

CHAPTER IX.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

THE Angul subdivision was formerly a Tributary State, which was confiscated in 1847 in consequence of the rebellion of the chief. Since that time it has been treated as a Government estate, the tenants holding their lands direct from Government. The rates of rent hitherto assessed have remained unchanged for the last 50 years, having been fixed at the settlement concluded in 1855. At the next settlement, which took effect from the beginning of 1892, Government did not consider it expedient to enhance these rates in view of the large increase of rental obtained from the extension of cultivation; and the rates of 1855 were accordingly left intact, in spite of the enormous rise in the prices which the cultivators obtained for their produce. By this settlement the total rental was increased from Rs. 46,029 to Rs. 1,07,215, *i.e.*, by more than 100 per cent., but the increase resulted from changes in classification, and especially from the assessment of new lands brought under cultivation, the area assessed being 156,549 acres as compared with 56,947 acres in 1855.

The result was to shew that the following average rates of rent per acre were paid for different classes of land:—for homestead lands, Rs. 3-8; for land growing sugarcane, Rs. 3-2-9; for *sārad* or rice land, Re. 1-5-4; for *toilā* or newly-reclaimed land, annas 3-7; and for cultivable waste, annas 3-6. The *toilā* land, with an area of 83,342 acres, accounted for nearly half the area assessed, and consequently the average rate of rent all round was extremely low, being under 12 annas per acre on the cultivated area. Government, however, was of opinion that it would be unwise to increase the assessment further in view of the remoteness and inaccessibility of Angul, and of the fact that there was still a large area available for cultivation and that the resources of the people had been weakened by successive bad seasons culminating in the famine of 1889. The term of this settlement was fixed for 15 years, and in order to encourage cultivation Government decided to take only a progressive increase for *toilā* lands converted into rice lands during the currency of

the settlement, half rates being levied for such lands during the first 5 years, three-quarters for the next 5 years, and full rates for the last 5 years. These orders were, however, not carried out strictly, for it was found impossible to trace the lands thus converted from waste; and what was done was to take the difference between the ryot's old rent and his new rent as being the rent for new cultivation, and to levy half this rent for the first 5 years, three-quarters in the next 5 years, and the whole of it in the last quinquennium.

Settlement
of rents.

The term of this settlement expired in March 1907, and a re-settlement is now in progress, in the course of which several important changes have been introduced. The great difficulty of the settlement and administration of the estate hitherto has been the extraordinary multiplicity of rates, which is a legacy from the first regular settlement of 1855; there being no less than 25 different rates for rice land, 13 for uplands, 5 for *toilā* or recently reclaimed land, and 22 for homestead land. The existence of 65 different rates has naturally proved a great source of embarrassment, and is now being replaced by a simpler and more intelligent system of soil classification.

The *sārad* or rice lands are divided into three classes—first, the low lands in the villages which obtain sufficient moisture to produce full crops in the great majority of years; second, the lands intermediate between the low lands and high lands, which produce good crops in ordinary years; and third, the higher terraced lands, which are almost entirely dependent on seasonable rainfall. The rates for these three classes are now being fixed at Rs. 2-5-6, Re. 1-9 and annas 12-6 respectively. These rates are very moderate, as land of the first class produces, on an average, 30 maunds of paddy per acre, of the second class 20 maunds, and of the third class 10 to 15 maunds.

The next division consists of the uplands, which are not suitable for rice cultivation, and these are divided into two classes—*harfasal* or the well-manured lands near the village homestead, which grow valuable *rabi* crops, and *bāsefasal* or uplands without any special advantages, but suited for ordinary *rabi* crops. The rates now fixed for *harfasal* lands are Re. 1-9 per acre and for *bāsefasal* annas 12-6 per acre.

Finally, there are the lands known as *toilā*, which have been recently reclaimed and are in process of being got ready for regular cultivation. These lands are divided into three classes, for which rents are being fixed at the rates of annas 6-3, annas 4-2 and annas 2-1 per acre, the rates being on the whole lower than at the last settlement, because it seems probable that the best land has

been reclaimed. Orchards are being assessed at the highest *toila* rate, viz., annas 6-3, as they are laid out on the best *toila* lands and are very profitable. Homestead lands have hitherto been rent-free in the case of resident ryots, while non-resident ryots have been charged rents varying from Rs. 3-2 to Re. 1 per acre, and non-cultivators have paid rates ranging from Rs. 8-4 to 12 annas. The resident ryots will still continue to pay no rent; non-resident ryots will be charged Re. 1-9 per acre; and in the case of non-cultivators it will be left to the Deputy Commissioner to settle annually such rents as may seem to be fair.

In some parts of the estate, especially in *parganas* Talmūl and Pānchārāh, lands were assessed at the last settlement at very low rates without any regard to the capabilities of the soil. This was due to various causes. In some villages the whole population were, through mistake, treated as *paiks* and allowed to hold at half rates. It is now found that there are only a few *paiks* in these villages, and land held by the remainder, who render no service, is being assessed at fair rates. Again in many villages, lands were treated as rent-free at the settlement of 1855, and though at the last settlement of 1892 the rent-free titles were declared invalid, the lands were assessed at the lowest rates of each class in order to avoid hardship. In these cases the rents are being levelled up to the moderate rates levied in the rest of the estate.

An important concession is being made to the tenants at the present settlement, to compensate them for their exertions in converting uplands into rice lands and in improving the quality of the latter; for it has been decided that, in the case of lands assessed to a higher rental, the enhancement shall be taken in two instalments, viz., one-half of the increase for the first five years of settlement and two-thirds for the remainder of the term. The amount of rent abated is, however, reimposable at the expiry of the period of the settlement.

Certain minor concessions are also being made in individual cases. Thus, the lands held by the Pāns are being assessed at the lowest rate for each class, whether *sāraṅ*, uplands, or *toila* land. This favourable treatment is allowed because the Pāns are a semi-criminal tribe, who make poor husbandmen, and it is specially desirable to encourage them to take up settled cultivation; they cannot pay the full rents demanded from other tenants, and, if an attempt is made to compel them to do so, they will abandon cultivation and revert to criminal pursuits. First class *sāraṅ* land is also being treated as second class land in the case of certain backward aboriginal villages inhabited by Gonds, Khonds, Mundāris, etc., who are also poor cultivators. Again, in the

Privileged
rents.

villages known as Brāhman Sāsan, rents are being reduced by 12½ per cent., as they are held by Brāhmins who perform priestly functions, are poor cultivators, and have received concessions at every settlement. The same reduction is being made in the case of villages in *parganas* Taiusi and Tikarparā, where the crops are liable to considerable damage from the depredations of wild animals; and in accordance with custom, the *patiks*, who perform quasi-police duties and assist at the *kheddah* operations, are allowed to hold their lands at half rates.

Khond-
māis.

In the Khondmāis Government takes no rent for the land, but a voluntary plough cess is paid at the rate of 3 annas per plough; a fresh enumeration of the ploughs is made periodically. Under-tenants pay a kid and some liquor as a yearly contribution to such tenants as allow them to hold land; and produce rents are also sometimes paid, the usual proportion being a third or a half of the outturn.

WAGES.

Practically the only skilled labourers are artisans, such as masons, blacksmiths and carpenters, brought from Cuttack and other places. A common mason earns a daily wage of 5 to 7 annas, while a blacksmith gets 3 annas, and a carpenter 3 to 7 annas; superior masons and carpenters are paid 8 annas a day, while expert blacksmiths receive a wage of 6 to 8 annas per diem. Local labourers are paid according to the rate prevailing, if employed by contractors, an ordinary cooly getting 2 to 3 annas a day; and if employed in field work by cultivators, they are paid in food and grain. Village artisans, such as blacksmiths, who make and repair plough-shares and other agricultural implements, and menials, such as washermen and sweepers, are allotted service lands, and also get in many places an allowance of rice and other grain at harvest time. This allowance is generally 10 seers of paddy per plough in the case of blacksmiths, and adult barbers and washermen get the same amount from each of their clients.

Field labourers are divided into two classes, *muliās* and *haliās*. *Muliās* are day labourers paid almost invariably in kind, and *haliās* are farm-servants employed permanently by well-to-do cultivators; the latter are given a monthly allowance of 1½ maunds of rice, and at harvest time 15 maunds of rice, 2 pieces of cloth, and a rupee in cash, the whole representing a yearly wage of about Rs. 30. On the whole, the *haliās* are better off than the day labourers, who can get little employment from February to May, except in repairing houses; during these months they have to subsist on their own little crops, on wild roots and fruit, by cutting and selling bamboos and fuel, and by making and selling mats, baskets, etc.

The marginal table shows the average price of food-grains in PRICES,

Year.	Common rice.	Wheat.	Gram.
	S. Ch.	S. Ch.	S. Ch.
1891-95	20 0	8 6	15 0
1896-00	15 12	7 14	15 6
1901-05	16 13	8 0	10 0

seers and chittacks per rupee during the last fortnight of March in the three quinquennial periods which have elapsed since the formation of the district. It is said that there is no appreciable difference throughout the district in the price realized by the cultivators for their rice,

but the returns of prices current show that the price at which it is retailed varies greatly, *e.g.*, on the 15th December 1906 common rice sold at Phulbani for 18 seers per rupee (*i.e.*, Rs. 2-3 per maund), at Sankhpur for 12 seers, and at Angul for $11\frac{1}{2}$ seers, while on the same date in 1905 it was sold for $19\frac{1}{2}$, 16 and 13 seers per rupee respectively at the three marts. Generally, it is reported, the price of rice is higher in the Khondmals than in the Angul subdivision, owing to the fact that in the former tract the areas available for rice cultivation are comparatively small.