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REVENUE AND AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT  
AUGUST, 1883

MAJOR PITCHER AND MR. GRIERSON'S  
ENQUIRY INTO EMIGRATION  
PROCEEDINGS Nos. 9-15

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suspended by the Indian Government, it may be inferred that the principal abuses complained of were remedied. In 1881 there was no emigration to the Mauritius, owing simply to the absence of requisitions from the colonies. It was, however, resumed in 1882. The Officiating Government Emigration Agent for the Colony of Mauritius in Calcutta is H. A. Firth, Esq. The colony also recruits from Madras, where it has an agency.

9. *Demerara or British Guiana*, known generally in the Bengal Presidency as "Damrá," or "Damraílá," commenced importing Indian labour in 1845. The total population is now 252,000, of which 88,000, or more than a third, are of Indian extraction.

10. *Trinidad*, known generally in the Bengal Presidency as "Chínítát," also commenced importing Indian labour in 1845. Its total population is 153,000, of which 51,000, or just one-third, are of Indian extraction.

11. These two colonies were most unfortunate in their first importations of Indian labour. So excessive was the mortality among the first immigrants, that immigration was stopped in 1849 by the Colonial Governments. Satisfactory arrangements having been made, importation of Indian labour into these two colonies was again permitted, and it has continued ever since.

12. In Demerara, in 1870-71, a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into abuses which had arisen under the Immigration law, and in the treatment of coolies. These abuses were brought to the notice of the Colonial Office by Mr. DesVaux. The Commission, after a searching enquiry, submitted a very full report, and a new Emigration Ordinance, No. 7 of 1873, was enacted, embodying most of the suggestions made by the Commission. It is said that this Commission was the indirect cause of some riots which were committed shortly afterwards by the Indian population. The coolies had expected that the result of the Commission would be a general rise of wages, and the most tangible result which they experienced was the abolition of a bounty on re-engagement which (the bounty) was very popular with them. In their disappointment excesses were committed which caused trouble for a time.

The Government Emigration Agent in Calcutta for Demerara is H. A. Firth, Esq.

The Government Emigration Agent in Calcutta for Trinidad is O. W. Warner, Esq.

13. *Jamaica* also commenced importing Indian labour in 1845. The total population is now 551,000, of which 11,000, or less than a fiftieth part, are of Indian extraction. Owing to excessive mortality amongst those first imported, importation of Indian labour was stopped in 1848, and not resumed again till 1859. In 1862 it ceased to indent for coolie labour till 1866, since when it has imported only at irregular intervals.

The Government Emigration Agent at Calcutta for Jamaica is O. W. Warner, Esq.

14. Of the smaller West Indian Islands, *Grenada* (total population 42,000, Indian population 1,500) *St. Vincent* (total population 40,000, Indian population 2,000), and *St. Lucia* (total population 39,000, Indian population 1,000), belong to the Windward Islands. Grenada commenced importing Indian labour in 1856, St. Vincent in 1861, and St. Lucia in 1857. They have only continued irregularly recruiting since. *St. Kitts* (total population 28,000, Indian population 200) and *Nevis* (total population 11,000, Indian population 300) belong to the Leeward Isles. St. Kitts commenced importing Indian labour in 1860, and recruited for only one year, and then stopped. Similarly, Nevis took one season's importation in 1873, and has since stopped. These minor West Indian colonies have been unable to afford the regular introduction of coolies, or to keep up a regular establishment in Calcutta, and have therefore depended on the Emigration Agent for one of the larger colonies supplying them with the few coolies they required from time to time.

At present the Government Emigration Agent for the minor West Indian colonies is O. W. Warner, Esq.

15. *Natal* commenced importing Indian coolie labour in 1860. Its total population is now 362,000, including 25,000 Europeans, and an equal number of Indian coolies. Importations took place only in the years 1860 and 1864. In 1871 coolies who returned from Natal made complaints of ill-treatment, which led to a temporary suspension of emigration to that colony till provision was made for their better treatment. Accordingly in 1872 a Commission of

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Enquiry was appointed by the Colonial Government to enquire into the condition and treatment of coolies in that colony. On the report of the Commission, appropriate measures were taken, and emigration was resumed in 1874, and continued regularly to the present time, with the exception that there was no recruiting in 1879.

The Government Emigration Agent in Calcutta for Natal is H. A. Firth, Esq.

16. *Fiji* commenced importing Indian labour in 1879. It has now a European population of about 2,200, and an Indian population of 1,400. Emigration to this colony was suspended in 1880 and 1881, because the planters at first refused to take the coolies, and the Government of Fiji had to find employment for them for some time. The value of the Indian coolie has, however, been since discovered, and the planters are now very anxious to get him.

The Government Agent at Calcutta for Fiji is O. W. Warner, Esq.

17. With regard to the *French Colonies* little is known. I have been unable to obtain any modern information as to their Indian coolie population. The figures given by me relate to some years back.

18. Emigration to *Reunion* commenced in 1860. Emigration thither was suspended in 1865, apparently because the planters preferred to get their coolies from French ports. The Indian Government has had no reason to encourage its resumption.

19. Emigration to *Cayenne* commenced in 1873, and none has taken place since that year. No where in the course of my enquiries have I come across a more fearful tale than that of the wretched men who went out in that year to Cayenne. The climate appears to be fatal to the Indian coolie, and, as an example of the results of gross inhumanity and climate combined, I may mention the case of one of the *best* managed estates where the mortality of Indian immigrants was given as 63 per cent. per annum (see report of Her Majesty's Consul at Cayenne on the mortality of Indian immigrants in French Guiana during the first half of the year 1877). No measures could be too strong for such a state of affairs, and accordingly we find the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal recommending in 1878 the absolute prohibition of emigration to that colony.

20. Emigration to *Guadeloupe* commenced in 1873, and continues still.

21. Emigration to the fourth French colony of *Martinique* commenced in 1871, and died a natural death in 1876.

The Government Emigration Agent in Calcutta for the French Colonies is E. Charriol, Esq.

22. There is now no emigration to the Danish colony of *St. Croix*. Only one batch went in 1862. It was reported by the British Consul there that they were not well cared for. This was brought to the notice of the Danish Government, and no more requisitions appear to have been made. Most of the survivors of the one batch of 1862 returned to India in 1868, on the expiry of the term of their agreements: a few (87) remained behind and settled in the island. There is no Government Emigration Agent for this colony.

23. Emigration to the Dutch colony of *Surinam* commenced in 1873. The total population of the colony is about 60,000, of whom 4,156 are Indian coolies. Emigration to this colony was temporarily suspended in 1875 on account of excessive mortality amongst the first importations. It was resumed in 1877, when better arrangements were made in the colony.

The Government Emigration Agent in Calcutta for Surinam is E. Van Cutsem, Esq.

Agents said they would rather make the coolie a present of the money than make an advance to be recovered. In the colonies its recovery gives rise to discontent. I am sure that many coolies would emigrate, if they had a little ready money before starting to leave with their relations, and pay any creditors who may refuse to let them go. This question is, however, more one for the Agents than for the Government to consider.

73. Finally, I have often heard it said that recruiters exaggerate a coolie's happiness in the colonies, and hence recruit under false pretences. I agree with Major Pitcher in thinking that the exaggeration itself is exaggerated. In the British colonies, at least, it is manifest that a coolie is far better off than he is in Hindustán. Every return coolie whom I have met makes the same comparison, and that unfavourably to his native country. After all, they are the best and most caudid judges, and surely a perfect climate, freedom from famine cholera and fever, light work, and high pay, compose a coolie's idea of elysium if anything does.

74. It is very difficult to get hold of any information about these people. The recruiters to a man deny their existence, but popular opinion says the reverse. I believe it must be admitted that they do exist, principally at the head-quarters of head recruiters. Here, where there is a considerable amount of recruiting carried on, it pays to employ these men to act as scouts for the regular recruiters. These men should, of course, be discouraged, and, under section 87 of the Bill, unlicensed recruiting is made heavily punishable. I would, however, suggest that this particular offence be also made cognizable by the police. This, I believe, would do much to stop the evil. Under the law as at present drafted, unlicensed recruiters will be little interfered with, for private persons will not take the trouble and expense of laying a formal complaint against them.

75. The existence of female unlicensed recruiters is a certainty. They exist, and are a curse. An example of the evil they do will be found in the diary of my visit to Motihári. I shall deal with them more fully in connection with the chapter on recruitment of females.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE FEELING OF THE NATIVE COMMUNITY ON THE SUBJECT OF EMIGRATION.

76. This question is closely connected with that answered in chapter X, viz., "What, if any, are the objections of natives to emigrate, and if they can be overcome?" In this chapter, I shall confine myself to the feelings of that portion of the native community which does not emigrate, reserving to chapter X the opinions of those who do emigrate, or who would emigrate if they were not prevented by their own prejudice, and that of their relations.

It will appear that native feeling is generally averse to emigration, but I shall not suggest any remedy here. Remedies suggested will be found in chapter X.

I now proceed without further preface to record what I have been able to ascertain.

77. The feeling with regard to emigration varies according to locality. There is a general consensus everywhere that it is a thing to be avoided, but the limit at which avoidance is considered to cease differs in different districts.

78. Different classes also have different opinions. The highly educated everywhere are in favour of it, with more or less reservation. This class includes the average native Deputy Magistrate, and other enlightened native gentlemen. The next step in the social scale—the zamindár, together with his servants—is everywhere (with rare exceptions) opposed to it. It is they who are able to make themselves heard, and who have



most means of forming the ideas of the people under them. To a zamindar every coolie who emigrates is looked upon as so much property lost. An example of this feeling may be found in Patna, where I noted that "many men of the lower castes, such as Doms, Dusádh, and Chamárs, are paid very low wages for their work, and eke out a livelihood by theft. This is not, however, due to the labour market being overstocked, but to the custom which has descended from generations, of a kind of Prædial servitude, under which men of these castes, who are frequently drunkards, lazy, and improvident, are kept bound to their landlord by liabilities which they can never hope to pay off." If such a man emigrates, his zamindar looks upon him much as a South American slaveholder is said to have looked upon a fugitive slave. The man was practically his property and the recruiter was a thief. Even when these extreme opinions do not exist, landholders look with very jealous eyes upon emigration from their estates as tending to raise the price of labour. I need hardly point out that Government does not consider this tendency such an unmixed evil as they do. Here is a letter received from an intelligent English-knowing zamindar of Sháhábád, the district which I have found to be the one where emigration has a certain amount of popularity: "The native community in this quarter is perfectly averse to emigration. In this district I humbly beg to state of my experience, and the enquiry I have held on the subject, that the labouring class is not in want of work in any part of the year; rather the demand of labour is very large in the months of Asárh, Srában, Kártik and Chait.

*This statement of the Sahabadi Zamindar*

"Among the low class of people, as, for instance, Dusádh and Chamárs, inducement to emigrate may succeed, but the cases would be very rare. People of higher classes who have caste prejudices would not like to leave India for any inducement. The objections of natives to emigrate are chiefly owing to caste prejudices. Besides there is no want of work in this country; the people do not like to leave it even when they can barely supply their necessities of life." Now, though of course the gentleman who wrote this believed it all to be true (and hence it is a valuable witness of the feeling with which native gentlemen look upon emigration), there is hardly a sentence in it which is not a misstatement, for Sháhábád is in parts notoriously over-populated. While its population per square mile is 450, the southern portion of the district consists of uninhabited hills. Again, to take the question of castes I cite the Ará registers of this very district as showing the following higher castes:—

Chhatri ...	...	...	...	...	51
Ahír ...	...	...	...	...	32
Koeri ...	...	...	...	...	17
Kahár ...	...	...	...	...	16
Kurmi ...	...	...	...	...	10
Bráhmán ...	...	...	...	...	7
Total					133

That is to say, 133 people "who have caste prejudices," out of a total of 175 Hindus emigrated from Ará alone in nine months; of the remainder, there were only nine Chamárs and six Dusádh.

The above shows how entirely erroneous the ideas of educated natives are on the subject, and the proverb of "Like master like man" applying here, it is no wonder that recruiters complain that they are afraid of going into villages to recruit, for fear of zamindári servants.

79. Taking another class of men—the police—I need not repeat what I have said elsewhere. The police are actively opposed to emigration, except where, as in Sháhábád, they are kept in order by their superiors. Police constables, I believe, act thus because they are not aware that emigration is encouraged by Government. They look upon the Colonies much as they look upon Indigo planters—as private speculators who wish to exploit India.

They generally steer clear of planters as much as possible, for they have found by experience that a *sahab* is an awkward subject to meddle with; but they are quite at home in the art of bullying a recruiter. He is, they consider, a private speculator, having no more connexion with Government than the peon of a factory, and he has not a *sahab* ready on the spot to defend him.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOES THE SYSTEM OF RECRUITING FEMALES NEED REFORM?

Preliminary.

128. ON this point I have little to say that has not been already said by Major Pitcher.

129. If there is a prejudice amongst natives against men emigrating, there are still greater prejudices against women going to the Colonies. There is a widespread and general belief that recruiters carry off honest women and make prostitutes of them. Here is a sample of native opinion, given me by a native gentleman educated above the average:—"The system of recruiting females is open to grave objection. Great atrocities are committed under its cover. Frequently the recruiters and their men entice away wives and daughters from poor and even respectable families, never mentioning to them the real object for which they are wanted. The men hold out other inducements, and take them away from their homes. When arrived at the depôts they are informed of the destinations they have to go (*sic*). Most of them of course refuse to obey him; but as on once leaving their homes they cannot return to them with honour and respect, and as, moreover, having once fallen into the power of the recruiter, they are forcibly kept with him, they after the lapse of a few days cannot but give way. Instances are also not rare of some of these women remaining as concubines of the recruiters or their friends. It also frequently happened that when a woman persistently refuses to go, the recruiter secures another in her place, and gets her registered in her name; but when the time of sending away comes, the woman who had refused is forcibly sent."\* I give this quotation as illustrating native opinion on the subject; not because I believe it. I asked the gentleman who was kind enough to give me the above note, if he had ever been personally acquainted or even heard of any single specific instance of any one of the abuses he mentions, and he was obliged to confess that he had not.

130. I have made pretty minute inquiries into this point, and I believe that, so far as Bihâr is concerned, there is hardly any truth in the stories told of recruiters enticing away married women. The people who ought to know most about it, the villagers of the class from whom recruits come in districts where emigration is popular, deny it, and stories of the kind are only common where it is unpopular, and where hence the people are ignorant about the matter. There are, it is true, inducements held out to recruiters to collect by hook or crook as many women as they can; but as for enticing away married women, the game is not worth the candle. One instance of its being tried would set the whole district in an uproar. If the recruiter was caught in time, he would probably be beaten to death, and if he escaped, he would certainly be prosecuted criminally. Another result would be that recruiting of any kind in the district would be permanently stopped. One example of this class of cases, and only one, has come to my notice. Since it occurred, there has not been a single emigrant recruited in the district (Champâran), nor dare a recruiter show his face within its borders. Natives keep a very jealous eye upon recruiters, and in some places if a woman disappears they charge the recruiter with enlisting her, and come in plenty of time to the Magistrate to complain. I have had the records of several of these cases before me, and in every one the result was the same—the charge was found by the Magistrate to be totally false. Sometimes it is found that the woman never came near the recruiter, and sometimes that she had run away with some lover of her village, and the two had been met far from their home by the recruiter, and enlisted.

131. The women who actually are enlisted consist, I believe, almost entirely in these four classes—

- (1) Wives of emigrants (generally of re-emigrants.)
- (2) Widows without friends, who are starving.
- (3) Married women who have made a slip, and who have either absconded from their husband's house with or without a lover, or who have been turned out of doors by their husbands.
- (4) Prostitutes.

\* See also paragraph 77 of Major Pitcher's report, which coincides with my own opinion.

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first into Hindus and Mussalmans. I have then divided the Hindu castes under three heads, going roughly by the social position of each caste. Some of the castes I have been unable to indentify owing to the illegibility of the registers, and these I have classed with the castes of lowest social position so as to be on the safe side. The following is the result:—

A.—Mussalmans	...	...	...	...	264
B.—Hindus—					
(1) Of higher social position—					
(a) Chhatri	...	...	123		
(b) Bráhma	...	...	81		
(c) Rájput	...	...	27		
					231
(2) Of medium social position—					
(a) Gowála	...	...	163		
(b) Koñi	...	...	64		
(c) Kurmi	...	...	60		
(d) Kabár	...	...	55		
(e) Máli	...	...	25		
(f) Teli	...	...	17		
(g) Naijali	...	...	15		
(h) Káesth	...	...	12		
(i) Kalwar	...	...	11		
(j) Baniya	...	...	10		
(k) Ghátwál	...	...	7		
(l) Sonár	...	...	5		
(m) Dháankh	...	...	4		
(n) Others	...	...	6		
					477
(3) Of lower social position—					
Chamá	...	...	54		
Dusádu	...	...	52		
Bhar	...	...	15		
Hajám	...	...	13		
Nunia	...	...	12		
Kaibarta	...	...	11		
Dhobi	...	...	10		
Others	...	...	110		
					277
					992
Total for Hindus	...	...	...	...	992
GRAND TOTAL	...	...	...	...	1,226

The above is of course a very rough classification and is possibly incorrect in one or two particulars, but it is near enough for my purpose, which is to prove that two-thirds of the Hindus recruited belong to castes of higher and medium social position. Only one-third can be considered of decidedly low social position.

153. Returning now to the means for lessening the separation between the colonists and their homes, I would point out that, as a rule, the fears of the people are to a certain extent founded on fact, and that a large number of emigrants do actually not only get cured of nostalgia, but actually in their new surroundings manage to break with all their home ties. Major Pitcher has explained this fact fully, and I have nothing more to say beyond that my information coincides with his, and, to quote my diary for the 9th February—

“As a proof of the apathy exhibited by coolies in the colonies with regard to their relatives at home, I may quote Mr. Warner, who was formerly Immigration Agent at Trinidad. He says that, when a ship returns from Trinidad with time-expired coolies, each one of them has to make his will. He says that he has hardly ever known an instance of a cooly devising his money in case of his decease to a relation in India. It is always left either to some wife or relation in the colony, or (if the testator has no such relation) to Her Majesty the Empress of India, or to a hospital. In such cases friends at home are practically never thought of.”

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REVENUE AND AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT, AUGUST, 1883.

Major Pitcher and Mr. (Grierson) Inquiry into Emigration. (Pres. No. 12.)

154. The existence of this state of affairs is admitted by returned coolies themselves. And they universally give the same explanation for it; they say that there is nothing to "jog the memories," so to speak, of the emigrants with regard to their friends at home. The coolies rarely send letters or remittances, because they distrust the delivery, and they still more rarely receive news from home. Here I must draw attention to the different ways in which the matter is regarded. Returned coolies said that emigrants were not to blame, because they despatched letters, but got no answer; and on the contrary the relations in India maintained that they were not to blame, for they did send letters, but they got no answers. This means that both in India and the colonies coolies have no trust in the postal system.\*

155. It is evident that communication by letter between the colonies and India must be made certain and easy before there is any hope of the main native objection to emigration being removed. The objection is well-founded, and must be respected. Some of the better managed colonies are doing something to facilitate the transmission of letters and remittances Indiawards. They collect letters from the coolies, and forward them, free of cost, to the Agents in India, who post them in Calcutta to the addressees.† Practically, then, a coolie can send a letter home for half an anna. In the same way, the agencies undertake the forwarding of remittances, free of cost, at the current rate of exchange. The result, however, in the case of letters especially, is miserably inadequate. The following four statements show this:—

A.—LETTERS.]

STATEMENT I.

NAME OF COLONY.	Number of letters delivered in India through the Emigration Agent in the years—											REMARKS.		
	1873.	1874.	1875.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1881.	1882.				
Mauritius														No record.
Demerara	No record.	24	34	31	63	95	335	506	540	702				
Trinidad														
Jamaica														
St. Lucia														
Grenada														
St. Vincent														
Natal										9	22			
Fiji														
Surinam												5	5	
French Colonies														

STATEMENT II.

NAME OF COLONY.	Number of letters delivered in India through the Emigration Agent in the year 1882.	Approximate proportion of the number of letters to every thousand coolies.	REMARKS.
Mauritius	2,48,000	No record.	Unascertainable.
Demerara	88,000	702	8
Trinidad	51,000		
Jamaica	11,000		
St. Lucia	1,000	No record.	Unascertainable.
Grenada	1,500		
St. Vincent	2,000		
Natal	25,000	44	1½
Fiji	1,400	No record.	Unascertainable.
Surinam	4,156	5	1½
French colonies	72,800	0	0

The figures in the column 2 for Natal are approximate, and are obtained by doubling the Calcutta figures, inasmuch as letters about equal in number to those sent to Calcutta were also sent to Madras.

\* Compare the following entry in my diary for 18th January:—"Two years ago a Sonar came back from the Mauritius and told Mir Koojra that his son was alive and well. Mir then sent a registered letter, but it was returned through the Dead-letter Office. People told him when he sent the letter that it would never reach its destination, as such letters never did. He did not believe them, but found they had spoken the truth."

† This appears to me to be an infringement of the Post Office Act, but I presume that Government would be the last to interfere with the arrangement on that account. The system might, however, be formally legalized.

सीमांत कार्यालय बलिबिसवाबा