assistant Michael Atkinson. On 29 July, however, he complained to the Board of the difficulty of making a reasonable settlement for one year. The effects of the floods in Bhaturia had aggravated these difficulties, and he suggested that the terms should be modified and the settlement extended for a further year.³ To this the Board reacted sharply; they would make no alteration in the current annual settlement, they censured Speke for suggesting its extension for a second year, and they warned him that he would be answerable for any loss caused by the delay in formulating the settlement.⁴

1. B.R.P., 18 May, 1787, R. 70, vol. 28.

2. Ibid., 5 June, 1787, R. 70, vol. 29.

3. Ibid., 10 August, 1787, R. 70, vol. 32.

4. Ibid.

The revenue collection under direct management had in fact, started well. By the end of August 1787 the deficit, at Rs.1,32,289 was only half that at the corresponding period in 1786.¹ But early in September the whole situation was unexpectedly changed by a terrible cyclone and accompanying floods. These hit a district which Speke gloomily reported to the already suffering from the past mismanagement and continued obstruction of the zamindar's servants.² In league with refractory ryots they prevented his procuring correct hasto-bud accounts of the zamindari and put obstacles in the way of collection. However for the time being he suggested that leniency would be more appropriate than severity, for the ryots had been hit by the destruction of the harvest. He concluded: "I am as little likely to be remiss, whatever the Board may believe, in exacting a fair claim, as another. I am far from the wish to exaggerate difficulties."³

Speke now decided that instead of relying on second hand reports he would go on circuit in Bhatouria to inspect its condition after the disaster of the cyclone and floods and personally to assess the damage to the standing crops. To fill his place at Moradbagh, the

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1. B.R.P., 5 September, 1787, R. 70, vol. 33.
 2. Ibid., 12 October, 1787, R. 70, vol. 34.
 3. Ibid.

the headquarters of the district he asked the Board to appoint John Evelyn who as a former collector had ample experience of local conditions. To this the Board agreed.¹

By November Speke had completed his tour of Bhaturia. He made it clear that the loss from natural calamity had been heavy, but he had found that the heavy arrears were also to be attributed to the unequal treatment of the various types of tenure holder.² There were three tenures - khas, karari and mazquri - and Speke held that only the lands held under the first of these, which paid one-fourth of the total revenues, were properly assessed. Those held under karari and mazquri tenures were under assessed, and being held by powerful renters could not be made to pay their proper share except with much conflict.³ Any attempt to reassess them immediately would make the situation worse confounded. The naibs had often complained about these renters as having been at the root of all troubles in the division.⁴ It may be remarked that many of these abuses had crept into the land tenures after the abolition of the ganungos in 1772, and their restoration in 1781 had ^afiled to eradicate the evils.

The inequalities in assessment could not be dealt

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1. B.R.P., 12 October, 1787, R. 70, vol. 34.
 2. Ibid., 4 December, 1787, R. 70, vol. 35.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

with all at once but to ease the condition of Bhaturia after the floods Speke suggested three remedies. First he proposed that there should be a temporary suspension of revenue collection until December, by which time the ryots could expect to recover from their distress. He also asked the Board's permission to grant remissions where he found this necessary.¹ Secondly, to relieve the revenue farmers he suggested that the settlement with them might be continued for another year or two, provided that they made good their payments after adjustment in the Mazuli Daftar.² They should be answerable for their collections only and not for the sums previously embezzled by the zamindari officials. He also urged, as his successor Tilman Henckell did later, that the farmers should be allowed to enjoy the revenues of any concealed lands discovered by them and of jungles and waste land brought into cultivation by them.³ His third suggestion was that if the Board did not agree to an extension of the farmers' contracts for a second year, then they should be given discretion to defer their demands upon the ryots until the end of December, and be allowed to suspend their payments to Government likewise, giving bonds in lieu of such payments.⁴

1. B.R.P., 4 December, 1787, R. 70, vol. 35.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.; This office had been created in 1782 for the examination and adjustment of disputed accounts, and balances.

4. Ibid.

In anticipation of a favourable response from the Board, Speke proceeded early in December 1787 to farm Bhaturia according to the proposals submitted on 24 November, on the understanding that the contract would be continued if it was satisfactorily fulfilled. He did not grant the farmers any reduction, but agreed to receive part of the revenues by the end of the revenue year, i.e. in April 1788.¹ In reporting this to the Board he asked for their aid by the issue of a parwana to all talugdars, ordering them to pay their dues immediately on pain of forfeiture of their lands to the collector. By these various measures Speke confidently hoped to make good the current deficit in Bhaturia: "I am myself of opinion," he said, "that there are no means so likely to be effectual towards recovering the cultivation of the country."²

The Board, however, showed itself sceptical of the plan for part payment of the revenues by bonds, and though they did not reject it outright as being desired by Mackenzie, they asked for more information about the nature of the bonds and the security to be taken for their payment.³ Again, since the current settlement was only a temporary expedient prior to a permanent zamindari

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1. B.R.P., 4 December, 1787, R. 70, vol. 35.
 2. Ibid., 11 December, 1787, R. 70, vol. 35.
 3. Ibid.

settlement, they expressed their disapproval of the suggestion that the farmers' contracts should be continued for another year. As for the request for power to forfeit talugdari rights in land upon default in revenue payments, this they rejected completely,¹ probably because it ran counter to the spirit of the India Act of 1784. Instead they directed the collector to attach and sell portions of estates to make good deficiencies.

The Board, noting the extraordinary situation created by the floods and cyclone had already decided to send Henry Lodge to act as Commissioner of Rajshahi, with the duty of investigating the stricken areas and assessing the total losses suffered.² While he was at work, Speke was to continue collection only in the least affected areas, granting reasonable remissions to the ryots.³ Lodge reached Rajshahi in mid December, 1787, and accepting Speke's argument that the recent settlement of Bhaturia should not be disturbed, began his investigation in Bhusna and Havily lands, which had also suffered heavily from the cyclone.⁴ Speke warned him that though these parganahs had been let to a responsible man of property and

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1. B.R.P., 11 December, 1787, R. 70, vol. 35.
 2. Ibid., 4 December, 1787, R. 70, vol. 35
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid., 4 January, 1788, R. 70, vol. 37.

character, the intrigues and refractoriness of the ryots and zamindari servants, both out to defeat the khas collection, had caused a great deterioration of the situation there.¹ Speke's hostility to the zamindari system is once again apparent.

By the end of December the arrears in Rajshahi had swollen to Rs. 3,01,344 as the result of natural calamity aggravated, Speke reported, by the frauds of the zamindari servants.² Of the seriousness of the situation there could be no doubt, and Lodge's report to the Board on 1 February 1788, fully confirmed this. However Lodge attributed the pathetic state of Bhusna and Havily to the floods and storm which had severely damaged the crops, swept away houses and cattle and caused much loss of life.³ Large tracts of land had been laid waste, and Lodge recommended general relief from revenue payments for the ryots whose crops had been destroyed, and the grant of tagari loans for the purchase of cattle and seed. Without such aid, these lands would remain uncultivated, and in the famine which had followed the floods the poorer ryots had been compelled to sell their children.⁴

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1. B.R.P., 4 January, 1788, R. 70, vol. 37
 2. Ibid., 29 December, 1787, R. 35.
 3. Ibid., 12 February, 1788, R. 70, vol. 38.
 4. Ibid.

By March 1788 the revenue deficiency had risen to Rs. 4,61,117.¹ The government felt compelled to act. They took steps to ease the situation by abolishing duties on the movement of grains, and they took action against monopolists and hoarders and for the distribution of grain to the famine areas.² They also allowed further remissions of revenue, and Speke took advantage of this to ease the situation in the district. He declared, "although the settlement is for a single year, I have not acted upon principles of temporary convenience but on those of necessary relief to the country and security of future revenues."³ He again advised that further collections of revenue for the year 1787-88 should be suspended: this would encourage the present farmers to think that their leases would be extended.⁴ The Board did infact forbear to send amins to the district to investigate the arrears, arguing that with cultivation for the current year due to begin this would merely increase confusion in the mufassil.⁵ They contented themselves with ordering the farmers to submit their accounts with the warning that if any false accounts were detected they would exact the full amount of the contract without any indulgence.⁶ In

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1. B.R.P., 25 March, 1788, R. 70, vol. 39.
 2. Ibid., 28 March, 1788, R. 70, vol. 39.
 3. Ibid., 25 April, 1788, R. 70, vol. 40.
 4. Ibid., 29 April, 1788, R. 70, vol. 40.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.

May 1788 the Board further sanctioned Rs.30,000 in taqavi loans for the current cultivations, a much larger sum than usual, though not very adequate it would seem to the distress reported by both Speke and Lodge.¹

It might seem that the Board had at last awoken to its responsibilities and had recognised that the havoc caused by the cyclone and floods required real relief to the hard driven ryots. The astonishing this^{ng} is, however, that the Board now chose to make Rani Bhabani bear the burden of the disaster. Her offer to manage the revenues of the zamindari had been rejected, and Speke had been installed to make a khas or revenue settlement. Repeated reports by Speke, Evelyn and Lodge had made it clear that Rajshahi had been the victim of an unusually severe series of natural calamities. Nevertheless the Board's reaction, when they found themselves faced with a deficit of four and a half lakhs, was to order the collector to recommend a suitable portion of the zamindari for sale. Accordingly parganah Rajapur was advertised for auction, and the Rani thus made good the loss to the Company caused by nature and by the inadequacies of their servants' management of the estate.

Having thus squared their books at the Rani's

1. B.R.P., 16 May, 1788, R. 70, vol. 41.

expense the Board turned^{on} /29 April to a consideration of a settlement for 1788-89.¹ The Rani had offered to manage the district at a reduced revenue of twenty one lakhs of rupees, and they forwarded this proposal to the Governor-General in Council, together with alternative proposals for continuing the settlement khas or in farm.² In mid May the Calcutta Council announced their rejection of the Rani's offer and their appointment of James Grant, the chief Serishtadar to the charge of Bhaturia,³ and of T.V. Short to the charge of Bhusna, as assistant to Speke in the management of the Rajshahi revenues.⁴ The Council also instructed the Board to hold the farmers of the previous year answerable for their engagements, though some allowance might be made on account of natural calamities. They approved the grant of Rs.30,000 in taqavi, but warned the collector to prevent the village money lenders advancing money indiscriminately to the ryots. They doubtless had no wish to see any other agency establish first claim upon the ryots' resources. The Board of Revenue expressed their full agreement with the Councils' decision to reject the Rani's offer, claiming that the demand of Rs.24,25,000 seemed quite reasonable for Rajshahi,

1. B.R.P., 29 April, 1788, R. 70, vol. 40.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 16 May, 1788, R. 70, vol. 41.

The office of Serishtadar was established in July, 1786 to supervise the business hitherto performed by Indian officers of the Khalsa.

4. Ibid. 31 May, 1788, R. 70, vol. 41.

provided that the zamindari was ably managed.¹ The collector was opposed to any settlement with the Rani while she was under the evil influence of Chand Thakur, though he would not have objected to Raja Ramkrishna, and he complained also of the rebellious activities of the taluqdars and ryots, acting in collusion with the zamindari servants.² Under such circumstances the Board agreed that there should be an immediate government authority in every division of the district.³ On 31 June 1788 a settlement of Rajshahi was accordingly concluded by the collector for the enhanced amount of Rs.24,80,922.⁴

The new arrangements for 1788-89 did not work smoothly. The Calcutta Council had provided an elaborate programme of investigation for James Grant when appointing him to Bhaturia. He was to examine all the mufassil accounts, to annex all lands that had been fraudulently alienated since the grant of the Diwani and to exact full revenues from those lands that had been underrated since 1772, while abolishing all abwabs imposed since 1765.⁵ The Council hoped thus to remedy the abuses in the various tenures in Bhaturia of which Speke had complained after his

1. B.R.P., 24 June, 1788, R. 70, vol. 43.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 16 December, 1788, R.70 vol. 49.

5. Ibid., 16 May, 1788, R. 70, vol. 41.

tour of the zamindari early in 1788. Grant was also asked to note the increase or decrease in cultivation in the district since 1769, to review the ryots' payments and the cost of collection, and after settling sair revenues on one side, to suggest an equitable land revenue demand for the district.¹ However, Grant refused to accept the appointment, not wishing to exchange his post as Serishtadar of the Record Department for an assistantship which would put him under the orders of the Board of Revenue.² Late in May therefore, the Board had to ask the Council for fresh instructions about the management of Bhaturia, and in June the Council directed the Board to instruct Speke to proceed with the settlement of Bhaturia on the lines of their order of 16 May.³ The revenue arrangements for one of the most ^{important} divisions of Rajshahi were thus delayed for nearly two months.

Speke began the second year of his management of Rajshahi handicapped by the calamities of the previous season, by Grants' refusal to take charge of Bhaturia, and by the hostility of the Rani, her advisers and servants.⁴ The Rani had lost Rajapur through no fault of her own, had been rejected a second time in her bid to take charge of

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1. B.R.P., 16 May, 1788, R. 70, vol. 41.
 2. Ibid., 23 May, 1788, R. 70, vol, 41.
 3. Ibid., 30 June, 1788, R. 70, vol, 43.
 4. Ibid.

the revenue collection of her zamindari, and had also seen all expenses for zamindari servants disallowed by the Calcutta Council in their orders of 16 May. As a result before the year was out, Speke was complaining of the rebellious behaviour of the head ryots, the mandals, and of the talugdars, and of intrigues by the zamindar's servants.¹ He alleged that the mandals were at the root of all troubles, they had become the real masters of the villages, and that by forcing the ryots to swell the ranks of the rebels, they hoped to compel the farmers to lower their revenue demands. Once demands were lowered it was extremely difficult to raise them again, which constantly encouraged the mandals to press for further reductions, thus creating uncertainty and confusion in the mufassil accounts. Speke complained, "I must confess however I have great apprehension that as the year draws to a close, and the return of the zemindary authority approaches, they will be very general." He continued, "it scarce possible for an honest officer of Government ... to execute his duty with regulations."² He also claimed that there was evidence that the Rani's servants were in collusion with the ryots to frustrate the system of khas collection by making it

1. B.R.P., 24 December, 1788, R. 70, vol. 49.

2. Ibid.

unprofitable. He therefore urged that the zamindar should be held accountable for all undisputed arrears in the collections or fairly proved mufassil balances.¹ He claimed later in support for such a move, that the bulk of the current deficits were to be found owing from her dependents, so that "it is politic, as well as just, to make him in this manner the instrument of punishment."² Speke does not seem to have considered the possibility that the rebelliousness of ryots, whose crops were acknowledged by Lodge to have been largely ruined in 1787-88, was caused by a genuine inability to pay a revenue pitched nearly five lakhs higher in 1788-89 than the gross revenue of the previous year.

By July 1788 the deficit had reached Rs.1,61,412 and by December it stood at Rs.3,30,993. In April, when no improvement had been achieved, the Board authorized Speke to enforce the payment of arrears by the talukdars.³ If this failed, he should submit an account of such portions of their lands as could be sold to make good their deficiencies. If that too proved insufficient to make good the arrears, the Board, ^{asked} then he should proceed to attach the property of the zamindar to clear off the balance.⁴ Even these drastic measures did not secure any

1. B.R.P., 24 December, 1788, R. 70, vol. 49.

2. Ibid., 23 April, 1789, R. 71, vol. 7.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

real improvement in the collections and at the end of the year the arrears for Rajshahi stood at Rs.2,72,402.¹

Despite the Board's orders that the farmers and their securities should be made to pay there is no evidence that they ever did so.

After futile experiment of direct collection in 1787 and 1788 had failed so disastrously, the Board of Revenue were at a loss about how they should proceed in 1789-90. They were aware that Speke was opposed to any settlement with Rani Bhabani, but Speke had also opposed any further direct collection, declaring in March, "if any circumstance should make it necessary to keep the district khas for another single year I cannot undertake to realize even what I expect the present year."² He explained, "my health will not admit of incessant personal exertions without which there is not a chance of its being realized," and he pointed out that in any case he could not carry such a burden of revenue work without failing in his important duties as a magistrate. He continued: "I could accomplish it with comparative ease if I was the zamindar's Dewan but I cannot do as a collector. The harden'd and artful rogues, both those from whom I have

1. B.R.P., 25 May, 1789, R. 71, vol. 9.

2. Ibid., 23 April, 1789, R. 71, vol. 7.

to collect and those I am obliged to employ, in the revenues are not to be effectually controlled nor while the leases are annual, have I the choice of better."¹ They therefore turned in desperation to his suggestion, voiced as early as 1787, that a settlement might be concluded with Raja Ramkrishna, the Rani's adopted son. This move could not be made earlier because the Raja's claim to the zamindari had not been decided, but in August, 1788, the Governor-General in Council had decided to recognise the claim of Ramkrishna as heir to the zamindari.² Speke had suggested that if he would offer a net revenue of twenty one to twenty two lakhs, this should be accepted, for it was much more for the general good than any mode of settlement for a single year could be adopted. The Board, accepting the local experts' advice, authorized him to agree to a settlement with the Raja on the basis of the revenue demand of the previous year, or to communicate any alternative offer the Raja might make.³

On 16 June 1789 Speke informed the Board that the zamindar, Raja Ramkrishna, had agreed to pay a net revenue of twenty two lakhs of rupees, bearing all the zamindari revenue expenses himself. This seemed generous to Speke,

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1. B.R.P., 23 April, 1789, R. 71, vol. 7.
 2. Ibid., 22 August, 1788, R. 70, vol. 44.
 3. Ibid., 21 May, 1789, R. 71, vol. 9.

who expressed himself as sceptical about realizing any higher revenue than that offered.¹ He submitted the figures of actual collections from 1777 to 1788 to prove the point. This showed that under all the various experiments tried - khas for four years, farming for one, and zamindari management for the rest - though the average demand had been Rs.24,36,203, the average collection had been only Rs.21,24,363.² Since the Rani, from 1781, had constantly endeavoured to establish that the average collection of Rs.19,61,000 secured for the years 1777 to 1780 was the just one, he pressed for the immediate acceptance of the Raja's offer. To ensure the success of the settlement he urged that government should extend its full co-operation to the Raja whose enemies would spare no effort to discredit him.³ He also proposed, in view of the unfortunate results of the annual settlements, that the settlement with the zamindar should be for two years.⁴ He pointed out that without the aid of loans from merchants it would be difficult for the Raja to fulfill his engagement for the current year, since about one-fourth of the year had already elapsed, but it would take time for the Raja to establish his authority in the district

1. B.R.P., 18 June 1789, R. 71, vol. 10.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

and so qualify for such loans from the merchants.¹

The Raja's offer, together with Speke's comments was forwarded to the Governor-General in Council, and was accepted, subject to the exculsion of parganah Rajapur, whose purchasers wished to pay their revenues direct to Murshidabad.² The Raja replied by demanding that either the Rajapur revenues should be paid to him or that he should be allowed a deduction of Rs. 1,21,898 from his offer of twenty two lakhs, otherwise he would renounce the agreement. Since Speke saw no hope of doing better than the zamindar, it was decided that Rajapur should be excluded in the agreement with the Raja. His claim that Rajapur was underrated at Rs. 1,21,898, was however rejected.³

The agreement with the Raja was finalised towards the middle of July, which meant a late start in his management of the collections. At the beginning of October, therefore, the Raja had to apply for an extension of the time scheduled for payment of the earlier instalments of the revenues.⁴ More important, he asked for power to deal with Chand Thakur and others who were opposing him in his revenue collecting. He held that it was due to the intrigues and exploitation of Chand Thakur

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1. B.R.P., 18 June, 1789, R. 71, vol. 10.
 2. Ibid., 29 June, 1789, R. 71, vol. 10.
 3. Ibid., 13 July, 1789, R. 71, vol. 11.
 4. Ibid., 8 October, 1789, R. 71, vol. 15.

that Bhaturia had been so much in deficit in the past.¹ He alleged that the Thakur, his brother and some other old zamindari servants were in possession of large talugs which were underassessed and so very profitable. He also accused him of sowing dissension between himself and the Rani, and of conspiring with refractory ryots to put obstacles in the way of realizing the settled revenues.² The Raja also denounced Pramanand, a former wakil of the Rani, for having misappropriated large sums from the zamindari and for creating disorder in the mufassil by spreading various rumours among the ryots.³ In all this the Raja confirmed many of Speke's old complaints about Chand Thakur and the zamindari servants - or perhaps made use of Speke's known prejudices to attack his opponents now that he was in power. The Raja followed up his charges, true or false, by requesting the Board to allow him to resume all lands held by these men, to allow the establishment of a tahsil at Nator under the control of the collector, to scrutinise the accounts of the under-farmers, and to discharge any zamindari servants whom he thought to be unreliable and hostile, replacing them with new men. The Board agreed to all his requests.⁴

1. B.R.P., § Oct., 1789, R. 71, vol. 15.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

By November the Board were able to congratulate themselves on a much more favourable state of collections under the new management than in the previous years. Thus though they had to ask Speke to enforce more punctual payments, the arrears at the end of August were only Rs.97,128, and in December, Rs. 1,86,281.¹ Tilman Henckell, who in that month took over permanent charge of the district, Speke's health having given way, commented that this was largely due to the delay in agreeing the settlement with the Raja.² The Board for their part told Henckell that some indulgence should be allowed on account of the wide extent of the estate which caused delay in the remittances from the remoter parganahs: to press the zamindar would force him to borrow from the mahajans or money lenders to pay the kists, a course of which the government disapproved.³ In the event the revenue year closed with a deficit of only Rs.82,261.⁴ In comparison with past arrears this was very nominal, and this too was liquidated in the course of the following year.

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1. B.R.P., 10 December, 1789, R. 71, vol. 17.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid., 17 May, 1790, R. 71, vol. 25.

While the settlement of 1789-90 was in progress, the Province was moving towards the Decennial Settlement with the zamindars. The measure was preceded by long discussion and controversy, in which "the status and position of the zamindars was subjected to a fresh examination."¹ The principals in the argument were James Grant, John Shore and Lord Cornwallis himself. Grant proclaimed that the zamindar was merely a temporary official and had no right of property in land, which in Grant's view belonged to the State.² Both Hastings and Committee of Revenue had held, and acted upon almost identical views. Shore on the other hand emphasized the contrary view: "the rents belong to the sovereign, the land to the zamindar."³ He echoed the views of Philip Francis and Boughton Rous, and he strongly advocated that all future settlements should be concluded with the zamindars, the hereditary proprietors of the land. Since the failures of the quinquennial settlement had driven even Hastings to recognise the practical value of working through the zamindars and since Shore had the advantage of more "practical experience in collection and management of revenue," it was towards Shore's rather than Grant's view to which Cornwallis turned.

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1. B.B. Misra, op. cit., p. 186.
 2. F.D. Ascoli, op. cit., pp. 42-53.
 3. B.R.P., 18 July, 1788, R. 70, vol. 42.

On 18 June 1789 Shore, then President of The Board of Revenue, submitted the results of his recent investigations and long revenue experience in a long and well informed minute which covered almost all aspects of revenue administration in Bengal since the time of Murshid Quli Khan. He therein set out the three methods of land revenue settlement open to the Company in Bengal: settlement with the ryots, settlement with revenue farmers and settlement with the zamindars. The first method he dismissed as impossible since it would demand a knowledge and assiduity in the collectors which they had not possess.¹ Speke's experience of khas collection which ended in 1788 with a frank avowal that it called for more energy and application than he possessed and a whole time devotion to revenue matters would seem to show that in this judgement Shore was right. Farming Shore also dismissed as injurious to both the Company and the cultivator, and proved so by years of experience. He therefore turned to a settlement with the zamindars as the only practical solution and the only one consistent with good government and the improvement of the country.¹

Regarding the rights of the zamindars of Bengal Shore emphatically declared, "I consider the zamindars as

1. R.C. Dutt, op. cit., p. 62.

the proprietors of the soil, to the property of which they succeed by right of inheritance according to the laws of their own religion, and that the sovereign authority cannot justly exercise the power of depriving them of the succession, nor of altering it, when there are any legal heirs. The privilege of disposing of the land, by sale or mortgage, is derived from this fundamental right, and was exercised by the zemindars before we acquired the Dewanny."¹ The zamindars, he pointed out had been both rich and numerous even in Akbar's day, they were still in existence when Jafar Khan was appointed to Bengal, and their estates had subsequently grown so that when the English acquired the Diwani, "the principal zamindars exhibited the appearance of opulence and dignity."²

With respect to the rights of the ryots Shore was equally emphatic, "In every district throughout Bengal, where the licence of exaction has not superseded all rule, the rents of the land are regulated by known rates called Nirk, and in some districts, each village has its own."³

Two things followed: that the property rights of the zamindars should be given a value, and the interests of the ryots safeguarded, by fixing a ceiling upon

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1. W.K. Firminger, The Fifth Report, vol. II, Para. 370
 2. Ibid., Para. 382.
 3. Ibid., Para. 391.

government demand, and by making that demand permanent. "We have admitted the property in the soil to be vested in the zamindars," he argued. "The mere admission of the right, unless followed by the measures that will give value to it, will operate but little towards the improvement of the country. The demands of a foreign dominion like ours, ought certainly to be more moderate than the impositions of the native rulers, and to render the value of what we possess permanent, our demands ought to be fixed. Removed from the control of our own government the distance of half the globe, every practicable restriction should be imposed upon the administration in India, without circumscribing its necessary power, and the property of the inhabitants be secured against the fluctuations of caprice, or the licence of unrestrained control."¹ Shore also stressed that, "the task which each individual is bound to pay ought to be certain, not arbitrary. The time of payment, the manner of payment, the quantity to be paid, ought all to be clear and plain to the contributor and every other person." He therefore pressed for a settlement to be made "for a period of ten years certain, but with a view to permanency."²

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1. W.K. Firminger, The Fifth Report, vol. II, Para. 264.
 2. Ibid., Paragraphs 457-459, 460 and 462.

"The leading principles upon which I shall ground my propositions for the ensuing settlement, are two. The security of government with respect to its revenues; and the security and protection of its subjects. The former will be best established by concluding a permanent settlement with the zemindars or proprietors of the soil; the land, their property, is the security of government. The second, must be ensured by carrying into practice, as far as possible, an acknowledged maxim of taxation"¹. Shore further emphasised "It is essential to the success of these principles, that the settlement be made upon such fair and moderate terms, that the zemindars may derive advantage from their engagements, after a due performance of the stipulations contained in them"² The views that Francis had expressed in 1776 were thus vigorously put forward again after over twenty years of varied experiment with alternative systems.

Shore's minute of 18 June 1789, had been a strong plea for a permanent settlement with the zamindars. In September 1789, in a further minute he sounded a more cautious note, urging that until the Decennial Settlement had had a fair trial, the zamindars should not be told that

1. W.K. Firminger, The Fifth Report, Vol.II. Minute of John Shore, 18 June 1789, Paras 457-60.

2. Ibid. Paras 461-62.

it would eventually be made permanent.¹ At this point Cornwallis intervened, forcefully arguing that the postponement of the decision on permanency would create distrust and suspicion among the zamindars. As a result the Decennial would meet the same unhappy fate as the Quinquennial Settlement.² On 18 September 1789, Cornwallis observed: "Mr. Shore has most ably and, in my opinion, most successfully, in his Minute delivered in June last, argued in favour of the right of the zemindars to the property of the soil. But if the value of permanency is to be withdrawn from the settlement now in agitation, of what avail will the power of his arguments be to the zemindars, for whose right he has contended?"³

"When the landlord of the soil himself, the rightful owner of the land, is only to become the farmer for a lease of ten years, and if he is then to be exposed to the demand of a new rent, which may perhaps be dictated by ignorance or rapacity, what hopes can there be, I will not say of improvement, but of preventing desolation?"⁴ He pressed home the point: "I may safely assert that one-third of the company's territory in Hindostan is now a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts. Will a ten years' lease induce any proprietor to clear away that jungle, and encourage

1. Memoirs of Lord Teignmouth, P.183

2. G.W. Forrest, Selections from the State Papers of the Governor-General of India, Lord Cornwallis, vol.II, P.87.

3. Ibid., P.73.

4. Ibid., P.74.

the ryots to come and cultivate his lands. When at the end of that lease he must either submit to be taxed ad-libitum for their newly cultivated land, or lose all hopes of deriving any benefit from his labour, for which perhaps by that time he will hardly be repayed" ?¹

why then delay, Cornwallis argued, twenty years had been spent by his predecessor's collecting information, and he had now spent three more, what was required was action. On 10 February 1790, therefore, Cornwallis directed the Board of Revenue to instruct all the collectors to conclude the settlement of 1789-90 with the zamindars for ten years, indicating that it would be made permanent as soon as it had received the approval of the Court of Directors.²

The Board of Revenue accordingly proceeded to fix the revenue settlement for the zamindari at Rs 24,50,000 ordering this to be made for ten years with the Raja. If he should reject the settlement the Board agreed to give him a stipend of five percent of that amount, though this was later raised to ten percent. As a further modification the demand was reduced to 23,28,101/^{rupees} since parganah Rajapur was settled independently with the purchasers,³ but with the addition of a further 2,50,000/^{rupees} at the end of three years.⁴

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1. G.W. Forrest, 'Selections - Lord Cornwallis' Vol.II, p.75.
 2. B.R.P., 18 February, 1790, R.71, vol.21.
 3. Ibid., 25, February, 1790, R.71, vol.23.
 4. Ibid., 19 April, 1790, R.71, vol.23.

On 8 April 1790, however, Henckell informed the Board that the Raja had refused to accept management of the estate on the terms offered by them, claiming that they were exorbitant.¹ The Raja argued that had the resources of the district been adequate to the demand, government would not have had to sell parganahs Sharubpur and Rajapur by auction. As it was his collection for the current year were not equal to the government demand, so that he was already in debt to the merchants. He requested therefore that he be allowed at least five years in which to reach the full figure of the demand, meanwhile enhancing the revenue by a general improvement of the estate.² Henckell added that in view of the condition of the district and the cultivators he fully shared the zamindar's apprehensions. Were the assets of the talugdars and the usurpations of land by others properly investigated, and were cultivation encouraged by granting pattahs to the ryots for their protection, then he was sanguine that with a permanent settlement a greater revenue might progressively be realised in the course of the next ten years.³ The Board, however, rejected the Raja's objections, supported though they were by the collector, and they refused to extend beyond three years of period within which the increase of Rs 2,50,000 was to be achieved, Henckell was ordered to inform them forthwith whether the zamindar accepted their terms or not.⁴

1. B.R.P., 19 April, 1790, R.71, vol.23.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Meanwhile the Raja had submitted another petition to the Collector, pointing out the irregularities and abuses that had crept into the affairs of the district in recent years. He found that many ryots in the zamindari, through the duplicity of the mufassil servants, had succeeded in alienating a considerable part of their lands under the head palataka or abandoned lands, and had obtained fresh leases for those lands at a nominal rate for their dependents when called upon to pay their original rents they evaded payments by producing fictitious leases.¹ The talugdars of Rajshahi had also obtained remissions of revenues by the same method, thus misappropriating the just revenues of the zamindari.² Further, many mandals held more lands than specified in their leases so that the ordinary ryots of their villages had to bear a larger revenue burden. This oppression had forced many to desert their lands.³ He asked the Board to declare all leases dishonestly obtained to be invalid, and to survey all village lands so as to protect the ryots from unfair burdens.⁴ The Raja also protested against the Government's decision to resume sair collections, claiming that this would give fresh scope for corruption, and he demanded the right to hear all complaints regarding the collections before they were forwarded to the collector's

1. B.R.P. 28 May, 1790, R.71, vol.25.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

court for his decision.¹ He also reminded the Board that at the settlement of 1789-90, he had been given an understanding that the current lease would be continued, provided he punctually paid his revenues and it was on that assurance that he had borrowed money from the merchants to clear his dues.² Finally, however, despite all these arguments against the enhancement of the demand upon Rajshahi, the Raja, from fear that the estate might be transferred to others, ended by agreeing to accept the terms of the Board, on condition that his objections were favourably considered and that suitable remedies were later applied.³

The Board did not accept the pleas and objections put forward by the Raja. They argued that under the Council's order of 10 February 1790 the zamindars had been empowered to deal with all illegalities within their jurisdictions. They also set aside his protest about sair collections and rejected his demand for police rights within the zamindari. Once again they demanded of the Raja whether he would or would not agree to "the ~~ag~~uing settlement on the terms already prescribed".⁴

Even at this stage, in a desperate attempt to keep the zamindari, Raja Ramkrishna chose to write another petition seeking to arouse the sympathy of the Board by relating

1. B.R.P., 28 May, 1790, R.71, vol.25.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

the deplorable condition of the zamindari. He also insisted once again upon his claim to sair collection, and argued that if this, and the collection from the talugdars were taken from him it would be impossible for him to accede to the demands of the government.¹ He ended dramatically, "the Board were pleased to put me in possession of this my heritage but lately; I am quite at a loss to think what fault I have committed, that it should be thus suddenly wrested from me again ... I did once earnestly expect that my terms being complied with, I should be able both to make good my engagements to and retain the favour of Government. But now! averse fortune drives me from my zemindary, and leaves me not a spark of hope, of ever re-possessing it. I rely upon the justice of the Board."² This time the Board responded more favourably, and they proceeded to ask the collector's opinion of the zamindar's pleas and the fairness of the Decennial Settlement proposed for Rajshahi.³

Unhappily for Ramkrishna, Henckell, who had earlier supported his pleas for a reduction in the demand, now urged that collections should remain khas for a further year. He had been ^{un}able despite his laborious efforts to persuade the Raja to accept the Board's assessment for with

1. B.R.P., 25, June, 1790, R.71, vol.26.

2. Ibid.

3. B.R.P., 23 July 1790, R.71, vol.27.

the season so abnormal and the sair and talug collections taken from him, the Raja was unwilling to risk being in default and so compelled to sell part of his estate. Now further delay in making the settlement would adversely affect collections and he therefore advised a khas settlement of Rajshahi for the current year.¹ Direct management appeared to be the only measure that could profitably be adopted for the current year, "consistent with the ideas of ensuring the greatest revenue to Government, ease to the inhabitants and general benefit to the District."² If the zamindari was fairly assessed he did not believe that there would be any default on the revenues in the current year, or that Rajshahi would be incapable after the ten years of reaching the highest sum yielded since 1765.³ Though not totally opposed to zamindari settlement, Henckell like John Shore believed that the Decennial Settlement should be given a trial before it was declared permanent. He believed such caution would serve to secure the interests of the ryots and the Company alike. Other collectors also echoed his views. He may also have pressed for a khas, temporary settlement out of annoyance at the Raja's stubborn rejection of the Board terms, terms which he believed and indeed showed to be quite possible ones. Henckell argued that he wanted

1. B.R.P., 23 July 1790, R.71, vol.27.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

to conduct a thorough investigation of abuses in the estate before making any permanent settlement with the zamindar. It is of course also possible that Henckell's mufassil settlement was an interested one, and that the outsiders and adventurers he brought in as farmers had entered into some corrupt bargain with him. Harrington in his report criticised Henckell's settlement and suspecting the probity of the diwan Ghulam Jaffar, asked for and obtained his removal, but he makes no direct accusation against the collector. That the Board allowed Henckell to ignore the council's instructions and proceed with his mufassil settlement also causes some surprise. However Henckell was known to be an officer of great imagination and enterprise, with considerable revenue experience and a fine reputation acquired as magistrate and collector of Jessore.

The Board accepted the collector's views, approved khas collection in Rajshahi for the year 1790-91, and asked the council for their final approval.¹ The council, however, considered the offer of the zamindar to be advantageous and expressed their willingness to conclude a settlement with him, allowing the increase of two and a half lakhs to be postponed for five years.² They therefore directed the Board in August 1790 to ask the collector to make a settlement with the Raja on the terms the latter had offered, with the

1. B.R.P., 23 July, 1790, R.71, vol.27.

2. Ibid., 4 August, 1790, R.71, vol.28.

necessary deductions on account of government resumption of the sair collections.¹ Only if the Raja refused should the district be managed khas for the current year, during the course of which proposals might be secured from the zamindar and the talugdars for a ten year settlement with an increase extending over five years of the lease.² Cornwallis, as has been seen, was anxious to make a permanent settlement with the hereditary proprietors of the land and by inspiring confidence to secure stability in the revenues.

Henckell, however, totally suppressed this communication to the zamindar, and proceeded to make what he called a mufassil settlement with some twenty farmers.³ In February 1791 he preferred the explanation that the settlement was made with farmers in the first instance "under a persuasion that the zamindar would afterwards take it on himself and engage to pay the revenue required by Government". He insisted that the zamindari was badly managed by Rani Bhabani and the Raja, whose agents cheated them and oppressed the ryots. As a result many profitable talugs had been carved out of the parganahs to which they belonged and given to favourites with the right of paying their rent direct to the Raja instead of through the farmer of the parganah.⁴ Henckell claimed that in making

1. B.R.P., 4 August, 1790, R.71, vol.28.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 21 February, 1791, R.71, vol.36 & 8 April, 1791 R.71, vol.38. [also see Harrington's Report, B.R.P., 9 July, 1792, R.72, vol.4.]

4. Ibid.

his settlement he had restored such parganahs to their true owners. He also reported that he had formulated strict rules for the farmers when they engaged for the revenues, prohibiting new abwabs, ordering invalid grants to be resumed, and laying down that the farmers must give receipts to the ryots, distinguishing between khudkasht and pykasht ryots, payments on account of asal and or abwab, and payments in cash or in kind. He had also forbidden the practice of najai by which the rents due from absconding ryots were demanded from those who remained in the village. He had also laid down that no lands were to be granted rent-free, that no patwaris or other village officers were to be removed, and that the farmers should not interfere in civil and criminal cases.¹ In return for these restrictions all profits from waste lands brought into cultivation were to go to the farmers. By May Henckell could report that he had collected from the farmers all but Rs 47,159 of the full revenue demand on Rajshahi, that is for the revenue year 1790-91.²

By that date the Council had come to learn that Henckell had not complied with their orders of 28 July 1790 and had failed to communicate to Raja Ramkrishna their acceptance of his revised offer. They censured Henckell in the strongest terms and ordered him to settle

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1. B.R.P., 21 February, 1791, R.71, vol.36 & 8 April, 1791, R.71, vol.38.
 2. Ibid., 30 May, 1791, R.71, vol.39.

the zamindari with the Raja immediately according to their previous orders. A ten year settlement commencing with the year 1791-92 was accordingly concluded with the Raja, who engaged himself to pay a net revenue of Rs 22,52,000.¹ He signed the engagement on 16 August 1791, and the Board approved the settlement and forwarded the papers to the Governor-General in Council for their final confirmation.

The Council accepted the settlement and then went on to censure Henckell for disobedience to their orders and for making a settlement ultra vires to his authority, and for his failure to separate the estates of the independent talugdars from the zamindari. Henckell was immediately released from his duties as collector, and J.H. Harrington, Secretary to the Board of Revenue, was appointed Commissioner for Rajshahi with special powers to separate the talugs and to complete the settlement of the zamindari.² Harrington reported to the Board his discovery that Henckell, suppressing the Council's order of 28 July 1790, had disposed of the district in farm for ten years as a measure of expediency, to persons many of whom were strangers to the district, adventurers, or even Company officers, all in subversion of the rights of

1. B.R.P., 26, August, 1791, R.71, R.42.

2. Ibid., 14 October, 1791, R.71, vol.44.

the zamindar and talugdars, and in defiance of General Regulations and his particular instructions.¹ On 20 April 1792, Henckell's mufassil settlement was therefore annulled and the Raja was informed that he might settle the estate with whomsoever he pleased.² In March 1793 this settlement was confirmed in perpetuity. After over a quarter of a century of constant change and upheaval, and not without loss of territory, the zamindari of Rajshahi thus appeared to reach, though not a safe haven under the Permanent Settlement of Bengal.

1. B.R.P., 9 July, 1792, R.72, vol.4.
2. Ibid., 25 April, 1792, R.72, vol.1.

CONCLUSION

The importance in the history of Bengal of the period between 1765 and 1793, between the East India Company's acquisition of the Diwani and the introduction of a permanent revenue settlement with the zamindars, has always been recognised. The period has been seen as that within which the Company established itself as a major political power in India, assumed quite novel and administrative functions, and created a civil service to perform them. It is the period which Clive, Hastings and Philip Francis, and Cornwallis moulded, each contributing their quota of ideas imported from Europe. But as this study has attempted to show, it is also the period when the Nawabs of Bengal and their officials, the great zamindars and talugdars, the Calcutta baniahs and gumasthas, and the ordinary ryots struggled to resist, to adopt to, or even to utilise the Company and its servants in Bengal. Their actions, motives and feelings are not easy to ascertain, or understand, for they must be viewed almost entirely through the Company's records, but without some picture of their reactions to English activity, the history of Bengal must be incomplete.

By 1765 the Nator family had been in possession of the Rajshahi zamindari for fifty years, and Rani-Bhabani had been mistress of estate for nearly twenty years.

Though some parganahs close to Murshidabad paid their revenues direct into the Nawab's treasury, over most of the vast area of the zamindari, extending as far East as Dacca, the Rani, her diwan and other officials represented the government, must have seemed to be the government to the mass of the people. At her principal Kacharis, at Nator, Barnagar and Sherpur the punyah ceremony was held each spring, when the last year's accounts were closed and the settlement for the coming agricultural year was agreed, and when gifts were made and ceremonial khilats bestowed in recognition of mutual obligation between the Nator zamindar and the taluqdars, jagirdars and underfarmers of the divisions. In the parganahs the Rani's naibs or deputies repeated on a lesser scale the same procedure. Thenceforward, as the monthly kists fell due, it was to the Rani's agents, her amils and khazanchis that payment was made, under pressure from her armed retainers or piadas (at need), and under the supervision of her mutasaddies and daroghas. From the local kacharis the money was then escorted to the sadar kachari at Nator by her thanadars, to be despatched thence to Murshidabad either direct or through bills provided by shroffs or bankers. From the palace ~~of~~ at Nator thus spread out across the zamindari a great network of zamindari officials, diwan, kazanchi, peshcars, amins, wakils, muharrirs, poddars and jamadars.

The zamindari armed police under their thanadars maintained public order, her revenue officials organised the village labour for the maintenance of the river embankments which protected the low lying, fertile lands of Bhaturia and for the repair of the embanked road running east from Bhawani-pur, her agents constructed and maintained numerous tanks and sarais for travellers, and her funds provided for the support of schoolmasters and doctors. The zamindari was thus for the whole countryside the source of administrative authority and action, interposing her power between the government of the Nawab, and the local authority of talugdars, jagirdars, clans and caste groupings. Moreover to this administrative function, the Rani added a social one, building temples endowing shrines and rest houses at Benaras, granting lands for the maintenance of Brahmins, schoolmasters and doctors. The Rani thus imposed law and order, controlled the collection of land and other revenues, and upheld the accepted moral and religious code of the people. Her functions in a society built upon status and custom were many.

Until 1757 the Rani and her officials operated within a system which they clearly understood. Relations with the Nawabs of Murshidabad seem to have been good; the revenue bargain was made on lines indicated by custom, and made less onerous by a certain flexibility and by the readiness of the great bankers of Murshidabad to lend their

assistance in difficult years. Within the zamindari the army of officials, remunerated with chakaran lands recognised perquisites likewise seem to have maintained the collection of slowly increasing revenues without undue difficulty, since there are no reports of any considerable local revolts and the Company's servants spoke of the zamindari as populous.

Then from 1757 to 1765 there must have been a difficult period, as Mir Jafar attempted to raise the revenues necessary to liquidate his debts to the Company, and as Mir Qasim pushed up the demand to unheard of heights in this attempt to gather the resources with which to resist the Company's encroachments upon his authority. What was actually collected is not known, but if James Grant is to be believed, the demand under Mir Qasim had been as much as ten lakhs more than the twenty four and a half imposed upon Rajshahi by Muhammad Reza Khan in 1765.

The acquisition of the Diwani by the East India Company in 1765 created quite new problems, however, for the Rani and her officials. It was now necessary to try to understand the attitudes and expectations, not of a Mir Jafar or Mir Qasim, but of quite unknown Englishman. Initially the conflict between the old order and the new was waged at Murshidabad, between Muhammad Reza Khan, Naib Diwan, and Sykes the Resident. The former had established

the revenue demand upon Rajshahi at twentyfour and a half lakhs in 1765, but this was revised upwards by Sykes to twenty seven and a half lakhs. This the Rani could or would not pay, and from 1767 amils were sent into the zamindari to make the collections. Such a measure was not unheard of, under the Nawab's sazawals had been deputed to make collections where a zamindar refused to accept a settlement offered at the punyah. Normally however an established zamindar was always continued in office. The one year lease under which the amils operated, and the ~~rumours~~ ^{ruinous} extortion practised by Dulal Roy and Pran Base, who collected seventeen rupees for every ten they paid into the treasury, threatened to ruin Rajshahi. In defence of her good name and her estate the Rani was driven in 1769 to accept a settlement of Rajshahi at twenty six lakhs.

In 1769 a new complication began with the appointment of Rous as supervisor of Rajshahi. The Rani had been threatened in 1769 with the forfeiture of her rights as a zamindar if she failed to fulfil her contract. After the arrival of Rous she was threatened with the loss of control over her own zamindari servants, for he was soon demanding controlling powers in Rajshahi. For the moment the Rani was protected by Becher, the Resident at Murshidabad, who had already warned the Fort William Council that they were

asking too much, and who strongly resisted Rous's demand for increased powers. Nevertheless in 1770 Rous, and other supervisors were granted controlling powers.

In 1770, however, the power given to Rous was to seem unimportant in the face of overwhelming disaster of famine which nowhere struck harder than in Rajshahi. The Rani, as befitted her position, lowered her demand upon the ruined starving ryots. Pressed by Calcutta, Becher kept up the revenue collections, and reached a total in 1770 as high as that fixed by Reza Khan for 1765. The Rani pleaded throughout 1770 for remissions of revenue by the Company to match those she had afforded to her ryots. Rous, from Rajshahi, supported her pleas, but Calcutta refused to allow any slackening in the efforts to collect, and when the year ended with a heavy balance turned upon Rous with accusations of incompetence. The mistake was not repeated, the collections of 1771-72 were back at the pre-famine level.

Since appeals for consideration went unheeded at Calcutta, answer by zamindari officials to English demands, as Rous reported, was to collect from those who survived the famine all that the dead should have paid, under the system of najai. There was also a great growth of mathauts, extra illegal ~~cases~~^{cases}, imposed, so Rous reported, by the zamindar, the amils and farmers, the superintendents of the

markets and the qazis who administered justice. And in the countryside the pressure of the Company was met by the flight of the ryots, by their rebellion or by their joining the bands of dacoits and sannyasis. Such lawlessness was made easier and more profitable because the internal policing of Bengal as a whole by the Nawab's forces, and within Rajshahi by the zamindari police had broken down under pressure from the Company. The control exercised by the Rani had already been seriously weakened, though she still had the strength to prevent encroachment upon her nankar lands. When Rous, under pressure from Calcutta for more revenues, suggested that these lands be put up to auction, no bidders could be found.

In 1772 on instructions from the Court of Directors Hastings took over the direct management of the Bengal revenues, still uncertain of the real value of the land, though convinced, perhaps by the arguments of Rous and Becher, that continuity was needed, Hastings introduced Quinquennial Settlement, with all lands put up to auction. Against the farming system both Muhammad Reza Khan and the Rani voiced urgent warnings, while Middleton, the Resident, pleaded for some relaxation in demand and for less rigidity in collection. The warnings went unheeded.

The Rani determined to defend her position as zamindar made a bid for Rajshahi of over twenty seven lakhs

of rupees, rising over the five years to an unheard of thirtyone lakhs. This defence of her position and status indicates how completely foreign and unintelligible the workings of the English mind still were to her, for if she hoped that the Company would be prepared to bargain, she was soon proved utterly mistaken. Her later explanation that she had been forced to secure the zamindari because of her obligation to look after her ryots seems to have been equally unintelligible to the Company. By the end of 1773 Middleton had taken the failing revenue collections out of her hands, and had suspended all the zamindari servants. By 1774, though he acknowledged that it would be useful to retain the Rani's influence over the ryots, the Rani had been completely ousted from the management of Rajshahi. For the last two years of the Quinquennial Settlement Pran Bose and Dulal Roy were installed once more as farmers.

For Rajshahi the regime of these farmers was again a disaster, and the Rani pleaded desperately that they were ruining the zamindari and driving the ryots to rebellion or to flight. The Provincial Council at Murshidabad was moved to support her, but was brusquely told that there could be no room for sentiment. The years 1774 to 1777-80 were the worst which Rajshahi had to suffer. There seems little doubt that Pran Bose and Dulal Roy were

supported in office by corrupt bargain with the Company's leading officials, Hastings included. Then with the arrival of Clavering, Monson and Francis Rajshahi became a weapon to be used in the struggle within the Council. While Clavering, Monson and Francis held power, the Rani was restored to office. When Hastings recovered his authority, though the Rani had paid her revenues in full, she was singled out for dismissal, while the agents of Dulal Roy were re-installed. Hastings even contemplated the destruction of the network of zamindari officials by seizing their service lands. There seems good evidence, too, that the installation of Nandalal Roy as diwan of Rajshahi by Edward Baber in 1778 was again a corrupt bargain - Baber is known to have joined with Bateman in illegal revenue-farming, and Nandalal was later dismissed, for corrupt dealings with Kantu Babu, Warren Hastings's banian.

Against such opponents the Rani used such weapons as came to hand. Her adopted son Ramkrishna produced evidence to Francis of corruption by Hastings and Middleton and thus secured the temporary restoration of the Rani as zamindar. When Hastings was back in power, the Rani and her officials obstructed the work of the revenue-farmers, appealed against their extortions, bid against them at the settlements, and when all else failed resorted to

leasing land at false valuations to such favourites as Chand Chakrabatty, the Rani's guru.

What is remarkable is the tenacity of the Rani, and of the Company. Both Hastings and his successors repeatedly ignored the social strength of the zamindar's position, and in a search for higher revenues were ready to ignore past failures and to enter again and again upon experiments in farming, khas management or some mixed system. Even under the most able of their servants, Evelyn and Dallas they never greatly exceeded the offers made by the Rani, and frequently they collected much less than the Rani actually paid in 1768, in 1772, in 1776 and 1777 or in 1784. This moreover despite the frequent warnings from the Murshidabad Council and the collectors of Rajshahi that a settlement with the Rani would be the best. The Rani, for her part, never tired in her appeals and protestations, in her making of bids and offers, and in using her influence and position to force the Company to settle with her. The Permanent Settlement with her adopted son Raja Ram Krishna, whose claims at last had been recognised, represented at least an acknowledgement of their mutual power, if not perhaps the victory of Rani Bhabani over the Company.

GLOSSARY

- Abwab: Miscellaneous taxes imposed on the ryots in addition to the regular assessment on land.
- Adalat: A Court of justice.
- Aman: Winter rice.
- Amil: A collector of revenue employed by the Government or by a revenue farmer.
- Amlah: Here a zamindari official or agent.
- Amalnama: A written order to manage or administer property granted to persons appointed to collect revenue in the name of the Government.
- Amin: A revenue officer appointed for the purpose of local investigation; also a surveyor.
- Anna: A sixteenth part of a rupee.
- Asal Jama: Original demand exclusive of subsequent cesses and imposts.
- Aus: Autumn rice.
- Band-o-bast: Settlement of revenue to be paid by the zamindar, renter or farmer to the Government.
- Banian: A man of business in the service of an European officer or trader; a Hindu trader.
- Batta: Additional expense for extra service; Difference in exchange.
- Bazar: A daily market or a shopping centre.
- Bazi Jama: Miscellaneous heads of revenue in addition to rent for the use of land.

- Bazi Zamin: Lands exempt from the payment of public revenue or very lightly rated.
- Bigha: A land measure, about one third of an acre in Sengal.
- Brahmattra: Lands granted free for the use of Brahism.
- Burc Kandaz, Bar Kandaz: An armed guard, escort or watchman.
- Chaitally: Relating to or produced in Chait, the Spring harvest.
- Chakla: A grand division of a country, it consisted of many parganahs.
- Chakladar: The Superintendent or renter of a chakla.
- Chakran Land: Land allotted for the maintenance of public officers and servants.
- Chauki: A seat, place for the collection of customs. Chaukidar - a village watchman.
- Chauth: An assessment equal to one-fourth of the original standard of assessment, generally to one-fourth of the actual Government collection. The Chauth was collected by the Marathas from the Muslim and Hindu princes of Hindustan as the price of forbearing to ravage their countries.
- Daftari: Record; Report. Daftarkhana - Record Office.
- Darbar: A court, a royal office.
- Darbarkharch: Expenses of a darbar; court charges; charge for presents and gratuities made to princes and public functionaries, bribes, etc.
- Darkhast: A representation, a tender, a petition.

- Daria-Shikast: Lands carried away by the encroachment of a river.
- Darogha: An overseer or Superintendent of any department, such as police, customs or excise station.
- Daul-band-o-bast: Detailed estimate or settlement of revenue from a district.
- Daul nama: Extract from the general particulars of an estimated assessment, for the information of the person paying.
- Devatra: Land granted for religious purposes.
- Dhari: A piece or share of landed property in a joint-tenancy village, a subdivision of a Taraf.
- Diwan: The chief revenue officer under the Mughal system of administration. Hence Diwani - the right of collecting and receiving the revenues.
- Diwani Adalat: A court of Civil justice.
- Ezafa: An increase of revenue.
- Farman: An order, grant or command of the Emperor.
- Fasli: The harvest year: Fasal bandi - the process of agreeing between zamindar and ryot what portion of the revenue should be paid at each harvest.
- Faujdar: An army officer, also a magistrate.
- Faujdari Adalat: A criminal court.
- Ganj: A wholesale market, commercial depots.
- Ghat: A ferry station, a landing place where tolls and inland transit duties were usually collected.
- Gram: Village.

<u>Gumastha:</u>	An agent, a steward employed by a merchant.
<u>Guru:</u>	A spiritual teacher or guide.
<u>Hakikat:</u>	Statement, account, representation of circumstances as they are.
<u>Hakikat-jama:</u>	Particular account of the public revenue in all its branches.
<u>Hal bhanjan:</u>	Anticipation of the revenue of the ensuing year.
<u>Hasto-bud:</u>	What is and what was; a method of assessment based on an inspection of the good and bad parts of the current harvest.
<u>Hat:</u>	A market held on certain stated days in the week.
<u>Heveli:</u>	Household lands, <u>Khas</u> lands.
<u>Hukum:</u>	An order.
<u>Huzur Zila:</u>	Estates or districts paying revenue direct to government.
<u>Ijara:</u>	A contract or lease of the revenue of a village or a district. <u>Ijaradar</u> - a farmer of any item of public revenue whether from land, customs or any other source.
<u>Jaidad:</u>	Resources, capabilities of any district in respect of revenue.
<u>Jama:</u>	Total rent or revenue payable by a cultivator or a zamindar; valuation of any particular area.
<u>Jamabandi:</u>	The annual settlement of revenue assessed upon an estate or district.

- Jamdar: An officer of police or customs, second to the darogha.
- Jama Wasil baki: The amount of collection and outstanding balances.
- Kachari, Cutchery: A landlord's office. An office where any public business is transacted.
- Katkinadar, Cutkinadar: An underfarmer or under-renter holding under the revenue-payer or zaminder.
- Khalsa: The Exchequer; an office of Government in which the business of the revenue department was transacted.
- Khamar: Land revenue of which was collected in kind being cultivated on a share produce basis between the cultivator and the zaminder.
- Khas: Estates managed directly by the Government.
- Khasanchi: A treasurer, a cash keeper.
- Khilat: A dress of honour.
- Khilat-bha: A tax levied by the Naawab's government to defray the cost of honorary dresses presented at court.
- Khud Kast: He who cultivates land in village in which he resides.
- Kifayat: Surplus, profit or increase in the amount of revenue received by the government, whether by raising the rate of assessment or imposing additional taxes.
- Kist: An instalment of revenue or rent due from a zamindar or ryot.

<u>Kistbandi</u> :	Payment by instalments.
<u>Lakh; Lack</u> :	One hundred thousand.
<u>Lakhiraj</u> :	Rent free land.
<u>Mahal</u> :	Land yielding revenue, an estate - regarded as a unit for the assessment of land revenue.
<u>Mahajan</u> :	A money-lender.
<u>Malguzari</u> :	Revenue assessment; the payment of land revenue; also the person or land subject to such payment.
<u>Malikana</u> :	The allowance made to zamindars on account of their profits when dispossessed from their estates.
<u>Malkhana</u> :	A treasury, a storehouse.
<u>Malzamin</u> :	A surety for the payment of a demand against the baillee in contradistinction to a surety for appearance.
<u>Mandal</u> :	The headman of a village.
<u>Meshaire</u> :	A monthly stipend.
<u>Mathaut, Mathote</u> :	An extra or occasional cess or tax imposed upon the cultivators for some special purpose; or under some incidental pretext either by the government, or its officials or the zamindar.
<u>Maund</u> :	A measure of weight, about 84 lbs.
<u>Mauza</u> :	A village.
<u>Mazkuri</u> :	A subordinate payer of revenue who pays his rent through a zamindar.
<u>Mazkuri-ryot</u> :	A nominal cultivator, a tenant at will having no hereditary right of occupancy.

<u>Moshaira:</u>	A monthly stipend.
<u>Muchalka:</u>	A bond; a written obligation.
<u>Mufassil:</u>	The interior of the District, the country, the Provinces - the opposite of Sadar.
<u>Muharrir:</u>	A writer or clerk in an office.
<u>Munshi:</u>	Secretary for the Persian language.
<u>Mutanaddi:</u>	A clerk; Officers employed in keeping the accounts of the Government.
<u>Naib:</u>	A deputy, a viceroy.
<u>Najai:</u>	Deficiency in produce, a tax formerly assessed in Bengal upon the cultivators present, to make up for any deficiency arising from the death or disappearance of their neighbours.
<u>Nankar:</u>	An allowance or an assignment of land for the subsistence of zamindar or of others connected with the collection of revenue.
<u>Nazarat charges:</u>	Charges for court officers.
<u>Nazarana:</u>	A present, especially one from an inferior to a superior.
<u>Nazr-andazi:</u>	Valuation of land, or estimate of the value of crops upon inspection.
<u>Nazar punyah:</u>	Pious offerings, but here means the present exacted by the revenue officers at the annual settlements of accounts.
<u>Nazim:</u>	An administrator, a governor of a Province charged with the administration of criminal law and police, hence applied to the Nawab of Murshidabad - <u>Nizam</u> - the office of the <u>Nazim</u> .
<u>Nazir:</u>	An inspector, a supervisor.

<u>Nij-jot:</u>	Rent free lands for subsistence of the zamindars.
<u>Parganah:</u>	A fiscal district comprising usually many villages.
<u>Partaki:</u>	Commission payable to the <u>ganungos</u> .
<u>Parwana:</u>	A warrant, an order from a person in authority to a dependent.
<u>Patwari:</u>	A village accountant.
<u>Patta:</u>	A deed of lease, a document given by the collector to the zamindar, to the cultivator specifying their conditions and the value on which the lands are held.
<u>Peshkash:</u>	Tax, tribute paid by the zamindar to the government on his investiture.
<u>Piada:</u>	Peon.
<u>Poddar:</u>	A cash keeper, a treasury clerk for weighing money and bullion and examining and valuing coins.
<u>Puja:</u>	Worship - Religious ceremony.
<u>Pulbandi, Poolbandi:</u>	Repairing embankments.
<u>Punyah, Punya:</u>	The day on which the settlement for the new year is made.
<u>Pykast:</u>	Those who hold land on an indefinite tenure, those who cultivate lands in a village to which they do not belong.
<u>Qabuliyat:</u>	A written agreement, a counterpart of a revenue lease, deed.
<u>Qanungo:</u>	A registrar of a <u>Subah</u> or Province appointed by the Government.

- Qazi: A Muslim judge under the mughal system of administration.
- Raja: A King, a prince; it is also assumed by petty chiefs or zamindars in various parts of India.
- Ramma: A Park, a preserve for game.
- Russud: A gradual increase in the amount of revenue assessed.
- Rusum: Customary commissions.
- Ryot, Raiyat: A cultivator. A peasant.
- Sadar Kachari: The principal revenue office of a District.
- Sadar-Jama: The sum total of revenue payable to the government direct, exclusive of the charges of collection.
- Sair: Miscellaneous sources of revenue.
- Senad: A written authority.
- Sannyasi: A Hindu religious mendicant.
- Saranjami: A collection made from the ryots for the private expenses of the faujdar or zamindars.
- Sarkar: A subdivision of a Province containing many parganas.
- Sarrof, Shroff: An Indian banker or money changer.
- Sazawal: An officer employed for the collection of revenues.
- Sebundy: An irregular 'native' soldier employed in the collection of revenue.

- Ser: A measure of weight, approximately 2 lbs.
- Sepoy: A soldier.
- Seristadar: A Keeper of records; A Superintendent of an office.
- Sicca: Any new coin - the standard silver rupee of Bengal [see J.C. Sinha - Economic Annals of Bengal.]
- Subah: A Province, the largest subdivision of the Mughal dominions. Hence Subahdar - the Governor of a Province.
- Tahsildar: An officer employed for the collection of land revenue from a specific area.
- Tahud: Agreement, stipulated rent.
- Taksim: Division, distribution of the assessment of the revenue upon the several subdivisions of an estate or district, the same as Taksim-jama.
- Taluq: A land holding, usually intermediate between a zamindari and ryot holding.
- Taluqdar: A landholder who, in Bengal, is regarded as inferior to a zamindar, but not necessarily dependent on the latter.
- Tagavi: An advance of money given to ryots to assist or encourage cultivation.
- Taufir: Increase, an augmentation of the revenue, either from extended cultivation or the lapse or resumption of alienated assignments.
- Taujih: Adjustment of accounts.

- Thanadar: A petty police officer.
- Wadadar: A contractor, a government officer responsible for the collections of zamindari, a farmer of the revenue.
- Wakil, Vakil: An agent or an attorney.
- Wasil-baki: Collections and balance, an account showing the amount of revenue realised, and remainder outstanding.
- Wasilat: Collections of revenue from every head of receipt, the proceeds of an estate.
- Wusul: Amount of revenue received.
- Zila: A district hence Ziladar - the officer in charge of a Zila.

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RAJSHAHI

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RAJSHAHI ZAMINDARI, RANGPUR

- 1. SHILBARIS (PARTS OF DINAJPUR.)
- 2. CHANDLAI (" MURSHIDABAD)
- 3. LUSHKERPUR (" " "
- 4. MAHMUDSHAHI (" " JESSORE.)

