

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

HISTORICAL REFERENCES IN THE ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL LITERATURE.

The district of Champaran in the ancient and mediæval literature has been referred to mainly as the land of *tapovans* (hermitages) where *Rishis* (sages) lived and prayed. There does not appear to be any particular reference to this district so far as industries are concerned.

POSITION OF MISCELLANEOUS INDUSTRIES OF MINOR IMPORTANCE DURING THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

During the eighteenth century there does not appear to have been any large or important industry in the district. Barring aside a negligible percentage, the people were entirely dependent on agriculture. They lived in villages dotted among their fields. The villagers grew their own crops, ground their own corn and built their own houses. Their cloth was woven by the village weaver, while the rough implements needed in agriculture were invariably made and repaired by the village smith and carpenter. The oil which they needed for day to day consumption was extracted from different varieties of oil-seeds by the Telis, a caste that mainly dealt in oil.

There was also a good sprinkling of Gareries or shepherds in the district who used to tend sheep and weave blankets. The district has had excellent pasturage from before and flocks of sheep are still reared within the district.

Gold washing in minute quantities from the Gandak river as well as from Panchnad, Harha, Shabsa and other rivers was also an industry of some importance and the Raja of Ramnagar used to collect every year gold of several thousand rupees. The Tharus were the gold washers.

Other industries of minor importance were mat-making, brass-ware and basket-making.

Poppy cultivation and opium trade was an important industry in Champaran. With the rest of Bihar, the district of Champaran was known widely for the cultivation of the finest variety of opium. Emperor Akbar, after his conquest of this region, found the opium traffic as a distinctive feature, though during the Mughal period there does not appear to be any attempt to encourage or restrict the cultivation of opium. The Governor of Bihar found neglecting his duties due to his addiction to *quknar* (opium-hemp) is mentioned in the *tuzuk*. Ralph Fitch, an Englishman, who travelled

in the East from 1583—1591 A. D. and visited Agra, Benares, Patna is the first person to mention directly about Patna opium. He found Patna with a large trade in cotton, sugar and opium. The Abbe Raynal (*Hist. Philosoph. des deux Indes*, 1770, a work translated in 1777, l. 424) says that "Patna is the most celebrated place in the world for the cultivation of opium. Besides what is carried into the inland parts there are annually 3,000 to 4,000 chests exported, each weighing 300 lbs." Alexander Hamilton in 1727 speaks of the chiefs of Calient vending from 500 to 1,000 chests of Bengal opium yearly.

The Britishers inherited the legacy of the monopoly in opium trade from the Mughals. Opium was allowed to be cultivated by selected *raiya*ts only as a source of revenue. An annual revenue or peshcush was demanded in advance. But this legalized local monopoly of purchase appears to have died out during the period of confusion between 1739 and 1757.

Hunter mentions in his '*Statistical Account of Champaran*' that "In 1773 the monopoly of providing opium in Champaran was granted to one Mir Mannir, who had previously been employed by the Patna Board; he engaged to answer for any outstanding balances and to deliver opium at Rs. 320, or £ 32, per maund. In 1785 the monopoly was put up at auction to the highest bidder and in 1789 again resumed by Government. In 1783 the price paid to ryats was Rs. 1-14 per seer (1 s. 10½ d. per lb.), and it was optional with them to grow the plant or not."

*The following table shows the area cultivated, the *damdetta* produce, and the average yield per opium *bigha* for the eleven years, 1863—1874 :—

**Seasons and Subdivisions.	Net quantity of land cultivated after deducting failures.	<i>Damdetta</i> produce at 80 tola weight.	Average produce per <i>bigha</i> .
	Bigha Katha Dhur	Md. Sr. Ch. K.	Sr. Ch. K.
1863-64			
Motihari ..	73,040 3 0	7,957 20 11 3	4 5 3
Bettiah - ..	42,711 14 0	5,566 12 13 0	5 3 2
1864-65			
Motihari ..	64,875 13 0	5,246 7 5 3	3 3 3
Bettiah ..	39,575 11 0	4,020 26 6 3	4 1 0

* *Vide Hunter's Statistical Account of Champaran* (1875), p. 271.

** Subdivisions here probably mean sub-agencies as there were two sub-agencies at Motihari and Bettiah, each under the supervision of a Sub-Deputy Opium Agent. assisted by an Assistant Opium Agent.

Seasons and Subdivisions. Net quantity of land cultivated after deducting failures. *Damultha* produce at 80 tola weight. Average produce per *bigha*.

Bigha Katha Dhur Md. Sr. Ch. K. Sr. Ch. K.

1865-66	Motihari	62,538	14	0	4,701	4	15	3	3	0	0
	Bettiah	38,455	14	0	4,123	2	13	1	4	4	2
1866-67	Motihari	68,453	17	0	5,989	1	15	1	3	8	0
	Bettiah	43,702	11	0	4,936	37	12	1	4	8	1
1867-68	Motihari	73,152	0	0	6,262	37	7	1	3	6	3
	Bettiah	45,443	0	0	4,594	38	8	1	4	0	3
1868-69	Motihari	65,215	3	0	3,923	36	6	3	2	13	2
	Bettiah	47,757	11	0	4,085	15	12	2	3	6	3
1869-70	Motihari	71,649	13	0	6,272	13	5	0	3	8	0
	Bettiah	49,595	11	0	4,980	35	9	1	4	0	1
1870-71	Motihari	77,289	0	0	5,288	39	3	2	2	11	3
	Bettiah	49,905	0	0	3,660	35	6	3	2	15	0
1871-72	Motihari	78,344	0	0	6,131	27	10	0	3	2	0
	Bettiah	50,588	0	0	4,332	0	13	3	3	6	3
1872-73	Motihari	68,784	0	0	3,235	39	8	0	1	14	0
	Bettiah	49,182	0	0	3,066	35	11	3	2	8	0
1873-74	Motihari	50,666	0	6	4,353	19	1	1	3	7	0
	Bettiah	42,803	0	0	3,921	10	14	3	3	10	3

Within the period of six months ending in February, 1876, a total of 4,643 maunds of poppy-seed was exported from Champaran through the river traffic.

As a monopoly trade, opium was a good source of revenue. Mr. R. C. Dutt, I.C.S., C.I.E., in his "*The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*" (p. 288), has quoted from the evidence before the Commons' Committee, 1832 (Part I, p. 26) to the spirit of the Britishers working behind the opium trade.

"The manufacture of opium and salt" said Halt Mackenzie, who was one of the principal witnesses examined by the Commons' Committee in 1832, "is conducted with a view to revenue, not trade. My opinion is that, of the suggested changes with regard to those articles, there is none that would not involve a large loss of revenue. In the salt department, I do not think we could by means of an excise, collect the same amount of net revenue as is yielded by the public sales....."

"From that source also (opium) they derive a very large revenue, the excess of the sale prices beyond the first cost constituting such a tax as I would think it hopeless to get by any other device; and though, commercially speaking there are strong objections to the system, yet we must set against the necessity of the revenue and my belief is that the same amount of revenue cannot be otherwise got."

The total amount involved in the exports from India from 1849 to 1877 is quoted below from Mr. Romesh Dutta's book, viz., "*The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*" :—

Year.					Opium.
					£
1849	..	..	..	..	5,772,526
1850	..	..	..	..	5,973,395
1851	..	..	..	..	5,459,135
1852	..	..	..	..	6,515,214
1853	..	..	..	..	7,034,075
1854	..	..	..	..	6,437,098
1855	..	..	..	..	6,231,278
1856	..	..	..	..	6,200,871
1857	..	..	..	..	7,050,630
1858	..	..	..	..	9,106,635
1859	..	..	..	..	10,827,642
1860	..	..	..	..	9,054,394
1861	..	..	..	..	10,184,713
1862	..	..	..	..	10,553,912
1863	..	..	..	..	12,494,128
1864	..	..	..	..	10,756,093

Year.					Opium.
					£
1865	..	..	..	..	9,911,804
1866	..	..	..	..	11,122,746
1867	..	..	..	..	10,431,703
1868	..	..	..	..	12,330,799
1869	..	..	..	..	10,695,654
1870	..	..	..	..	11,693,330
1871	..	..	..	..	10,783,863
1872	..	..	..	..	13,365,228
1873	..	..	..	..	11,426,280
1874	..	..	..	..	11,341,857
1875	..	..	..	..	11,956,972
1876	..	..	..	..	11,148,426
1877	..	..	..	..	12,404,748

The figure for net revenue for the last decade of the nineteenth century is available but the author says that "the revenue derived from opium declined within the last ten years of the century while the salt revenue showed rather an increase."

Net Revenue in rupees.

Year.					Opium.
					Rs.
1890-91	..	..	..	..	5,69,83,850
1891-92	..	..	..	..	6,15,05,670
1892-93	..	..	..	..	6,39,06,840
1893-94	..	..	..	..	4,75,09,640
1894-95	..	..	..	..	5,70,76,520
1895-96	..	..	..	..	5,05,49,810
1896-97	..	..	..	..	3,92,25,460
1897-98	..	..	..	..	2,79,06,550
1898-99	..	..	..	..	3,35,20,400
1899-1900	..	..	..	..	4,01,22,420

All the above quoted figures are for India as a whole. But Bihar had been the main area for poppy cultivation and Champaran in Bihar had the maximum acreage. Poppy was a good competitor for both indigo and sugar cultivation. The Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Champaran during 1892-1899, published in 1900, mentions that "the other single non-food crop of great importance and value is opium, occupying 3.7 per cent of the net cropped area. Wheat among the food crops, and opium among

non-food, are the two great rivals of indigo.....” A comparative statistics noted from the same Report, in respect of the area under opium cultivation in Champaran and neighbouring districts would show the importance of poppy cultivation in Champaran :—

Serial no.	Name of district.	Area (in acres).	Percentage to net cropped area.
1.	Champaran	53,594	3.7
2.	Muzaffarpur	12,179	0.8
3.	Gorakhpur	16,555	0.8
4.	Azimgarh	6,469	0.8
5.	Ballia	4,866	0.9
6.	Gaya	6,063	2.5
7.	North Monghyr	1	..

The cultivated area was distributed throughout the district. Though the district percentage was 3.7, it was largely exceeded in Adapur, Dhaka, Gobindganj and Motihari where the crop was artificially irrigated from wells. Bettia and Kesaria only reached the district average, while in Bagaha, Shikarpur and Madhubani it was much below so that the percentage of area under opium was two and a half times greater in the Sadar than in the Bettiah subdivision—from the *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations during 1892–1899* (published in 1900) the following statement of the area and percentage of the cultivated area under opium crop thana by thana is quoted below :—

Serial no.	Name of thana.	Area (in acres).	Percentage to net cropped area.
1.	Bagaha	2,262	1.1
2.	Shikarpur	2,950	1.2
3.	Bettia	8,605	3.5
Subdivisional figures ..		13,817	2.0
4.	Adapur	7,755	6.4
5.	Dhaka	10,960	6.2
6.	Motihari	6,722	5.1
7.	Gobindganj	8,311	6.5
8.	Kesaria	4,989	3.6
9.	Madhuban	1,040	1.7
Sadar subdivisional figure		39,777	5.2
District figures ..		53,594	3.7

This wide cultivation of opium, however, did not continue for long. It appears to have declined at a rapid speed for there is no reference about poppy cultivation in the Report on the Revisional Survey and Settlement Operations published only 23 years after the first Report.

Numerous factors have been responsible for this decline. A study of the old letters available in the Champaran Record Room would show that with the cultivation of opium numerous abuses had crept in which harassed the *ryots* of opium to the most and ultimately destroyed the cultivation altogether. Romesh Dutt, Hunter, Sir George Watt and others have all commented severely upon the way the management of the opium cultivation was done. A letter in Duncan Records by A. Shakespear, Vol. II (1873), shows in detail the different reasons for the decline of the opium trade. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century opium had both great demand and gross neglect due to political conditions within and without India. Inside India the political troubles with the Nawabs of Bengal naturally upset the opium trade as river transport was often disturbed. Also outside India European wars caused similar decline in the opium trade. Nevertheless, with stability of political peace in India under the British rule the trade was monopolised by the Government and poppy cultivation reached a new peak. That continued for the first half of the nineteenth century and opium trade was extensively carried into four Eastern countries, especially with China. To maintain their source of great profit and large revenue the European traders of opium in India forced upon China a war on that plea, viz., the Opium War. By this war the unpopularity of opium trade as demoralising the human character became prominent. China began to grow her own opium. The agents of the Government harassed the *ryots* to cultivate poppy irrespective of their financial gain, extracted bribes from the cultivators through the use of force while the Zamindars and Chowdries started to harass the cultivators. But all this hastened the end of poppy cultivation.

L. S. S. O'Malley's *Gazetteer of Champaran* (1907) has the following, regarding the Government organisation for opium control :—

“For the administration of the Opium Department the district was formerly divided into two sub-agencies, Motihari and Bettiah, each under the supervision of a Sub-Deputy Opium Agent, assisted by an Assistant Opium Agent; but owing to the reduction of the area under poppy cultivation there, two charges were amalgamated in 1907. Under the provision of Act XIII of 1857, the Collector is *ex-officio* Deputy Opium Agent, but in practice he takes no part in the administration of the Department.”

There were also provisions for station guards for Opium Department as would be evident from letter no. 245, dated the 31st January

1846, from the Under-Secretary to Government of Bengal, to Captain T. C. Elwall. There were also Opium Kotees in Champaran along with other districts in Bihar. Opium trade encouraged crimes. There are references in the old correspondences that Motihari town used to have a lot of thefts and other like crimes due to the large collection of opium *ryots* in the town.

SUGAR INDUSTRY FROM THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TILL THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century or in the early years of the nineteenth century manufacture of sugar is said to have been introduced into the district by immigrants from Azamgarh and Gorakhpur and in the first half of the nineteenth century it was the most important industry in Champaran. There were several refineries and *golas* of sugar in the district. Several Europeans were very much interested in the manufacture of sugar and as a matter of fact, many of the European indigo concerns were originally started as sugar factories, a number of which worked by steam being scattered through several *parganas*. In an extract from the Commercial General letter from the Court of Directors, dated the 6th May 1791, preserved in Muzaffarpur Record Room, it has been mentioned that for the purpose of the expansion of the sugar cultivation the Government was actuated by the same policy which had been adopted for indigo cultivation. For this purpose the East India Company made an agreement with John Paterson, a noted conversant in the culture and management of the same article in the West Indies. According to the terms of the agreement, the Company was to afford all facilities to him. A tract of 6,000 *bighas* of land of 100 cubits each, in such part or parts of Bengal and Bihar as may be the most suitable for sugarcane was to be leased to him for 12 years to commence from the 1st January, 1792. Such lands were to be applied only for the sugar cultivation. The soil of Champaran district being found suitable was utilised for the cultivation of sugarcane. The crop being a cash crop or particularly suited to Champaran soil became an important crop and sugar manufacture by indigenous method had quickly spread.

The sugar manufactured used to be transported by boats and road to places like Singhia and Lalgunj in Muzaffarpur district and Chupra and Patna by boat. Calcutta was the main centre where the bulk of the sugar ultimately found its way.

There were two main reasons for the decline of the industry till the beginning of the present century. The first was the difficulty of transport and the higher prices obtained for indigo for the same labour and land. Transportation of machinery for sugar manufacture from the far distant places to the district was a very costly affair and an up-hill task, for there was not much of railway communication. Transportation of manufactured sugar from the district to the

chief consuming centres like Calcutta was equally difficult and costly. In many cases sugar could not be reached to the place of destination before the rains set in and this setting in of rains was a great danger to sugar in transit and proved fatal for several manufacturing concerns. Sugar industry gave way to the indigo but continued to be manufactured on a very small scale on the indigenous method till the end of the nineteenth century. Detailed account of the sugar industry is given later in this chapter. It may be mentioned that sugar manufacture was more or less carried with steam-power or manual labour till the end of the nineteenth century. But processes for cleansing the sugar and for graining had been evolved even then.

INDIGO INDUSTRY FROM THE DATE OF INTRODUCTION IN THE DISTRICT TILL IT DECLINED.

Cultivation of indigo came in soon after sugar industry was introduced. Indigo industry had prosperous days from about the middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the present century and was able to almost push out sugarcane and manufacture of sugar for some decades. As the indigo industry almost ruled the economy of the district for decades some details are given although indigo has completely died out now.

The pioneer of the indigo industry in Bihar was Francois Grand, Collector of Tirhut (Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga) in the years 1782-1785. He has left his own record that he introduced the manufacture of indigo on the European methods and had encouraged the establishment of indigo works and plantations and erected three at his own expense.

Grand came to grief and was discharged by Lord Cornwallis for running the indigo concerns on his own, nevertheless his contribution to indigo industry was of a pioneer nature.

In this connection a summary of a letter, dated the 7th August 1792, to R. Bathurst, Collector of Tirhoot, is of interest. It mentions that in pursuance of an engagement for the cultivation of indigo weed the *raiya*s were paid 3 *sicca* rupees for cultivation and 3 rupees for land rents during *Assar* crop sown in June and July, provided the land was retained in indigo for the whole *Fussily* year. But if the field was relinquished in the month of *Cartic* the indigo contractor paid only annas ten and the remaining six annas was paid by the *raiya*s to the proprietors. For the *Falgune* crop shown in March Rs. 1-8-0 was paid per *bigha* for rent for cultivation if the weed was only once cut, and Re. 1-2-0 as rent, if relinquished at that time.*

In his book "*History of Bihar*" Mr. Minden Wilson (1907) has mentioned that T. S. and Co. built an indigo factory at Rajpur

* See Muzaffarpur Old Records published by Gazetteer Revision Section (1959).

in 1801. Mr. Jaffry Finch, who held a share with a Bengali gentleman was the sponsor. Wilson has mentioned that the *mokarrari sottah* for the land on which the factory was built was dated the 2nd October, 1807, but from the wording of the document it was evident that the factory itself was built some five or six years before, that is, in 1801.

From the old records it would appear that in 1807 the second factory to follow western methods of manufacture was founded at Seerha. Shortly afterwards, the Turkullia concern was started by Mr. Henry Hill. According to Minden Wilson, Mr. Hill was at Rajpur from 1810 to 1814 and in 1818 purchased Burrah, Rajpur and Motihari concerns. From this time the cultivation of indigo steadily extended. The old records show that in 1830 the Collector was keen to build more roads for the development of the country and reported that in this Government would get the assistance of the indigo planters who were well spread. Although Europeans had to take out licenses and permissions from the Governor-General in Council through the Board of Revenue to start indigo concerns it appears they were liberally encouraged to do so and helped to acquire lands for this purpose. About 1850 the high prices obtained for indigo for export dealt a final blow at sugar industry. The cultivation of sugar was replaced by indigo, and the sugar factories were slowly converted into indigo concerns. Some of the other indigo concerns of the nineteenth century were at Peepra (originally a Dutch factory but in 1835-1838 was one of a group belonging to Major Noel and Co.), Jagoulia (1848), Lohereah (1859), Hardea (1862), Moorla (1864), Pursa (sometime in the sixties), Mohowah (1881), Gowandrah (1882), Byreah (1884), Kooriah (1884), Russelpore (1891), Bagaha, etc.*

Systems of cultivation.

The following is a description of the systems of indigo cultivation which were followed in Champaran during the flourishing days of the industry. The two systems were *Ziraat*, i.e., direct cultivation by means of hired servants on landlords' *zirat* (more correctly landlord's *bakasht* land) and *asamiwar* or cultivation through tenants of the factory (*asami*). A third system, which was uncommon in Champaran, was *khuski* or cultivation by means of agreements with outside *raiyyats*. Roughly, one-third of the cultivation was carried on under the *zirat* system and two-thirds under the *asamiwar* system.

Ziraat.—The term *Ziraat* has been incorrectly applied to any land in the direct occupation of a factory, and not only to land held by a proprietor or superior tenure-holder. *Ziraat* indigo land was cultivated by the factory at its own expense and with hired

* See Muzaffarpur Old Records by P. C. Roy Choudhury (Gazetteer Revision Section, Revenue, Bihar).

labour. Over one-fourth of the area under indigo was of this class, and owing to its careful cultivation returned the best profits.

Asamiwar.—When the system of *asamiwar* cultivation was followed the indigo was grown by the factory tenants, under the direction of the factory's servants, at fixed rates per *bigha*. Generally documents called *sattas* were executed, the *raiya*t receiving an advance and binding himself to grow indigo on a certain specified portion of his holding, and to pay damage if he should fail to carry out his contract. All the expenses of cultivation were paid by the *raiya*t, but the seed was given by the factory, which also cut and carted away the indigo, the *raiya*t being paid for the latter at fixed rates. When the contracts (*sattas*) were executed, the cultivators generally agreed for a term of years to grow indigo on 3 *cottahs* per *bigha* of their holdings. This was sometimes called the *tinkathia* system, but must be distinguished from the system, under which the planters appropriated 3 *cottahs* per *bigha* out of the *raiya*t's holding, giving him in return nothing beyond a proportionate reduction of rent.

Badlain or exchange was prominent characteristic of the *asamiwar* system. Lands, after being cropped three and four years successively with indigo, require to be sown with grain and other surface root crops. Indigo, being a plant with a deep root, forms an excellent rotation crop with them, but successive crops of indigo usually exhaust the soil unless it is regularly manured. Hence it seemed necessary to arrange for an exchange of land, and *badlain* was a practice universally followed.

Khuski.—Agreements executed by *raiya*ts who were not the tenants of the factory, were called *khuski*, as the cultivators voluntarily agreed to grow indigo. In this case the factory supplied the seed and paid for the crop when delivered, at privileged rates; it sometimes also gave an advance to the cultivators at a light rate of interest. The system was very rarely found in Champaran, as, if it is to pay, indigo requires selected lands, carefully cultivated and rotated in an intelligent system; the rate of remuneration has to be high in order to induce the outside *raiya*t to grow indigo; and in Champaran factories had such extensive tenure-holding rights that they could generally make better terms with their own *raiya*ts, and had no need to enlist the service of cultivators holding land in other estates.

Kurtauli.—Under the *kurtauli* system (sometimes also called the *shikmi* system), the factory took a sub-lease from a *raiya*t and raised the indigo with its own labour, the rent agreed on being deducted from the rent due from the *raiya*t to the factory in its capacity as landlord. The factory was, in short, a mere under-*raiya*t. *Kurtauli* leases were rare in Champaran and appear to have been more common in Motihari than elsewhere.

Hiring of carts.—An important feature in indigo cultivation was the hiring of carts, which was generally affected by means of agreement as it is imperative that the indigo plant should be cut and brought into the factory as soon as it is ripe. In consideration of an advance, the cart-owner agreed to place his cart for a term of years at the disposal of the factory, and in return received a fixed rate of payment slightly below the ordinary rate.

Subsequent History.

The industry was seriously threatened in 1867, when there was a strong demonstration against the cultivation of indigo, accompanied, in some instances, by acts of violence. The causes of dissatisfaction on the part of the *raiya*ts were several. They objected to the unusual trouble and hard labour required for the successful production of the indigo plant, and felt that the rates being paid for its cultivation did not give adequate remuneration for the labour involved. It was known that enormous profits were made from indigo by export abroad and they had a natural desire to obtain a large share of them, while the high prices of food had raised the profits obtained from the cultivation of foodgrain and therefore made indigo still more unpopular than before. Further, they resented the harassment of the factory servants, who besides committing various acts of oppression, were alleged to be in the habit of taking a large percentage of the payments made to the *raiya*ts as their own perquisites under the general name of *dasturi*. In addition to their grievances, there was an absence, on the part of the managers of factories, of that sympathy with the *raiya*ts which used formerly to be displayed by the old proprietor-planters, who paid more attention to the well-being of their tenantry. By this time the proprietors had started leaving the factories to youngsters.

The opposition of the *raiya*ts showed itself in a general refusal to sow indigo, and in some cases in the forcible appropriation for other crops of the lands already prepared for indigo. The first instance of such proceedings occurred in a village called Jaukatia, the *raiya*ts of which, in defiance of the contract into which they had entered with the Lalsaraiya factory, sowed their lands with cold weather crops; and this example was rapidly followed by other villagers. The planters had very considerable interests at stake, and the then administration thought that it was necessary that they should receive prompt and final decisions on their complaints. Government, at their request, established a small cause court at Motihari, with jurisdiction over the entire district of Champaran, for the trial of all cases of breach of contract between them and the *raiya*ts. This court was composed of two judges, the one a covenanted civil servant, usually a European, and the other an Indian gentleman and these two officers were directed to sit together for the trial of all suits connected with the indigo question. This

measure was naturally interpreted that Government would not allow the leases to be abrogated and the question of the equity or legality of the contract would not be entered into. The result was naturally very favourable to the European planters. Though few suits were instituted, the mere knowledge that such a court was at hand to enforce promptly the payment of damages for breach of contracts was sufficient to deter the *raiya*ts from breaking them. Within nine weeks of the establishment of the court, the Lieutenant-Governor was able to put an end to its special constitution, leaving the Indian Judge only to preside over it. It may be mentioned here that the European planters at that time were almost at one with the British administration and they had even been given concession of drawing money on their own signatures from the Government Treasury to be repaid when indigo would be sold.

But the spirit of unrest among the Indian cultivators could not be crushed. It was a general unrest which was also noticed in parts of Bengal. The disputes between the *raiya*ts and planters had at one time threatened to become very serious. The local officers almost unanimously reported that the cultivation of indigo had become very unpopular, and that there was not a single *raiya*t who would not abandon the cultivation if he could; and this state of things was ascribed as much to the insufficiency of the remuneration which the *raiya*ts received, as to the exactions, oppression, and annoyance to which they were exposed at the hands of the factory servants. Government was satisfied that the time had passed when planters could hope to carry on an indigo concern profitably by forcing on the *raiya*ts a cultivation and labour which were to them unprofitable; and it was clear that, in the altered circumstances of the time, they must be prepared either to close their factories, or to give to the *raiya*ts, in some shape or other, remuneration which should make it worth their while to grow indigo. This necessity was recognised by the general body of planters, and they yielded to the pressure, raising the rate of remuneration from Rs. 7-8-0 to Rs. 12 per *bigha*.

Many European indigo planters had endeavoured to lay much of the blame of torture to the indigo *raiya*ts on the Zemindars of Champaran. But a different story is given out by a letter no. 165, Champaran, dated the 13th May 1840, from G. D. Wilkins, Joint Magistrate, to G. Gough, Officiating Sessions Judge of Saran. It mentions about the circular letter of Sudder Nizamut Adawlut no. 3166, dated the 22nd November 1839, which required the Magistrates not to punish the European British subjects for contempt of court under the regulation there in force. The Magistrate wanted a classification as how to enforce the meaning of section 5, Regulation VI of 1823, explained in construction no. 385, that is to enter a penalty bond of Rs. 50 not to plough up an *assami*'s crop for the purpose of forcibly replacing it with his own indigo. The Magistrate also draws the attention to the fact that the extension of

indigo cultivation was entirely in the hands of Europeans who were proved to do injustice to the *assamies* in cultivating indigo.

It was believed that this movement among the *raiya*s was instigated by certain persons who had their own interests to serve; and this belief appeared to be borne out by the fact that the open opposition to the planters was mainly confined to the estates of the Maharaja of Bettiah. The management of the Bettiah Estate by an English gentleman was said to have given rise to much dissatisfaction among the influential natives of the Raja's household, whose opportunities of enriching themselves at the expense of the Raja had been restricted thereby; and the combination among the *raiya*s was said to have been engineered by them, mainly with the object of involving the manager of the estate in difficulties so that the Raja, disgusted with the management, might allow his affairs to revert to their former neglected condition.

Ten years later the financial embarrassment of the same estate resulted in the indigo industry being placed on a firmer footing. Hitherto the planters had been able only to secure temporary leases of land, but circumstances now arose which gave them a more permanent and secure hold on the soil. By 1876 the Bettiah Raj, owing to the extravagance of the Maharaja and the mismanagement of his employees had become heavily involved in debt; and, as a means of extricating it from its difficulties, a European Manager, Mr. T. Gibbon, was appointed. One of the first steps of the new Manager was to ensure financial equilibrium, and the Gulliland House consented to float a sterling loan of nearly Rs. 95 lakhs, on the sole condition of substantial European security. To satisfy this condition and cover the interest on the loan, permanent leases of villages were granted to indigo planters, and the indigo industry was thus placed in the hands of the European planters on a secure basis. Permanent rights in the land being assured, the cultivation of indigo was widely extended by them until by the end of the nineteenth century no less than 21 factories, with 48 outworks, had been established, while the area under indigo was 95,970 acres or 6.6 per cent of the cultivated area.

Landed Interests.

In the Settlement Report of 1899 it is stated that the indigo concerns exercised the rights of landlords in nearly half of the district, either as proprietors or tenure-holders, and that the indigo industry owed the strength of its position in this district to the fact that the planters possessed a landlord's interest in so large an area; not the least noticeable results of which were that most of their indigo being grown on land of which they were the landlords, they were relieved from the necessity of haggling with petty proprietors and cultivators, to which their less fortunate fellow planters had to submit in Saran and Tirhut.

The proportion of land held by planters as proprietors was inconsiderable, amounting to only $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in the whole district. Generally speaking, the interest of the indigo concerns in the land was mainly that of tenure-holders, but in thanas Bettiah, Motihari, Gobindganj and Kesariya, where the proportion of land held on permanent tenure varied 23 to 45 per cent, it was practically as secure as a proprietary right.

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of indigo cultivation, the following remarks are quoted from the Settlement Report of Mr. (later Sir Charles) Stevenson Moore, with slight condensation :—

“My conclusions are that the indigo industry in relation to Government and the administration, in relation to land-owners, and in relation to labourers, confers very decided benefits on the district but that in relation to cultivators its advantages are very much more questionable. In Champaran the utility of the indigo factory is largely connected with the management of the Bettiah Raj. It has been seen that it was their security which rendered possible the raising of the Bettiah sterling loan. Further, while the factories, to the best of my knowledge, are good and considerate landlords to their *raiya*s, they increase the value of property they supervise by dint of good management, and pay up their rents with punctuality. The Bettiah Raj has not the organisation requisite for the efficient management of all its estates direct. That, relying on indigo and not on *zamindari* for their profits, indigo factories have been available to share with it the responsibility of management, at a very slender rate of remuneration, has proved a decided advantage to that estate.

“The benefits of the indigo industry to the labouring population are still more marked, for these are the classes in greatest need of support. The average number of labourers employed is high and more than half the labour is employed in the cold weather months, when these classes are most liable to destitution. It is true that the factory rates of labour are somewhat lower than those ordinarily paid, and it is often urged that factories have had a tendency to keep down labour rates. A large employer of labour naturally gets it cheaper than the man who employs a single cooly, and if factories have attempted to keep down rates, they have not invariably succeeded, as the rates differ considerably in different tracts.

“In relation to the agriculturists, its merits are more questionable. But here again, so far as *raiya*s not called upon to grow indigo are concerned, an indigo factory, as landlord, is a very decided advantage. The indigo concerns' best interests centre in maintaining stability of rents, and what is of more importance, this truth is generally both recognised by them and acted upon. Again, non-indigo *raiya*s who are tenants of factories have their accounts kept well and accurately, are given proper receipts, are not called on for additional demands to meet domestic ceremonies so common in

native estates and are protected and helped when they fall into difficulties. Pecuniarily, a cultivator loses per acre by growing indigo. This deficiency may or may not be made by other advantages, but these are less tangible and he does not appreciate them at the full value. He finds that if he had grown another crop, he would have made more money. He forgets that he received an advance when he required it that the existence of indigo gives him more profits from his cart than he would otherwise obtain; and that his rent, had the village been leased to a native *thikadar* instead of to an indigo planter, would probably have been more onerous.

"The fact remains that the *raiya*s, on the whole, do not like indigo, though I do not think they possess very active sentiments on the subject, their attitude being one of passive acquiescence. Again the system of accounts is open to the objection that it tends to check independence of thought and action. The accounts for rents, advances and indigo are all mixed up together, and though kept no doubt well and accurately, are incomprehensible to the ordinary uneducated mind. Finally the system of exchange (*badlain*) raises apprehension in the *raiya*'s mind that his tenant right will be interfered with. His tenant right is, as a rule, preserved unimpaired, and the record-of-rights will afford him full protection. Moreover, indigo as a rotation crop for food grains, distinctly benefits the land. But a *raiya* may be asked to give, in *badlain* for indigo, a plot which he has liberally manured and carefully tilled in anticipation of fat profits to be realised from some other crop. Whatever the cause, the fact remains that the *badlain* system is not generally liked. My general conclusions then are that the cultivators who grow indigo on agreement receive little advantage from it, and in their own opinion the crop is generally believed to be pecuniarily disadvantageous; that on the other hand, only two-thirds of the indigo cultivation is of this nature, that is today only 4 per cent of the cultivated area in the district; and that to be set against the real and imaginary disadvantages to a comparatively small body of *raiya*s are the great and material benefits that accrue to the administration, to landlords and to labourers from the presence in the district of the indigo concerns and their industry."

Indigo factories were more common in the headquarters subdivision and less common in the northern thanas, which consists mainly of rice lands unsuitable for the growth of indigo. The following is a list of the indigo factories at work in the district at the end of the nineteenth century:—

Motihari Subdivision.

Factories.				Sub-Factories.
Bara	..	..	..	Gaundra.
				Jugaulia.
				Mahuawa.
				Rasulpur.

Factories.			Sub-Factories.		
Belwa	..	..	..	Chailaha.	
Motihari	..	..	..	Haraj.	
				Mirpur.	
				Purnahia.	
				Sugaon.	
Nawada	..	..	..	Parsauni.	
Padumker	..	..	..		
Pipra	..	..	..	Daini Math.	
				Dhekaha.	
				Dobwalia.	
				Madhuban.	
Rajpur	..	..	..	Hussaini.	
				Jamunapur.	
				Pakri.	
Siraha	..	..	..	Parewa.	
Telhara	..	..	..		
Tetaria	..	..	..	Bala.	
Turkaulia	..	..	..	Barharwa.	
				Gahiri (Bettiah	
				subdivision).	
				Khairwa (Bettiah	
				subdivision).	
				Makhwa.	
				Olaha.	
				Sakhwa.	
				Tejpurwa.	

Bettiah Subdivision.

Bairia	..	..	..	Nautan.	
Kuria	..	..	..	Lalgarh.	
Lalsaraiya	..	..	..	Farwa.	
				Madhopur.	
				Rajghat.	
Malahia	..	..	..	Sirsia.	
Parsa	..	..	..	Harpur.	
Sathi	..	..	..		

From 1900 onward.

From about 1900 the industry began to suffer from the competition of the synthetic indigo in Europe. The rise in prices of foodgrains encouraged the cultivation of more food crops in the district. The artificial dye slashed down the price of the natural dye which fell from Rs. 232 per factory maund to Rs. 130 in 1912-13. The area under indigo cultivation naturally decreased and the history of the industry gradually merged into the more general history of relations between landlords and tenants. In 1900 the *tinkathia* system prevailed as described above. In the non-indigo

concerns the *raiya*s paid to their immediate landlords various *abwabs* with a general incidence of about Rs. 3 per *bigha*; it should be remembered that these non-indigo concerns were mostly in the north of the district, where the large *bigha* is prevalent. The indigo concerns, therefore, began to decrease the area under cultivation and to levy compensation from the tenants for releasing them from the obligation of cultivation of indigo under the *tinkathia* system. It is clear from contemporary records that the words *hunda* and *tinkathia* were used to indicate compensations of this kind. This coincided with the gradual awakening of the tenantry to the doubtful legality of these additional considerations. Complaints were received but led to no improvement, as the tenants exaggerated their grievances. At this period the reduction of opium cultivation occasioned considerable loss to the *raiya*s and they were all the more ready to revolt against the existing system. The bad feeling increased until widespread disturbances broke out in 1907-1908. A noticeable event of this year was the murder of Mr. Bloomfield, Manager of the Telhara Concern which was the outcome not of any of the larger questions at issue, but of an isolated case in which the Manager refused to sanction the transfer of holdings.

The Sathi Disturbances.

From early in the year 1907 there was a general feeling of uneasiness in the *Sathi dehat*. Continual meetings of the Muhammadan *raiya*s were held under the guidance of one Sheikh Gulab. Acts of violence were committed on factory servants by *raiya*s who refused to labour for the factory after having received advances. Convictions were obtained, but reversed on appeal. Arson followed and most significant of all, the sowing down of the *raiya*s' own crops in the *tinkathia* field set aside for indigo. More convictions were set aside by the appellate court, and the prestige of the recusant party was enhanced.* A common fund was raised for contesting cases and petitions were put in against the factory specifying—

- (1) that *hurja* or damages for not growing indigo was being taken although no *sattas* had been executed;
- (2) that other illegal cesses were taken by the *amla*; and
- (3) that the services of labour and cartmen were not paid for.

The factory shut off the supply of water through the *pains* which it had constructed, and there followed thefts of water and prosecutions on this account. Some of the leading *raiya*s, Sheikh Gulab and others, were made special constables. They refused to act, and were convicted under the Police Act. The High Court set aside the conviction in March, 1908. The status of the tenants in Champaran had been reduced to such an extent that he could not walk with an umbrella opened within a mile of the *kothi* of an

* See "Gandhiji's First Struggle in India" by P. C. Roy Choudhury (Navajivan Trust, Ahmadabad).

European planter. Meanwhile the tenants had petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor. An enquiry by the Subdivisional Officer and the Collector followed and the *raiya*s displayed their grievances in full. In February and March, 1908, *raiya*s disputed with the factory the possession of the oats and other crops grown in the *tinkathia* land and thousands of cases were instituted. In sympathy with these disturbances meanwhile the *raiya*s of the Bhasurari factory, which held villages in *thika* lease under the Ramnagar Estate, petitioned against their landlord and complained of illegal exactions. The upshot of the Sathi disturbances was agreements that whatever crops in the *tinkathia* land were grown from factory seed should be taken by the factory; while the *raiya*s should take the crops grown from seed supplied by themselves, and that such *raiya*s as did not wish to grow indigo or oats on the *tinkathia* system, should pay for their irrigation from the *pains* at the rate of Rs. 3 for every *bigha* of their holding instead of the previous nominal rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas, and should execute agreements to this effect. The registration of these *pains* as improvement was in progress when the more serious disturbances of 1908-09 broke out, and temporarily put a stop to the work. When conditions were settled again, the *raiya*s quietly executed agreements or *sattas*.

The Bettiah Disturbance.

The general spirit of uneasiness continued through the summer of 1908 and at the Bettiah *mela*, a general feeling of dissatisfaction was expressed against the whole *tinkathia* system, and the *raiya*s more or less agreed to take the law into their own hands, and break the system once for all. An outbreak of violence started in the area of Parsa Factory and spread to the Mallahia, Bairia and Kuria areas. Military police was employed to preserve order. Fifty-seven criminal cases were instituted and 266 people were convicted of acts of violence. The disturbances were thus quelled in November, 1908. Mr. Gourlay, who was then Director of Agriculture and had at one time been Subdivisional Officer in Bettiah, was deputed to make an official enquiry which he completed in December and January. His report was submitted in April, 1909. The fact that Gourlay's report was never published and remained a secret document supports the theory that Gourlay had come to conclusions against the planters. Gourlay made a very detailed enquiry and returned to the headquarters with a few packing boxes. He used to point out the packing boxes and mentioned that they contained the best evidence that he could collect. At a later stage he opened the packing boxes and showed the clods of earth which he had picked up from the *raiya*s' lands containing both *rabi* and indigo plants. What he wanted to show was that *raiya*s were forced to put indigo plants on the lands they had earmarked for *rabi*. But Gourlay's report had some effect. After informal discussions between Government and members of the Planters' Association

certain changes were made in the existing system, the chief items being—

- (1) an increase of the price per acre paid for indigo cultivation to the *raiya*ts from Rs. 12 to Rs. 13;
- (2) the introduction of a by-law whereby the area to be taken from the *raiya*t each year was reduced from 3 *cottahs* to 2 *cottahs* in the *bigha*.

These, however, were not fully ratified by the planters, for in the memorandum of the Planters' Association (1910) it is mentioned that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal bringing the deliberations of the conference of the Planters' Association to a close in Darjeeling in 1910 said that "confidence has been reposed in the planters on the present occasion because they have always respected every confidence reposed in them in the past".*

The agitation subsided to some extent more because of the extensive police arrangements and the wide-scale arrests and even burning down of some houses of the tenants. About 350 persons were convicted and put into prison. Discontent, however, against the whole existing system continued, and the recusant element gained confidence from the immunity enjoyed by the agitators in general, from the acquittal of the persons convicted in connection with the Sathi disturbances of 1907-08, and particularly from the modification by the High Court of the death sentence passed on the murderers of Mr. Bloomfield.

Sharahbeshi and Tawan.

The years 1910 and 1911 were free from incident. In December, 1911, a large body of *raiya*ts assembled at Narkatiaganj railway station to state their grievances to George V, the King-Emperor of India who was then on his way back from Nepal and in January, 1912, they sent representatives to submit a memorial in Calcutta. In September and October, 1912, in a series of articles under the caption "The Planter and the Raiyat" in the *Beharee* newspaper the system was again vigorously attacked. Meanwhile with the decrease of indigo cultivation the landlords' practice to claim compensation from the tenants for releasing them from the obligation to grow indigo became general. Compensation was levied by two methods. First in villages held in *mukarrari* or permanent lease in which the planter was really in the position of proprietor, the *raiya*ts executed contracts to pay enhanced rents. The enhancements were about 60 per cent over the original rents and were effected by registered documents. This method was popularly known as *sharahbeshi*.

Secondly, in villages held on temporary lease the planter took lump sums called *tawan* from the tenants. There were of course exceptions, for instance, the Rajpur concern adopted the *tawan*

* See "Gandhiji's First Struggle in India" by P. C. Roy Choudhury.

system in all its villages, the Pipra concern while enhancing rent in the *mukarrari* villages continued *tinkathia* cultivation in the *thikadari* villages. The Lalsaraiya concern adopted neither method but merely assessed rent on excess area discovered in the possession of the *raiya*s at the last settlement, which the factory had agreed to leave unassessed so long as the *raiya*s continued *tinkathia* cultivation.

These substituted arrangements were proceeded through 1912, 1913 and 1914 and were in full swing when the Revisional Survey and Settlement operation started in October, 1913. The situation was complicated by the fact that the Bettiah Estate applied for enhancement of rent under section 105 of the Bengal Tenancy Act in all its *thikadari* villages.

In 1914-15 the record-of-rights for the Bettiah subdivision was attested. Towards the end of 1914 a number of petitions were presented to the Lieutenant-Governor complaining of *abwab* and other matters, which were reported on by the Settlement Department. It was clearly proved that illegal *abwabs* were being collected on a large scale. The Bettiah Estate stopped all such levies by its *thikadars*, but the administration was not in a position to enforce a similar prohibition in the Ramnagar Estate. In 1915-16 the records of the Motihari subdivision were attested. The legality of *sharahbeshi* was vigorously contested by the *raiya*s. The majority of the enhanced rents were allowed as the *raiya*s failed to prove their main plea, which was that force had been used to procure the enhanced agreements. The *raiya*s, especially of Pipra and Turkaulia areas, were inclined to be turbulent in their objection to these decisions, and the settlement officers had an unpleasant experience. No actual violence, however, occurred and the *raiya*s eventually seemed inclined to accept the enhanced rents as inevitable.

In the meantime the leaders of the Bettiah *raiya*s had enlisted public interest outside the district. One Shri Rajkumar Shukul of village Satwaria, police-station Lauriya, had attended the Provincial Congress at Chapra in 1915 and the Indian National Congress in December, 1916, in Lucknow and had a resolution moved by Shri Braj Kishore Prasad of Darbhanga regarding the necessity of an enquiry into the agrarian condition in Champaran, particularly because of indigo cultivation. Shri Rajkumar Shukul supported the resolution and the resolution was passed. It is at Lucknow that Shukul extracted a promise from Gandhiji to visit Champaran and look into the matter, when he declined to move the resolution on the ground that he had no personal knowledge of the agrarian conditions in Champaran. In pursuance of his promise Gandhiji arrived at Muzaffarpur on the 10th April, 1917. He saw the Commissioner, Tirhut Division, and intimated him of his impending visit to Motihari and Bettiah to look into the grievances of the *raiya*s. But the Commissioner did not agree with Gandhiji and the latter rightly apprehended obstacles in the way of his enquiry. He was

served a notice under Criminal Procedure Code by the Subdivisional Officer, Champaran, to quit Champaran. But Gandhiji politely declined to obey the order and in his refusal note mentioned "..... Out of a sense of public responsibility I feel it to be my duty to say that I am unable to leave this district but if it so pleases the authority I shall submit to the order by suffering from penalty of disobedience".*

Since Gandhiji was apprehensive of his arrest, the whole night preceding the day when the case was to come up he spent in work and gave very clear instructions to his followers as to what they had to do in case of his imprisonment.

Gandhiji appeared before the Subdivisional Magistrate, Motihari, on the 18th April, 1917. The Court was packed and thousands of people were waiting outside. The District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police and other local officials were present. Gandhiji gave his statement in which he reiterated his previous view and stated that "..... I have ventured to make this statement not in any way in extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me, not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the high law of our being—the voice of conscience".

The case was adjourned on that day and was withdrawn unconditionally on the next date. It is believed that the withdrawal was entirely at the instance of Sir Edward Gait, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Rev. C. F. Andrews is supposed to have worked as the contact-man.

Gandhiji stayed in Champaran and continued his work of hearing and recording grievances of the *raiya*s.

At the intervention of common friends Gandhiji had an interview on the 10th May, 1917, with Mr. Maude, the Chief Secretary to Government of Bihar and Orissa at Patna for about two hours. The Chief Secretary wanted a report from Gandhiji as to the conclusions he had already come to, and also to give up his lawyer friends associating with him in the enquiry.**

Gandhiji furnished his report on the 13th May, 1917. In his report he referred to various kinds of atrocities perpetrated upon the *raiya*s and the illegal exactions extracted from them. He also mentioned that nearly 4,000 *raiya*s had been examined and their statements had been recorded after careful cross-examination. Several

* *Gandhiji's first struggle in India*, by P. G. Roy Choudhury, Navjivan Publishing Home, Ahmedabad.

Autobiography of Gandhiji.

Champaran and Satyagraha by Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Autobiography of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

* See "Gandhiji's first struggle in India" for Gandhiji's letters. He refused to give up his Lawyer friends. (P. C. R. C.)

villages had been visited and many judgments of courts studied. Gandhiji was also prepared to produce proof in support of his conclusions.

In his report he had also recommended for certain relief to the *raiya*ts and wanted that they should be told by proclamation and notices distributed broadcast among them that they were not only bound to pay *abwabs*, *tawan* and *sharahbeshi* but they ought not to pay such amounts. He also recommended that the *raiya*ts should be informed that they were not bound to render any personal services and that they were free to sell their services to whomsoever they chose and that they were not bound to grow indigo, sugarcane, or any other crop unless they wished to do so and unless it was profitable for them. He further recommended that the Bettiah Raj leases given to the factories should not be renewed until the wrongs were remedied and when renewed, should properly safeguard *raiya*t's rights. As to *dasturi*, he recommended, the better paid and educated men should be put in charge of responsible offices and that no continuance should be given to the diminution in *raiya*t's wages by illegal exaction of *dasturi*.

Gandhiji also declined to disassociate himself with his lawyer friends until it was proved to his satisfaction that their presence was aggravating the situation.

The Chief Secretary sent his reply to Gandhiji's letter on the 21st May, 1917, in which he mentioned that the local officers had been called for reports by the 20th June, 1917, and that the Settlement Officer could not give more than a general or preliminary report within the short time allowed, but the Government hoped that it would be sufficient to deal with the tenancy matters on the points recommended by Gandhiji and that the District Officer had been asked to report on the points which did not fall within the scope of Settlement Operations.

It is evident that the Chief Secretary's reply was very calculating and he did not promise very quick action. But since the agitation was far too acute and the district was in a state of unparalleled excitement, the Government was obliged to take quick action. The Subdivisional Officer of Bettiah, the District Magistrate of Champaran, the Commissioner of Tirhut Division and the Settlement Officer were asked to report on the letter of Gandhiji referred to above. As a result of all this the Bengal Government appointed a committee to look into the matter, vide Resolution no. 1890C., dated the 10th June, 1917.

It is interesting to mention here that a resolution was moved in the Legislative Council as early as the 7th April, 1915, to appoint a mixed committee of officials and non-officials to enquire into the complaints of the *raiya*ts and to suggest remedies. But it was negatived on the ground that the appointment of such a committee

at that stage was unnecessary as the Settlement Officers were engaged in collecting materials required for the decision of question at issue and additional enquiry would exacerbate the relations of landlord and tenant which were feeling the strain of Settlement Operations.

Agrarian Committee.

The committee appointed to enquire into the agrarian conditions of Champaran consisted of Mr. F. G. Sly, C.S.I., Commissioner, Central Provinces, as President, Mr. E. L. Tanner, I.C.S., Settlement Officer, South Bihar, as Secretary and Mr. L. C. Adami, I.C.S., Superintendent and Remembrancer of Legal Affairs, Bihar and Orissa, Raja Harihar Prasad Narayan Singh, Member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, Mr. D. J. Reid, Member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, Mr. G. Rainy, I.C.S., Deputy Secretary in the Finance Department, Government of India, and Mahatma Gandhi as members. The duty of the committee was : “ (1) to enquire into the relations between landlords and tenants in Champaran including all disputes arising out of the manufacture and cultivation of indigo; (2) to examine the evidence of these subjects already available, supplementing it by such further enquiry, local and otherwise, as they may consider desirable, and (3) to report their conclusion to Government stating the measures they recommended in order to remove any abuse or grievances which they may find to exist ”.

The Lieutenant-Governor left a free hand to the Committee as to the procedure they would adopt in arriving at the facts.

Raja Harihar Prasad Narayan Singh resigned on account of ill-health before the committee assembled and Raja Kirtyanand Singh of Banaili, Member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, was appointed to fill his place.

Although about 4,000 *raiya*ts had given their evidence before Gandhiji, only 25 *raiya*ts were produced before the Committee for examination. Several officials were also examined and local investigations were held at eight indigo concerns where a mass of registers of accounts were examined. The Committee recorded evidence and held nine sittings at Motihari, Bettiah and Ranchi. The Bihar Planters' Association was also invited to submit a memorandum of its view but it did not do so on the ground that it had no materials and facts regarding agrarian conditions in Champaran.

Sri Rajkumar Shukla in his evidence *inter alia* mentioned that even the rate of Rs. 19 or Rs. 20 a *bigha* was never paid and the result was that the tenants had not only been impoverished but they were running away and many had settled in Nepal Terai. *Painkharcha* was being charged even for the lands which had never been irrigated. The tenants were fined Rs. 460 for submitting a

memorial to Lieutenant-Governor. Sri Rajkumar Shukla mentioned a few of the *abwabs* besides *painkharcha* as follows :—

- (1) *Bapahi Putahi*.—When the father or relative of a person died and his land devolved by inheritance on him the factory did not allow him to take possession of it until he paid Rs. 5 per *bigha* to the factory.
- (2) *Ghorahi Bhainsahi*.—When a buffalo or horse of the factory became old then the manager sold it by lottery and realised Re. 1 from each tenant.
- (3) *Bungalahi*.—When the bungalow of the indigo concern had to be repaired Re. 1 was realised from each tenant. The *raiyyats* were compulsorily to pay for the residential comforts of their landlord.
- (4) *Hak Talbana*.—When a peon was posted on any tenant for any purpose then Re. 1 was realised as *talbana*. The idea was that not only the peon would get something atrocious done but also made the tenant pay for his irritating stay.
- (5) *Phaguahi*.—*Phagua* or the Holi festival is a great festival in Bihar and even if the factory *sahib* did not observe it there was no reason why the tenants should not pay a rupee each for enjoying the festival.
- (6) *Hakfarkhawan*.—This was realised at the rate of one anna per rupee on the rent and was an offset for giving a receipt for the rent realised.
- (7) *Motorahi*.—If the factory owner went in for a motor car the tenants should feel proud of the fact and they would have to pay Re. 1 per head for the privilege of having a car-owner as the boss.

Apart from all this, Shri Shukla spoke of *bethbegari* in which labourers were forcibly made to work. The factory managers had also another great privilege and whenever there was any dispute between one tenant and another and complaint was made to the factory, the manager used to realise fine from Rs. 5 to Rs. 500 commonly known as *hakjariwana*. The managers did not allow the disputes of the tenants to be settled by themselves or by private arbitration inasmuch as their income would be lessened thereby.

It may particularly be mentioned that the Settlement Officer, North Bihar, Mr. J. A. Sweeney, I.C.S., gave evidence which went against the planters. For this he had to face social boycott by the Europeans. Sweeney's contribution was of very great help to Gandhiji. As a matter of fact the report which Mr. Sweeney had submitted to the Government on some of the suggestions of Gandhiji has now been looked into and showed that he fully supported the views of Gandhiji. Mr. Sweeney was careful before he sent up his report to the Government. He particularly consulted some of his

trusted Assistant Settlement Officers including Messrs. Luke, B. P. Seal and Akhauri Gopi Kishore Lal. Mr. Sweeny had to face considerable official displeasures for his outspoken views and was transferred to the Judiciary. This able administrator had to retire prematurely and left India almost an invalid.*

The Committee found the *tinkathia* system to be unpopular, radically defective and inconsistent with the relations that should exist between landlords and tenants under modern conditions: it recommended that emergency legislation should be introduced to effect the abolition of the system and to prescribe the conditions under which indigo cultivation might be continued on a purely voluntary basis.

As the feeling against *sharahbeshi* was so strong and the prospect of ruinous legislation so imminent, it was recommended that the enhancements of rent should be reduced by 20 to 26 per cent and that all entries on the record-of-rights regarding existing obligations to grow indigo should be cancelled.

The taking of *tawan* in the opinion of the Committee was not justified in temporarily leased villages, while in permanently leased villages it was desirable that an arrangement analogous to that in connection with *sharahbeshi* should be made. It was, therefore, proposed that in the former the Bettiah Estate should make it a condition of the renewal of the leases to the *thikadars* that 25 per cent of the *tawan* collected should be refunded to the tenants through the estate and that the estate should for seven years forego enhancement of rent granted in the settlement courts on the ground of rise in prices, from any tenant who had paid *tawan*.

Champaran Agrarian Act, 1918.

The Government accepted the Committee's recommendations generally. Accordingly a Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council in the cold weather 1917-18, and in its final form the Champaran Agrarian Act (Act I of 1918) received the assent of the Governor-General on the 1st of May, 1918. The Act abolishes the *tinkathia* system and renders invalid any existing or future contract between a landlord and a tenant which contains a condition to set apart the land of the tenancy or any portion thereof for the cultivation of a particular crop; though contracts between tenant and landlord, for a period not exceeding three years, for the delivery of a specified weight of a particular crop, as distinguished from cultivation of a certain area with that crop, are permitted. In accordance with a compromise arrived at between the *raiya*t on the one hand, and the Pipra, Turkaulia and Motihari factories on the other, it is provided that the *sharahbeshi* enhancements should be reduced with effect from the 1st October 1917, by 30 per cent in the case of

* The Editor had the advantage of personal contacts with Messrs. Seal and Lal and looked into the records in Government Archives. (P. C. R. C.)

Turkaulia, and by 26 per cent in all other cases. On the other hand, where the *sharahbeshi* enhancement had either been disallowed by the Settlement Department, or not imposed at all, and the indigo condition was in force and entered in the record-of-rights, it is provided that the entry should be cancelled, to an extent proportionate to the reduced enhancement allowed in respect of *sharahbeshi* tenancies belonging to the same or neighbouring villages of the same landlord. It provides for the freedom of tenants from an obligation to grow indigo and liberty to them to grow indigo on the voluntary basis if they like and makes arrangements to prevent litigation in respect of the matters covered by the Act. Finally the Committee's recommendation to confer on the Collector summary powers to fine landlords for the exaction of *abwabs* was rejected by the legislative body and omitted from the Act.

Decay of the Industry.

The first crisis of the indigo industry in North Bihar was due to the planters themselves and that was the discontent of the cultivators that were obliged to grow indigo. Indigo cultivation had never become popular in North Bihar in spite of the fact that a large number of cultivators and labourers made their living out of indigo cultivation and manufacture. The second crisis came in 1897 when synthetic indigo that flooded the market at once caused a sharp decline of price of indigo. The price fell to about Rs. 152 per maund from Rs. 234 per maund. By 1904 the price had fallen down to Rs. 100 per maund. By 1914-15, there were only 59 concerns producing 7,000 maunds of indigo as against 112 concerns with an average production of 65,000 maunds before the synthetic indigo was invented.

Subsequent Agrarian Disputes.

The war of 1914-1918 curtailed the supply of aniline dyes and the price of indigo rose to 600 per factory maund. The profits of the Champaran concerns rose proportionately but owing to the disputes described above, the area under cultivation did not increase very materially. After the war the prices dropped rapidly to their former level. The industry ceased to be of any importance and finally died out completely in 1931.

The passing of the Agrarian Act set at rest all disputes directly concerned with the industry, but the general discontent broke out in other directions. There was considerable excitement and opposition on the part of the tenants to the enhanced rents. In 1918-19 there were a large number of criminal cases between factory landlords and tenants. The latter objected to paying their rents; in their *raiyyati* holdings they claimed fishery rights and disputed the landlords' rights in trees, and there were disputes over grazing rights. These subjects had been raised before the Committee and attained importance then for the first time. In 1919-20 the certificate

procedure under section 158-A was granted to certain European *mukarraridars* in respect of their worst villages. Though the Bettiah Estate set apart grazing grounds for cattle and the rights of tenants to a half share of the trees on *raiya* holdings was settled by a ruling of the High Court, the situation did not improve.

In 1921 the non-co-operation movement gave rise to a distinctly anti-landlord tendency and resulted in a general inclination to withhold rents though there was no definite no-rent campaign. There was bad feeling against European *thikadars* and *mukarraridars* in spite of the fact that they behaved with some restraint.

The Turkaulia, Pipra and Motihari concerns applied for certificate procedure for the collection of rents and Indian landlords also complained of the difficulty of collecting rent. There were also disputes over fisheries. Some of the European *thikadars* in the north of the district were on the bad terms with the *raiya*s; the causes of disputes which culminated in the burning of the Chauterwa factory were mainly due to the labour supply and grazing. A detachment of mounted military police was posted in the north of the district. Owing to this punitive measures and the cessation of the non-co-operation campaign, relations improved in the following years.

In 1923-24 the certificate procedure was considerably extended as there was still widespread difficulty in collecting rents. Subsequently relations were satisfactory, though there was intermittent agitation regarding the rights of tenants to free-grazing and wood in the jungles in the north of the district. Between 1924 and 1928 the Turkaulia, Pipra, Motihari and Rajpur concerns in the south and the Bairiah concern in the north surrendered their leases to the Bettiah Estate, and their villages were reabsorbed in the estate and taken under *khas* management.

In 1929-30 there was considerable agitation in the Doon valley in the Ramnagar Estate regarding the recognition of tenants who had cultivated *gairmazarua malik's* lands, the cutting of trees in the jungles and petty illegal exactions of the staff. The disputes were complicated by the fact that the Ram Raja had obtained possession of the estate in 1927-28, but his position being anything but secure, he could not settle these disputes. A congress committee enquired into the grievances of the tenants but failed to achieve a settlement. Relations, however, improved and the agitation subsided. The Ram Raja finally lost possession in 1931 through a decision of the Privy Council.

SALTPETRE INDUSTRY.

Saltpetre was another industry of importance in the district. It used to be manufactured from the seliferous earth found round the village homesteads, where potassium of nitrate appeared on the surface as a white efflorescence. The process of manufacture was

simple and the implements were primitive. Manufacture were carried on in small factories situated in the towns and villages scattered over the country. Nitrous soil was collected from the vicinity of the village houses and steeped in small earthen filters. The nitrous brine was next concentrated in iron or earthen vessels with the aid of artificial heat, and saltpetre was obtained by crystallization, as the temperature of the concentrated liquid fell. The saltpetre obtained was impure in quality, as it contained earthly matter and foreign salts (such as potash and sodium) in mechanical admixture. This saltpetre was collected in refineries situated at different points among the village works, was purified in them to a fair degree of refraction and was then sent to Calcutta, some for export and some for purification to a higher degree of refraction in the local refineries.

The saltpetre industry was associated closely with the poor Nunias. The very word "Nunia" is suggestive of the profession the community was associated with. Nunia is derived from the word 'noon' a Hindi transcription of the word 'salt' in English. These Nunias actually used to collect seliferous earth and conduct all the processes up to the pre-refraction stage. Even at the refraction stage Nunias were associated with saltpetre, though not as independent worker but as hired coolies.

The saltpetre industry was founded on a system of advances made by the middlemen who had also contacts with larger business houses in Calcutta. The manufacture itself was being controlled by the Northern India Salt Department through a system of license.

It is interesting to mention here that Macpherson has referred to the chronic dearth of saltpetre in England in the seventeenth century.* "Repeated attempts have been made (in England) to obtain saltpetre by digging up the floors of houses, stables, and pigeon holes; and the people were obliged to admit saltpetre men to destroy their floors whenever they thought proper. Other projects were set on foot; but they were equally unavailing." Naturally, the authorities of the Company in England "were never weary of asking for saltpetre from Patna where it could be had so good and cheap that the contract for it was discontinued on the west coast in 1668 and at Masulipatam in 1670". The English used to send down every year saltpetre from Patna, at first to Hugly and later on to Calcutta in a small fleet of boat.

On December 8, 1755, English authorities in Bengal wrote to the court of Directors, "our contract for saltpetre..... being insufficient to comply with your directions..... we increased the quantity. Omichand agreed to deliver us by the end of January from 30,000 maunds to 40,000 maunds at the rate of Rs. 5-12-0 (Arcot) per factory maund".

* Quoted in Prof. J. C. Sinha's *Economic Annals of Bengal*, MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1927.

In 1758 Mir Jafar granted an exclusive monopoly of saltpetre to the English East India Co. The entire quantity of saltpetre produced in Bihar was bought at certain fixed prices by the company which exported the greater part of it to Europe.

The quantity of saltpetre exported from Champaran in the early days is not exactly known. But an idea of the same can be had from the total figure of the Company's business in saltpetre which received the greater part of the article from Bihar and the contribution of Champaran in the total quota of Bihar was not inconsiderable.

Saltpetre being an ingredient of gunpowder, its export was regulated by the course of political event. During the twelve years of peace from 1763 the company sold on an average 22,620 bags of saltpetre per annum, while during the eight years of war from 1775 to 1782, its average annual sale was only 15,019 bags. The Company's export of saltpetre to England brought a profit of £ 5,381 in 1776. There was a temporary drop in the business of saltpetre during the late seventies and early eighties of the 18th century, but during 1783 to 1792 the average annual sale was 33,130 bags. This increase was due to the resumption of the re-export trade in saltpetre from England in the years of peace, for in their letter of 8th April, 1789, the court of Directors complained that although they had gradually reduced the price of saltpetre from 80 s. to 42 s. per cwt. the demand did not show sufficient increase. Again in their letter of May 19, 1790, they remarked "we have again reduced the price (of saltpetre) to 38 s..... but out of 39,703 bags offered at the September sale only 24,896 sold at the advance of 6 d. In the March sale of this year we declared 32,390 bags at the same price but only 21,354 sold. We have now in warehouse unsold 18,541 besides what we expect by the approaching arrivals". But this glut disappeared with the outbreak of war with France. In 1792 the Company sold 22,000 bags of saltpetre at an average price of £ 3-7-10 per cwt. This was only on account of continental trouble than any permanent increase in consumption.

The English, the French and the Dutch all were equally interested in the saltpetre trade. The French had their factory at Chupra and the English at Patna and Singhia. The three European companies were united in their opposition to the purchase of saltpetre by the Government or the nobles in high position and later selling it to them. Sometime in the thirties of the eighteenth century the English issued strict instructions of their factory at Patna not to buy any petre from the Government and entered into a tripartite agreement with the French and the Dutch to frustrate the designs of the Government in this direction. In 1838 the French disassociated themselves and the price was considerably raised by competition.

In this way saltpetre trade passed through several vicissitudes and in Champaran the manufacture of saltpetre thrived well till

the close of the nineteenth century, when it was showing a tendency to decline. In 1895-96 the outturn of saltpetre was 70,500 maunds and that of the salt educed was 4,000 maunds, which declined to 25,000 maunds and 2,600 maunds, respectively, in 1904-05. The number of Nunias then in the district is not available but in the census of 1911 it was recorded that there were 58,935 Nounias in the district and the saltpetre refineries were nine which provided employment to 232 workers, out of which 18 were in direction, supervision and clerical work, 39 skilled workers and the rest were unskilled. Although these figures do not speak of the actual number of Nunias engaged in saltpetre, but it may be said that the majority of this community was engaged in saltpetre.

The chief causes for the decline of this industry were of varied nature. The cost of manufacture, which never went beyond rather crude and orthodox methods, had gone up considerably on account of a number of supervisory staff that had to be engaged for better control. The high cost of production left the margin of profit very low. A substitute of saltpetre began to be imported from abroad and depressed its price. The Nunias who formed the man force slowly gave up the hard work owing to low wages and took to other occupations. The control of the Salt Department was also a discouragement to the man engaged in this industry.

INDUSTRY DURING THE CURRENT CENTURY.

Sources of Power Supply.

There are no Hydro-Electric or Thermal Stations anywhere in the district.

The industries that are run by power have either their own electricity plants or get the power from the Electric Supply Companies or from the power generating stations maintained by Government. The sugar mills have all their own power generating plants.

MINING AND HEAVY INDUSTRIES.

There are no mining and heavy industries in this district. There are no prospected minerals excepting stone chips from Bhiknathori area. The bottleneck due to the Ganga and other rivers stands on the way of the starting of heavy industries.

LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIES.

Sugar manufacture is the only industry in the district which may be classed as a large-scale industry from the capital outlay point of view and the number of workers employed in an individual unit of the industry. This industry has passed through several vicissitudes. As has been stated above, it was once a very popular industry in the district, but about 1850 the high prices obtained for indigo dealt final blow to this industry. The cultivation of sugarcane was replaced by

indigo and the sugar factories were converted into indigo concerns. However, with the decline of the indigo industry by the close of the last century this industry turned the corner and since 1905 large-scale modern sugar factories have sprung up.

The first of these appears to have been started at Siraha which at that time was a branch factory of the Indian Development Company, whose headquarters were at Ottur in Muzaffarpur district. This factory came to an end several years before the publication of the last District Gazetteer of 1938 (containing information up to 1932). In 1906 a factory was built at Pakri near Lauriya and one at Barah, the former being the property of Parsa concern and is now known as S. K. G. Sugar, Ltd., Lauriya, and is under the management of Dalmia Jain. The one at Barah, now known as Champaran Sugar Co., Ltd., Chakia, belong to M/s. Begg Sutherland and Co.

In the thirties there was a tremendous drop in the price of grain and other crops and the production of sugar was very profitable. Further the industry received a great impetus from the decision of the Government of India to give tariff protection to this industry by passing the Sugar Industries Protection Act in 1932. This granted protection to the sugar industry for an initial period of fourteen years. These causes led to the establishment of six sugar factories, out of a total of nine now existing in the district, in the early thirties. M/s. Begg Sutherland and Co., built another large mill at Chainpatia and M/s. Birla and Co., at Narkatiaganj. The four other concerns that were rapidly built up at that time were N. B. Sugar Mills, Bagaha; Shri Hanuman Sugar Mills, Ltd., Motihari; Motilal Padampat Sugar Mills, Majhoulia; and Sugauli Sugar Works, Sugauli. The Harinagar Sugar Mills, Ltd., Harinagar, also followed the suit and now there are altogether nine sugar mills working in the district.

An important development in the field of sugar industry has been the legislation of 1937, which is known as Bihar Sugar Factories Control Act, 1937, and the Rules framed thereunder. According to this Act some area round each factory was reserved to each factory of which the factory concerned is bound to purchase cane. The Rules framed under this Act in 1938 gave a legal status to Canegrowers' Co-operative Societies. There has also been made a provision for assigned area over and above the reserved area to certain factories. This has been done when it was found that the reserved area of any particular factory was not sufficient to feed it.

This Act gave an impetus to the formation of the Canegrowers' Co-operative Societies. These societies were originally purely organised by the canegrowers themselves. But now they are organised by the Government staff and are registered under the Co-operative Societies Act. While the internal management of these societies is entrusted to a Committee of Management consisting of the elected members, the supervision and the audit is carried on by the Government staff. These Canegrowers' Co-operative Societies

operating in the area of each sugar factory are affiliated to the Central Co-operative Development and Cane Marketing Union which enters into contract with the factory and regulates supply of cane on behalf of the societies. There is also a Provincial Cane-growers' Co-operative Association and a Provincial Co-operative Federation to which all these societies and the Central Unions are affiliated.

In 1938 there were only six Canegrowers' Co-operative Societies and one Cane Marketing Union. Having gained some legal status, the Societies began to multiply rather in a geometrical progression and in 1945 there were 554 Societies and 10 Unions with a membership of 12,840. While the figure for the Unions has remained the same, the number of Societies and membership has continuously been increasing. In 1951 there were 1,170 societies with a membership of 39,696 as against the corresponding figures of 1,448 and 68,295, respectively, in 1956-57.

So far the financial aspect of these Societies are concerned, they have their share capital but also get some commission on the cane supplied through them. Besides, they also get loans from the Co-operative Bank and the factories to be distributed amongst the needy members. As a matter of fact the value of share capital of these Societies is generally considerably less than the actual amount of help given by the Societies to their members. In 1939 the amount of financing to members came up to Rs. 23,025 and the capital of the Societies was Rs. 27,566. In 1941 the figures stood at Rs. 19,730 and Rs. 16,747, respectively, as against Rs. 12,82,387 and Rs. 8,46,610, respectively, in 1950. In 1956-57 the owned capital of the Societies was Rs. 4,59,629 and the amount of financing to members was Rs. 12,42,744.

The Sugar Factories Control Act of 1937 also affected the industries in several other ways. Under the provisions of the Act price level and marketing of sugarcane were regularised, a cane cess was imposed and an Advisory Committee was set up to advise the Cane Commissioner on the issue of allotment of area to different factories.

The minimum price of sugarcane is fixed by the Government every year on the basis of cost of cultivation, output and the price level of competitive crops. This minimum price is practically paid by each factory and their agents. The cane price varied between annas 5 to Rs. 2 per maund from 1937 to 1952. The price was Rs. 1-5-0 per maund at out stations and Rs. 1-7-0 at factory gate in 1956-57 per maund. According to the provisions of the Act, the cane price is to be paid within a fortnight from the date of weighing or within a week of subsequent demand. Sugarcane is supplied in bullock-cart loads which are weighed at the factory gate or outlying purchasing centres. The receipts indicating the gross weight and the net weight of cane along with the amount of price

payable to the seller is issued to the person delivering cane. These receipts are subsequently presented for payment at the payment centres and payment is made with a copy of payment sheet delivered to the payees.

A cane cess was levied on all cane delivered or entering into the local areas of a sugar factory. The money so collected is merged into the general revenue of the State. The State Government has, however, launched some schemes, like tube-wells for irrigation, operated by electricity, improvement of roads in sugarcane producing areas, etc., for the benefit of the cultivation. Out of this cess money the Government also meet the cost of sugarcane development and research from year to year. The cess rate varied between 6 pies to 3 annas per maund from 1937 to 1952. It continued to be 3 annas per maund in 1956-57. It is estimated that an average of nearly 30 lakhs goes to the State Exchequer from this district on account of this cess.

A central excise duty has also been levied on sugar since 1942-43. The rate has varied between Rs. 3.62 nP. per cwt. and Rs. 5.62 nP. per cwt. till 1956-57. The Central Excise Department exercises continuous control through the help of its staff and an Inspector is posted at each factory to look after the interest of the Government's revenue. On an average Rs. 1,19,78,450 (on the basis of figures from 1953-54 to 1957-58) are collected by the Central Excise Department from sugar annually. Molasses is a provincial subject. No tax is levied on molasses but control is exercised as regards its disposal to distilleries.

The District Sugarcane Advisory Committee consists of an equal number of representatives of canegrowers and factory owners, besides the officials. The Collector is the Chairman of this Committee. The Committee is constituted every year. The Committee advises the Cane Commissioner on the estimates of cane requirement of each factory, declaration of reserved and assigned areas, etc., brings to the notice of the Collector cases of breach of any of the provisions of the Sugar Factories Control Act and Rules framed thereunder, recommends ways and means to maintain healthy relations between factories and canegrowers. The Committee exercises considerable influence and check on the activities of the factory owners and their relations with the canegrowers.

The Champaran Sugar Co., Ltd., Barachakia, has a daily cane crushing capacity of 932 tons. It is under the management of M/s. Begg Sutherland and Co. and has double carbonization plants. In 1951-52 seasons it crushed 19,10,860 maunds of cane and manufactured 2,60,693.30 maunds of sugar and 69,269 maunds of molasses. The corresponding figures for 1956-57 were 35,32,462.30 maunds, 3,02,617 maunds and 1,27,073 maunds, respectively. The recovery figure of this factory was 8.57 per cent in 1956-57.

Sri Hanuman Sugar Mills, Ltd., Motihari, which is under the management of M/s. Sri Hanuman Investment Co., Ltd., has a daily cane crushing capacity of 850 tons. It has double carbonization plants since 1945-46. In 1951-52 seasons it crushed 17,69,443 maunds of cane and manufactured 1,80,878 maunds of sugar and 55,943 maunds and 3 seers of molasses as against 44,67,759.10 maunds; 3,08,751; and 1,15,379 maunds and 31 seers respectively in 1956-57. The recovery figure of this factory in 1956-57 was 9.09 per cent.

The Sugauli Sugar Works, Ltd., Sugauli, has a daily crushing capacity of 900 tons and has double sulphitation plants. In 1951-52 season, it crushed 15,52,136 maunds of cane and manufactured 1,51,822 maunds of sugar and 59,730 maunds of molasses as against 22,98,129.20 maunds, 2,11,651.20 maunds, and 84,029 maunds, respectively, in 1956-57. Its recovery figure was 8.99 per cent in 1956-57.

Motilal Padampat Sugar Mills Co., Ltd., Majhulia, has a daily crushing capacity of 1,000 tons. It has a double sulphitation plant. In 1951-52 seasons it crushed 28,18,455 maunds of cane and manufactured 2,93,400 maunds of sugar and 1,02,000 maunds of molasses as against the corresponding figures of 50,29,462.20 maunds, 4,81,360 maunds and 1,87,280 maunds, respectively, in 1956-57. Its recovery figure was 9.57 per cent in 1956-57.

Champanan Sugar Co., Ltd., Chainpatia, is under the management of M/s. Begg Sutherland and Co. It has single sulphitation plant. It crushed in 1951-52 seasons 20,85,501 maunds of sugarcane and manufactured 2,15,569 maunds of sugar and 86,587 maunds of molasses as against 27,60,361.10 maunds, 2,57,001.10 maunds and 1,16,064 maunds, respectively, in 1956-57. Its recovery figure was 9.31 per cent in 1956-57.

S. K. G. Sugar Co., Ltd., Lauriya, has a daily cane crushing capacity of 800 tons and is equipped with double sulphitation plants. It is under the management of M/s. Dalmia Jain and Co., Ltd. In 1951-52 season, it crushed 29,68,623 maunds of cane and produced 3,04,651 maunds of sugar and 1,16,009 maunds of molasses as against 42,26,919.10 maunds, 4,10,483.27 maunds and 1,71,430 maunds, respectively, in 1956-57. Its recovery figure in 1956-57 was 9.71 per cent.

The New Swadeshi Sugar Mills, Ltd., Narkatiaganj, has a daily cane crushing capacity of 900 tons. In 1951-52 it crushed 23,62,863 maunds of cane and manufactured 2,45,756 maunds of sugar and 84,540 maunds of molasses as against 40,54,634.10 maunds, 2,35,670 maunds and 1,08,211* maunds, respectively in 1956-57. Its recovery figure was 9.20 per cent in 1956-57. It is under the management of Birla Brothers.

* This figure is supplied by the District Industries Officer. But the Superintendent of Excise, Champaran puts the figure at 1,56,706 maunds in 1956-57.

The Harinagar Sugar Mills, Ltd., Harinagar, is the largest Sugar Mills of the district and has a daily crushing capacity of 1,500 tons. It is under the management of M/s. Narain Lal Bandilal. It has double sulphitation plants. In 1951-52 season, it crushed 32,64,908 maunds of cane and manufactured 3,27,760 maunds of sugar and 1,17,113 maunds and 20 seers of molasses as against 45,87,693.10 maunds, 4,13,132 maunds and 1,92,521 maunds 4 seers, respectively, in 1956-57. Its recovery figure was 9.01 per cent in 1956-57.

The North Bihar Sugar Mills, Ltd., Bagaha, is under the management of Kanoria Brothers. Its crushing capacity is 900 tons per day. In 1951-52 seasons it crushed 17,65,814 maunds of cane and manufactured 1,77,206 maunds of sugar and 64,940 maunds of molasses as against 26,34,606 maunds, 2,35,670 maunds and 1,08,211* maunds, respectively, in 1956-57. Its recovery figure in 1956-57 was 8.94 per cent.

Several of the sugar mills have their own farms to grow seed cane and to supplement their normal crush. The sugar factories under this category are Sri Hanuman Sugar Mills, Ltd., Motihari, M. P. Sugar Mills Co., Ltd., Majhaulia, S. K. G. Sugar, Ltd., Lauriya, N. S. Sugar Mills, Ltd., Narkatiaganj and Harinagar Sugar Mills, Ltd., Harinagar. The last named has the largest farm, the supply of cane from which varies between 9 to 12 lakh maunds annually.

It is reported that about 10,000 workers are employed in this industry during the season and about 3,000 during the off season, the average being 4,000 workers the year round.

The unskilled and semi-skilled labourers, who are in the category of simple mazdoor, are generally recruited from within the district. No recruitment practice has so far been put into practice. But due to retaining practice and various agreements between the labour and the management the employment is becoming steady. The Labour Unions see to the interests of the labourers for recruitment and continuance. The heirs of the deceased and disabled labourers are given preference in employment. The skilled jobs are filled up by properly qualified persons outside the district, if necessary.

The labourers are now becoming more and more conscious of their rights and effective in their demands on account of labour unions. Each of the sugar mills has one or two labour unions, most of which are affiliated to Indian National Trade Union Congress. Some of the unions are under the influence of various other political parties. During the recent years the labourers have acquired for themselves certain facilities from the management with the help of Government or by the methods of agitation and negotiation.

* The Superintendent of Excise, Champaran puts the figure at 1,25,775 maunds in 1956-57.

The minimum wages in the industry was about Rs. 10 per month in 1930-31 which fell to Rs. 6 per month in 1936-37. The wages increased to Rs. 11 in 1939-40, to Rs. 22-8-0 in 1945-46, to Rs. 36 in 1946-47 and again to Rs. 45 in 1947-48. The wages were once again raised to Rs. 55 per month in 1948-49 since when they have continued to be the same with a minor *ad hoc* addition of annas 12 granted by the decision of the Sugar Standing Committee. The introduction of Provident Fund Scheme has also benefited the workers and has been a step towards the social security measures for the workers. The bonus has now become a regular feature in all the sugar mills.

Some welfare facilities have been given to the labourers in the shape of housing, medical, canteen, educational and recreational facilities.

All the sugar factories give housing facilities to some of the workers, especially to those who are permanent staff. But taking the labour population as a whole, the facility afforded on this count covers a small percentage only.

So far educational facilities are concerned, all but two sugar factories, namely, Sugauli and Chainpura, run schools of different standards. Three of the sugar mills of Harinagar, Majhulia and Lauriya also maintain one H. E. School each. Other facilities, such as clubs, games, labour welfare fund, electricity, water-supply, etc., have also been provided by many of the factories to the workers.

SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES.

Among the small-scale industries requiring thousands of capital outlay rice milling is the only industry that may be mentioned. It appears from the census of 1911 that there were a few more small-scale industries of the type in the district, namely, timber yards, brick and tile making factory, and lime works and kilns. There were one timber yards employing 619 workers, one brick and tile factory employing 289 persons, and two lime works and kilns employing 166 workers. All these industries appear to have disappeared by 1921 as none of the industries was recorded at the census of 1921. However, it appears that by this time a new industry had sprung up and it was button making industry. In 1921 there were two such factories employing 237 workers. By this time rice milling industry also cropped up and there was one such factory recorded at the census of 1921. The number of employees was only 32.

RICE-MILLING INDUSTRY.

Champan being mainly rice producing district, it is only natural that it should have attracted rice-milling industry. It appears from the census tables that the industry did not find any

place in the district till 1911 and it was only in the second decade of the current century that a small rice mill was established. It is difficult to say anything definitely regarding the growth and development of this industry since at the subsequent censuses the statistics of industries were unfortunately not included. Nevertheless, it could be said that there had been a steady growth and development of the industry afterwards. Several new mills were established in the district from time to time and there are now 22 important rice mills in the district. A list of such mills with average daily crushing capacity is given below :—

Name of mills and place.	Average daily crushing capacity.
	Tons.
(1) Anpurna Rice Mills, Raxaul ..	20
(2) Pasupati Nath Rice Mill, Raxaul ..	20
(3) L. N. Rice Mill, Adapur ..	20
(4) Shree Shankar Rice Mill, Adapur ..	20
(5) Mahabir Rice Mill, Adapur ..	15
(6) Jai Hind Rice Mill, Chauradano ..	5
(7) Sumeshwar Nath Rice Mill, Chauradano ..	10
(8) Shambhu Rice Mill, Bhalahi ..	9
(9) Shankar Rice Mill, Ghorasahan ..	20
(10) Durga Rice Mill, Bhalahi ..	18
(11) Bhagwati Rice Mill, Bhalahi ..	10
(12) Mahabir Rice Mill, Sikta ..	15
(13) Bismilla Rice Mill, Sikta ..	10
(14) Ganesh Rice Mill, Sikta ..	11
(15) Lakshmi Rice Mill, Sikta ..	10
(16) Bismilla Rice Mill, Narkatiaganj ..	10
(17) Shri Durga Rice Mill, Bhairoganj ..	12
(18) Shri Mahabali Rice Mill, Chainpatia ..	10
(19) Shri Hanuman Rice Mill, Chainpatia ...	10
(20) Shri Sakambhiri Rice Mill, Ramnagar ..	15
(21) Shri Krishna Bhagwan Rice Mill, Narkatiaganj.	15
(22) Shri Mahabir Rice Mill, Chainpatia .. (Many of the mills crush oil and grind flour.)	..

There are several more rice mills of smaller capacity in the district. Most of the rice mills are located at the Indo-Nepal border

for obvious reasons. Paddy is a predominating crop in Nepal Tarai and Champaran both. Rice is gathered in the harvesting season, particularly when the crop is bumper. All the mills do not work throughout the year as they cannot get paddy supply as and when required.

The rice-milling industry on a big scale flourished in the district for only a few decades. As has been mentioned above, there was no rice mill in the district in 1911 and there was only a small one in 1921 employing only 32 persons. Although the census of 1931 does not provide us with industrial statistics, it recorded the number of persons employed in this industry. The total number of persons engaged in rice pounding and husking and flour grinding was 589 in 1931. Since the census of 1941 had to be much curtailed it does not provide us with any kind of statistics concerning rice milling industry. According to the census of 1951, there were 73 paddy husking mills employing 267 persons.

A decline had recently set in the industry so far big rice mills are concerned. There are two main reasons for the decline of the industry. Firstly a crisis of paddy supply set in during war and post-war scarcity period. Restriction over milling of rice, control over the rates of paddy and rice and procurement levy were enforced by the Government during the last war and post-war scarcity period. This affected big mills quite adversely. Other main reason for the decline of big rice mills is the installation of a number of several rice mills of a very small cost and capacity in the district. These small mills are run by diesel engine and generally have the capacity of crushing of about one to two tons of paddy per day. The machinery itself is very simple and can even be operated single handed.

These two reasons have led to the closure of many big rice mills in the district and several have to work much below their capacity. It has almost become a problem for the big rice mill owners what to do with their machines and boilers. A few of the mill owners have begun dismantling their factory either with a view to remove the same to elsewhere or to utilise the plants for other purposes.

The labour force required for the industry is mostly unskilled and they are recruited from the local population. Since the industry is of more or less seasonal nature labourers have to be watchful for other employments. The labour force engaged in this industry is disorganised and illiterate. According to the census of 1951, there were altogether 267 whole-time employees engaged in the industry.

OTHER SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES.

According to the census of 1951, the number of establishment of small industries of different kinds in the district is 3,461 with 7,984 whole-time and 188 part-time employees. A table is given

below showing the name and number of industries as well as the number of persons employed therein (1951).

Name of industry.	Total no. of establishments.	Male.	Female.	Total.
Persons employed (including part-time.)				

Textile establishments	2,537	4,067	1,990	6,057
Sweetmeat-making	58	154	6	160
Paddy husking	73	259	8	267
Flour mills	72	192	..	192
Oil-pressing	16	91	10	101
Gur-making	1	11	..	11
Ice-making	2	3	..	3
Bird-making	19	124	..	124
Tailoring..	104	231	25	256
Dyeing ..	6	24	..	24
Hide-making	10	60	..	60
Shoe-making	4	16	..	16
Blacksmithy	186	340	..	340
Cycle repairing	20	71	..	71
Salt-making	1	4	..	4
Explosive materials ..	2	2	..	2
Medicine manufacturing	4	11	..	11
Soap manufacturing..	11	31	..	31
Button-making	33	278	..	278
Goldsmithy	61	157	..	157
Harmonium manufacturing	1	2	..	2
Brick-making	2	30	..	30
Pottery ..	79	128	44	172
Glass bangle-making	20	49	13	62
Carpentry	116	207	..	207
Basket-making	11	27	16	43
Printing press	2	2	..	2
Book-binding	1	1	..	1
Stone-cutting	1	5	..	5
Painting ..	8	13	..	13
Total	3,461	6,590	2,112	8,702

It is not clear from the table as to what have been the criteria on the basis of which small-scale industries have been enumerated and naturally it is apprehended that some of the cottage industries might have been enumerated as small industries and *vice versa*. Some of the figures go to corroborate the theory, viz., the number of *gur*-making concern has been recorded as one and that of textile has been recorded as 2,537. Both these industries are widely carried on the district, some on small-scale and some on cottage basis. Naturally the account of cottage industries that is to follow may have some overlappings with the small-scale industries. Some of the figures appear to be underestimated such as for *gur*-making, *biri*-making, shoe-making and book-binding.

COTTAGE INDUSTRIES.

Among the cottage industries mention may be made of pearl button, lac, leather, *khadi* and woollen, silk, saltpetre, *khandsari* (*gur*), *dari* (carpet), *khair* (catechu), basket-making, potteries, *ghee* and rope-making industries. A brief account of each of these industries is given below.

Pearl Button Industry.

Button manufacturing industry at Mehsi, a small township adjacent to the Mehsi Railway Station on North-Eastern Railway, is not only unique to this district, but to the State of Bihar and the Indian Union.

The industry owes its origin to the ingenuity of Sri Bhulawari Lal, a Sub-Inspector of Schools and an inhabitant of Mehsi. It is he who sometime in 1905 tried to prepare buttons from oyster shells, so commonly found in river Sikrahna, by hand. In this adventure he also took help of some of his friends. Although buttons so prepared had no good finish, but the idea of encouraging indigenous industries prompted them to the manufacture of such buttons. Some samples of such buttons were sent to Sri Motilal Ghosh, the then Editor of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, who wrote that since the buttons had a bad finish, they could not have any marketable value. This impelled the originators to install machinery and a set of the same was imported from Japan. With these machines and a small capital outlay of Rs. 1,000 the first button factory under the name of Tirhut Moon Button Factory was established in 1908. Subsequently rules for its registration were framed and it was registered under the Indian Companies Act.

The profits earned by the first factory led to the establishment of a number of other factories at Mehsi. Till the First World War, the industry had to face much competition with the Japanese buttons. But during war years Japanese buttons became scarce and the indigenous industry got a fillip. With the termination of war the Japanese buttons began pouring into the Indian market and pushed back the local product. Nevertheless, the factories went on

multiplying gradually. The Second World War put a check on the Japanese buttons and the demand for local buttons shot up in the Indian markets. Some of the foreign markets were also contacted. The manufacturing costs have also come down and the industry can now compete with the foreign products.

It is reported that there are about 116 button factories at Mehshi. They employ individually a few workers and the industry is entirely a cottage industry. The factories are situated at Mehshi mainly because of two reasons, viz., availability of raw material in the form of oyster shell from the river Sikrahna and the local labour force which has acquired some skill needed in the industry. It is said that some interested persons tried the industry at Gorakhpur, but could not succeed. The output of buttons is reported to be about 24,00,000 gross per annum of different types. The quality of the button is of three types—big, medium and small, technically known as 18, 14 and 12 size. The buttons prepared here are used for all purposes except coating.

The producers invest their own money as initial capital for the factory. For a factory having machine strength of 10 a sum of Rs. 5,000 is required as initial capital besides the value of land on which the factory situates. Recently Dayal Bagh concern has purchased the old Tirhut Moon Button Factory and with its entrance into the field small concerns are fading away. It is estimated that the total amount invested in the industry would be about Rs. 75,000. Some of the units for making buttons are run with electric power.

Since the industry is unique in the State, it has attracted the attention of the Government. A Special Officer of the Industries Department has been appointed to help the proprietors tackling the problems which this industry is facing. The Government have also made provision for loans to encourage the industry.

The button industry gives employment to nearly 300 adults of the locality. Children and women are also employed for pasting button paper sheets and for preparing small paper boxes for packing purpose. The workers are paid at piece-rate. Roughly speaking a labourer engaged in the industry earns Rs. 1-8-0 to Rs. 2 per day. The labour employed are of Mehshi and the neighbouring villages. This industry also gives employment to the local workers in some other forms such as in piecing the refuse pearls which is used in decorating floors and walls of buildings. Such piece pearls are sent in large quantities to different parts of the country. Some hundreds of families are engaged in piecing the refuse pearls.

Lac Industry.

Lac or shellac has been a valuable and old cottage industry of Champaran, particularly of the villages lying on the borders of

ex-Bettiah and ex-Ramnagar Estates' jungles. Both these estates had a *lahee mahal* and they used to derive a fair amount of income annually from these *mahals*. Almost all the *laheras* (bangle-makers) used to purchase a part of these *mahals*.

Lahee, the insect of lac, is a fungus group of white-ant like insect not visible to the naked eyes. *Lahee* lay eggs on particular type of trees, namely, *pakar*, *bargaj*, *bair*, *siris*, and *palas*, with an alarming speed during the rainy season. With the approach of winter season thick coating of dark maroon colour of a pasty substance is to be found round the stems and branches of host trees. Leaves fall down and trees present a diseased look. The collectors of *lahee* cut down the branches and take out *lahee* by twisting the stems. The *lahee* so collected is dried and powdered and converted into lac. The filthy and dusty part of it is used as the principal raw material for a kind of bangle, locally known as *lahathi*. The *lahathi* is in common use among the rustic women folk. Earlier, women of every class used to use *lahathi*. As a matter of fact, even these days, it is understood to be a sign of good omen and is invariably used by a bride on the occasion of her marriage or the like auspicious ceremonies.

In the pre-war days the rate of *lahee* used to range from Rs. 60 to Rs. 120 per maund, but with the introduction of some synthetic product in place of original *chapra* (refined lac), and the popularity of glass bangles in place of lac bangles, the price of the lac has considerably fallen down to Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 per maund. Cutting down of host trees has also struck a heavy blow against this industry. Nevertheless, a considerable quantity of lac can be had from the forest near Terai area and the industry can be revived by extending some marketing facility.

Leather Industry.

In the world market of hides of London, New York and Boston there is a recognised special quality of goat skin known as "Bettiah quality" and in this "Bettiah quality" Champaran goat skins get the highest position and attract an easy and competitive foreign market. These goat skins are most suitable for glaze-kid and swede leather tanning. These skins are comparatively free from disease and are least affected by post-mortem skin worms. This distinctive goat skin quality and its comparatively easy availability in village or town markets is a very good incentive for a fair number of persons indulging in this trade.

Cow and buffalo hides are tanned by the local Chamars (shoemakers) by indigenous method. After flaying the carcass they dip the hide for a few hours in lime, then take it out and after filling the same with small broken pieces of *banjhee* shrubs soaked in water hang it like a bag. The leather is allowed to remain hanging till it assumes fawn colour when it is dried. The leather so tanned

is not very soft and durable but is good enough for many purposes, particularly for rough shoe-making. Many Chamars are also engaged for tanning by "Raguees", a sub-caste of Muhammadans who have taken to hide export business in Champaran and are said to have immigrated to this district from Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh.

The number of Chamars exclusively engaged in tanning business is not large in the district. According to the census of 1951, there were 317 persons engaged in leather, leather products and footwear. This figure appears to be an under-estimate.

There is no tannery in Champaran, but there is scope for a small tannery. The Bettiah hides are sent to Calcutta. The demand from abroad for this quality of hides has not abated.

Khadi and Woollen Industry.

Though spinning and weaving of cotton and woollen both are widespread, the population of weavers is particularly large in Dacca thana. They are age old industries in the district, but on account of machine-made goods they have been gradually dwindling in importance. Madhubani is a very important place in Dhaka thana from the viewpoint of weaving and spinning. There is a branch of Bihar Khadi Samity at this place with head office at Muzaffarpur.

The woollen industry was started at this place in 1934 following the Earthquake as a branch of the Bihar Earthquake Committee sponsored by the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee. Mr. Mathura Prasad Purushottam, an associate of Mahatma Gandhi, was the organiser of this branch under the direction of the above mentioned Relief Committee. Instead of giving charity relief people were made to spin threads from cotton and were paid according to the yarn produced. The simple spinning work continued till 1937, when it was affiliated to the Bihar Spinners' Association and its name was replaced by Bihar Charkha Sangh, Madhubani. In this year weaving of *khadi* was also started but within one year *khadi* weaving was replaced by the weaving of woollen materials. Since then (1938) woollen industry is being carried out here by handlooms. In 1947 this branch was renamed as Bihar Khadi Samity, Madhubani Branch, and the name has been continuing.

Raw materials for the industry are imported from outside places like Almora, Rajputana and Punjab and sometimes also from Australia as the locally produced wool is not of good quality. The produce consists of blankets, sweaters, and miscellaneous woollen clothes. Workers for the industry are drawn from the nearby villages, consisting of male, female and children. They have been trained in knitting, spinning and weaving. The number of workers runs to several hundreds.

Besides, there is a good sprinkling of Gareries (shepherds) in the district who rear sheep and gather wool of a rough variety. They also knit and spin wool and weave blankets. It is estimated that

about 20,000 blankets of rough variety are annually produced by the Gareries of this district.

There are also several families of weavers who pursue their profession of weaving independently. These independent weavers do not have any organised marketing agency for their goods. They sell their goods to the local population. The Bihar Khadi Samity at Patna helps them by buying their stuff and also by supplying them the necessary raw materials.

Silk Industry.

Silk industry is comparatively recent in the district and is confined to a very small area. It is localised in Dhaka and Patahi thanas, specially in Azagari, Dumari and Shishatni villages. It is only in these two thanas that the host trees for eri-silk worm, that is, castor plants, are abundantly grown. The Agricultural Department of the State Government have taken some initiative by distributing eri-silk worms. Officers of the Government tour in villages. They demonstrate and introduce rational method of rearing eri-silk worms and spinning of eri-silk yarn. Though the industry is in its infancy, its future seems to be bright.

Saltpetre Industry.

It has already been mentioned that on account of several reasons saltpetre industry began to decline since the beginning of the current century. The production of saltpetre fell down to 25,000 maunds and that of educed salt to 2,600 maunds in 1904-05 as compared to 70,500 maunds and 4,000 maunds, respectively in 1895-96. The industry has continued to be in bad state. At the census of 1921 only two saltpetre refineries were recorded which gave direct employment to 31 persons. Unfortunately, no such figures are available for the census years 1931 and 1941. At the census of 1951 only one such establishment was recorded with four wholtime employees.

Saltpetre as an organised industry has had a decline. But there are still Noonias who scrape out saltpetre and there is a small local trade of it. It has been recorded under the head "Occupation" at the census of 1951 that there were 67 persons engaged in this industry for earning their principal means of livelihood. The figure appears to be an under-estimation since there are no less than several hundred families of Noonias in Govindganj and Kessariya police-stations engaged in the saltpetre industry. It may be that several such families which are engaged in the industry only to earn a subsidiary means of livelihood have been omitted at the census. A reported estimate goes to mention that the industries of salt and nitre give employment to nearly 2,000 persons and a capital worth Rs. 1½ lakhs is invested in them. It has also been estimated that about 20,000 maunds of saltpetre is still produced in the district on

indigenous method. Nitrate is exported outside the district and salt is consumed locally.

Till very recent days the system of license was in vogue under the control of the Central Government. But now there is no such licensing system prevalent.

Khandsari or Gur Industry.

Gur industry is one of the most important cottage industries of the district. The industry is carried on in almost all the villages which produce sugarcane. Generally, the cane not consumed by the sugar mills is utilised for the purpose of making *gur*. A reported estimate goes to show that capital worth Rs. 10 lakhs is invested in the industry and about 6 to 7 lakh maunds of cane is converted into *gur* every year.

The manufacture of *gur* is more extensive in Bettiah subdivision than in the Sadar subdivision.

Gur produced is consumed locally as well as is sent to the neighbouring districts of Muzaffarpur and Saran.

Dari or Carpet Industry.

Once Govindganj and Mehsi were centres of *dari*-making industry. The local Momin population of these places has specialised themselves in the art of carpet-making. Now the industry is almost on its last legs. A reported estimate shows that about Rs. 30,000 are invested in the industry and some 100 families are engaged therein. Raw materials, specially yarns, are imported from Bombay and Agra. There is no organised agency for the sale of the products. Hawkers go from village to village in the district and to some parts of Muzaffarpur to sell the products.

Khair or Catechu Industry.

Khair or catechu is produced from catechu tree available in the Rajpur Sonaria forest, commonly known as Bagaha forest as well as the Udaipur forest. The system of production is known as *handi* system, under which the matured catechu trees are cut into small pieces and these pieces are thoroughly boiled in a *handi* or pot with water. The juice so obtained is exported by the contractors to outside the district.

Till recently these catechu forests were under the control of ex-Bettiah Raj which never took any care to improve the industry. The Raj used to sell out matured catechu trees to contractors worth Rs. 50,000 annually.

The forests have now vested in the State. But it appears that no concrete step has been taken to put the industry on sound footing.

At Chautarwa Dom Settlement catechu is extensively prepared.

Basket-making Industry.

Since the district has an extensive area of jungles, baskets in common use for domestic life are prepared from bamboo, reed and cane by a particular community known as Dom. At Chautarwa Dom Settlement such articles are extensively prepared. The articles are locally consumed as well as exported outside to the neighbouring districts.

Pottery.

Pottery is an age old industry of the district. Since the product of this industry forms an item of necessity of the village folks, it is hardly subject to any severe shock of slump. Labour is the only item required to keep the industry going.

Earthen dolls are an especiality of the villages surrounding the district headquarters. Besides, earthen jars, pitchers, pots, etc., are also produced.

Potters hardly require any money for the industry excepting very petty amount for colour. But they are economically so depressed that even this petty amount they have to borrow from the village *mahajans* at an exhorbitant rate of interest.

Probably the method of production is itself centuries old, but this does not indicate any decay in the industry. Under proper supervision and training this industry could better the lot of potters and could play an effective role in the rural economy of the district. It is reported that some 200 families of potters (*Kumhars*) are engaged in this industry.

Ghee Industry.

Ghee industry is also an age old industry of the district. Probably every man of some means in the villages used to maintain a cow or a buffalo to use milk for domestic consumption and to sell *ghee* to supplement the family income.

Prior to the Second World War there was enough of pasturage to graze the cattle. But now since the price of foodgrains have abnormally increased and there have been a campaign for the extension of agriculture, such pasturages have considerably vanished. The cost of tending cattle has considerably gone up and people find it difficult even to maintain oxen to cultivate their agricultural lands. There have been also other developments which have told upon the *ghee* industry. Raw milk is now in more demand than it used to be. Introduction and popularity of hydrogenated oil such as *dalda* has also given a rude shock to the industry, for adulteration has much come in vogue and even honest seller is hardly taken at his word.

Although the price of *ghee* has considerably gone up in recent years, but it has hardly provided any incentive to tend more cattle for milk and *ghee*-making. This industry is now on the wane.

Rope-making Industry.

Rope-making on cottage basis by the poorer sections of the population is very common in the district. Rope is prepared out of several raw materials such as *patua* (jute plant), *sanai* (a variety of jute plant), *sabe* grasses, etc. The last named is by far the most common.

Sabe grass grows in the northern boundary of the district between Thori and Bhaisalotan near Tribeni at an altitude of over 500 feet above sea-level, mostly on rocky lands. It also grows on ridges in other parts of the district. It begins growing in cold shady places during the rainy season and comes to its full growth by December or January, when it is cut for use.

Ex-Bettiah and ex-Ramnagar estates each had a *sabe mahal* from which they used to derive good income every year by settling *sabe* grass to *thikadars*. Since both these estates have vested in the State, the sale proceeds goes to the State exchequer through the Forest Department.

Sabe grass sold to *thikadars* is eventually sold out to the villagers by *thikadars* for being turned into rope. Thick and thin both types of rope is prepared from *sabe* grass, the former being used for fastening cots, and also in thatched houses, *tattis*, etc., and the latter for fastening cattle, etc.

It may be mentioned here that as pulp can be prepared from *sabe* grass for the manufacture of paper, a small paper mill could be usefully established in the district.