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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
27th July 1871.*

No. 367. Read the following letter from the Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, to the Acting Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Madras, 13th July 1871, No. 2,908 :—

I AM directed to request Government to determine what arrangements shall be made for tabulating the results of the General Census of November 1871, and for preparing the Census report.

2. On previous occasions the District Returns have been abstracted by the Collectors from the Taluq Returns, which had previously been compiled by the Tahsildars from the Village Returns. At each stage of this process differences of treating the Returns must have crept in, and much valuable information must have been irretrievably lost.

3. It is obvious, for instance, that when tabulation is supervised by many different officers they must have as many different ways of classifying Religious Castes, Races, and Occupations. The most minute instructions cannot prevent this, for the varying circumstances of a country covering 116,248 square-miles must present innumerable doubtful cases which each Supervisor has to determine to the best of his ability. If there is but one Supervisor and Reporter any error he may make will be revealed in the report. If there are many, their errors will defy detection and invalidate the general results.

4. Again, the Census of so small a tract as a single talook, or even a single district, is not wide enough to suggest the averages by which the results should be tested. For instance, if tabulation is conducted at the Presidency, and it is found that the proportion of population to houses in one particular town is far in excess of that found to exist in other towns, the Supervisor will at once direct local inquiries to be made, and the result will be either that an error is rectified or that a curious and perhaps important fact is recorded. A local tabulator would not know that there was anything remarkable about the returns.

5. Again, if District abstracts are sent in, and it is then found that more information is wanted, it will be impossible to obtain it without setting in motion the whole machinery of the Revenue administration down to the village officers. In this way many of the minor Census results with the regard to the occupations, degrees, and distribution of the people, "which are absolutely indispensable in the just consideration and effectual framing of measures affecting the general interests of that people," will be lost for ever. It will be within the recollection of Government that great difficulty was experienced in determining the number of boys and girls of a school-going age, when the Local Funds Act was under discussion. All the necessary information was recorded in the Village Returns of the Census of 1867, but part was incorporated when the Taluq Returns were framed, and part when the District Returns were abstracted from them. Nothing to the purpose was to be found in the Presidency abstract.

6. Mr. Plowden, in his able report on the Census of the North-West Provinces for the year 1865, says that experience has shown that central tabulation is *absolutely necessary*. He adds, "As long as the District Statements are made up in the Collector's and Sub-Collector's offices we lose the opportunity for that thorough examination of the facts displayed by the original Village and Town

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Returns which is so requisite for a comprehensive view of those facts. It is owing to this cause that in the present report we have absolutely no information, except that which Mr. Hume has collected in regard to the births in the several castes, on any of the following subjects of interest :—

The proportion of the sexes in the various castes.

The progress of the urban and of the rural population, and the relative fecundity in cities and country.

The distribution of the various trades and professions in towns.

The original Returns would throw light on all these subjects, but the necessary information can only be obtained by a careful analysis of the Village and Town Returns. It is these which must be carefully sifted and examined if the report on the Census is to be really useful and comprehensive. But to make such an analysis requires a strong establishment supervised by an officer who is experienced in statistical inquiries."

7. The arrangements for the Census of November have been made with great care, and the enumeration will be successfully performed. The cost of the operations up to date has been about Rs. 50,000 (of which Rs. 30,000 is for the paper on which the Forms have been printed). It would be unwise to neutralize all this expenditure of labour and money by any imperfection in the tabulation.

8. The Board are convinced that the tabulation of all the forms for Tamil and Telugu Districts should be done at Madras under a specially qualified Supervisor acting under their orders. It is possible that a sufficient number of Clerks able to abstract Malayalam and Canarese returns may not be found in Madras. If so, the Supervisor should proceed to Calicut and Mangalore in turn, after the Madras work is finished.

9. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the tabulation cannot be done by the Board's Establishment nor the report prepared by their Secretaries. Their time is already fully occupied with work which is of even greater importance, and the task of tabulating and reporting on between five and six millions of forms, weighing between fifty and sixty tons, is not one that can be performed in a building devoted to other purposes, and by persons whose attention is distracted by other duties.

10. It follows that a special officer must be appointed to supervise the tabulation. He must be a man familiar with statistics, especially with those of life and population, and he must be well versed in the history and results of the Censuses which have already taken place in India and elsewhere. Without desiring to hamper the choice of Government in any way, the Board desire me to mention that they believe these qualifications are to be found in Mr. C. E. Gover, the Honorary Secretary of the Committee appointed by the Municipality of Madras to take the Census of the Town, and the Writer of the reports disposed of in Government Order, 10th September 1869, No. 1,267, and 25th January 1870, No. 98.

11. In calculating the expense of the Tabulation and Report, it must be remembered that so far as the work of Clerks goes, the cost will be less if it is done at Madras than if it is done at twenty different places. The cost of supervision will be additional, but it will be amply repaid. The cost of the salary of a special officer to prepare the report is inevitable in any case.

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12. The exact amount which must be expended on the Tabulation and Report it is very difficult to calculate. Mr. Plowden estimated that in the North-West Provinces, 70 Tabulators would be required, and the total expenses would be Rs. 31,000, but an analysis of his figures shows that an unknown portion of the cost was not to be charged to the Census. Thus he gives the cost of printing Enumeration Returns as Rs. 9,000, and allows no separate sum for paper. Experience has shown the Board that the paper alone could not cost less than Rs. 30,000.

13. The Board believe after careful consideration that these final operations of the Census can be well performed in eight or nine months for less than Rs. 50,000.

14. For the sake of comparison it may be mentioned that the cost of the English Census of 1861 was £139,885.

No. 368.

ORDER THEREON, 27th July 1871, No. 1,321.

Miscellaneous.

THE Government request that the Board will communicate with the Municipality, and ascertain whether Mr. Gover's services could be temporarily placed at the disposal of Government for the purpose and period stated, and whether Mr. Gover would be willing to undertake the duty of supervising the tabulation, and will report the result.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) A. deC. SCOTT, Captain, R. E.,
Under-Secy. P.W.D.,
for Secy. to Govt.

To the Board of Revenue.
„ the Public Department.

Ed. F. B. Bantleman.

Col. of 11871 Madras.

REVENUE.

THE BOARD OF REVENUE.

Ac. to

Based July 27th.

Board

Q. O. 271 only 1871 No. 1371

JULY

No. 207308

Handwritten notes:
The Board of Revenue
has been directed to
communicate to the
Commissioner of the
District of Madras
the result of the
Commissioner's report
on the subject of the
Madras Revenue
Board of Revenue
No. 1371

Dec. 1871. 1871.

Board of Revenue,
MADRAS.

Letter of 13th June 1871, No. 208.

Handwritten: 13th June 1871. Encl.

Received

JULY.

No. 208.

General Census of November 1871.—Government
men requested to determine what arrangements
shall be made for tabulating results of, and for
preparing Census report.

Handwritten: 13th June 1871.