

**OUR LAND
REVENUE POLICY
IN NORTHERN INDIA**

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Our Land Revenue Policy in Northern India by Charles James Connell

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CHARLES JAMES CONNELL

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BY

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PREFACE.

THE main portion of this volume consists in the reproduction of a pamphlet, which was written in August 1874, and printed for private circulation among friends. Some of those to whom the pamphlet was sent were kind enough to say, that some passages and suggestions merited a larger audience; and, with considerable diffidence as to the value of its contents, I publish this attempt to present an untechnical description of the Native and the English revenue systems, and to offer some few proposals for the reform of our method of revenue-administration.

It was not possible to point out the defects in our present system without proving my assertions by frequent quotations from published official reports. It may be thought, that some few remarks or quotations have a savour of personality, and that allusions to the performances of fellow-officials, all of them my superiors in experience and in ability, betoken a want of good taste and decorum on the part of the writer.

I can only say, that nothing could be further from my thoughts or wishes than in any way to cast reflections upon any particular official, nor would it be possible to do so without great impropriety. It must be recollected, that the point which the writer would strive to impress upon the readers of this work is—not that the Settlement Officers or Collectors voluntarily fail in the performance of their difficult and onerous duties, but that our system, defective in its idea, and unsuitable in its form, urgently requires extensive reforms. It is impossible for officials, whether of ordinary or extraordinary ability, to carry out in any perfection a method of assessment which would probably

tax beyond their powers the most highly-trained land-surveyors, and it is not reasonable to require, or expect a Collector, unaided by any adequate staff, and overburdened with an immense variety of other duties, to perform the functions of an efficient revenue-administrator.

If a young officer may be allowed to say so without raising a smile, there is no one more impressed than I am with the extreme difficulty of securing a really fair assessment of the land-tax under our existing system, or more astonished at the indefatigable energy with which, in defiance of the limited duration of a day, the Collectors contrive to drive along the official omnibus with so few serious break-downs.

It is in the hope that this endeavour, insufficient and incomplete as it is, to explain the defects of the present system of collection and assessment of the land-tax, and to suggest a few remedial measures, may afford some aid to those earnest Indian officials, who realize the necessity for reform, that I offer these pages to the criticism of the Anglo-Indian public.

Want of leisure must be my apology for a perfunctory revision of the proof-sheets, and for the lengthy list of errata, as well as for the absence of an index.

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