

PREFACE

The last District Gazetteer of Muzaffarpur by Mr. L. S. O'Malley, I.C.S., was published in 1907. At that time Muzaffarpur district formed a part of the Province of Bengal.

The Preface of Mr. O'Malley's book (168 pages) was as follows:—

“ When the Statistical Account of Bengal, by Sir W. W. Hunter, was published, the district of Muzaffarpur had only recently been constituted, and it was treated as part of the district of Tirhut, in which it was comprised until 1875. The present volume is, therefore, the first Gazetteer in which Muzaffarpur has been treated as a separate district.

I desire to acknowledge the very great assistance I have derived in compiling this volume from the Muzaffarpur Survey and Settlement Report by Mr. C. J. Stevenson Moore, I.C.S., an exhaustive review of the economic conditions of the district, my obligations to which will abundantly appear in the various Chapters of the Gazetteer.”

Mr. O'Malley's book had 15 Chapters as follows:—

Physical Aspects; History; The People; Public Health; Agriculture; Natural Calamities; Rents, Wages and Prices; Occupations, Manufactures and Trade; The Indigo; Means of Communication; Land Revenue Administration; General Administration; Local Self-Government; Education and Gazetteer.

Some detailed Statistics were published in a separate brochure.

When the last District Gazetteer of Muzaffarpur had appeared in 1907, one of a series compiled by O'Malley, Bihar was part of Bengal. Much water has flowed down the Ganga and Gandak since. In 1912 a new Province called “ Bihar

and Orissa " was carved out from the old Bengal Presidency. In 1936 the Province of Bihar was separated from Orissa on the basis of race, language, economic interest and geographical position.

The district of Muzaffarpur was a part of the Division of Patna when the last Gazetteer was published. It may be mentioned here that Muzaffarpur or Tirhut district comprising of the districts of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga formed a part of Bhagalpur Division till 1856. After the Santhal Revolt in 1855 when the district of Santhal Parganas was carved out, Tirhut district was placed under the Patna Division as a matter of administrative convenience. In 1875 Darbhanga was separated and was given the status of a district. Administrative exigency again brought about the division of Patna Commissionership.

From the original documents preserved in the National Archives, New Delhi, it appears that Lord Morley gave his sanction to the division of Patna Commissionership into two Commissioners' charges in his letter no. 65, dated the 15th May, 1908, issued from India Office, London. The move for the partition was made by the Governor-General of India in Council in their no. 348, dated Simla, the 5th September, 1907, after measuring public opinion. One of the reasons for making the administrative change was the prevalence of famine conditions in part of the Patna Division. Sir Andrews Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, felt strongly about the necessity of the division of the existing Patna Division into two Commissioners' charges as a matter of urgent administrative expediency.

Before this step was taken, for several years an Additional Commissioner had been employed to assist the Commissioner. In Resolution no. 202-Appointment, dated Calcutta, the 10th January, 1908, the proposal for splitting the Patna Commissionership was circularised. Criticisms and suggestions were invited and after duly considering them the Government decided that the districts of Patna, Gaya and Shahabad south of the river Ganges (Ganga) be known as Patna Division with headquarters at Patna and the districts of Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga on the north of the river Ganges be known as Tirhut Division with headquarters at Muzaffarpur. There was some controversy as to the name of the new Division. Sir Andrews Fraser

proposed the name of Muzaffarpur Division. But the Government accepted the suggestion of Mr. Ridgley, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, that the name of the new Division should be Tirhut Division.

In the last 50 years there have been such fundamental changes in almost every aspect of life that it was not considered proper to merely revise the old Gazetteer and the present book is a completely re-written volume. O'Malley's Muzaffarpur Gazetteer shows his intimate knowledge of local details and deep scholarship. But the basic changes, discovery of new facts and the present set-up of a Welfare State indicated that there should be a re-written Gazetteer from a slightly different angle of vision. The plan of contents followed in the book does not basically differ from the plan followed by O'Malley. It was thought more advisable to print the Statistics as an appendix to the book and not separately.

A book like this could only be produced by the pooling of resources and personal observations. A mass of literature had to be looked into including crumbling old documents and books that have become very rare. My contact with the district of Muzaffarpur in my previous official capacity has been particularly useful. There have been no further Survey and Settlement Operations since Mr. O'Malley's time. Had there been such operations recently my task would have been easier.

The excellent source materials in the old English Correspondence Volumes of the 18th and 19th centuries in the Record Room of Muzaffarpur have been partially utilised for this work. The study of the Old Correspondence Volumes in Muzaffarpur Record Room is being followed by the publication of a separate write-up as 'Muzaffarpur Old Records'. That volume forms a sister volume to this Gazetteer and may be useful as a source material for the future research workers.

I am obliged to the collaborators, officials and non-officials, including the District Magistrates (Messrs. S. C. Roy, R. Hoda and V. Jha) and Dr. H. R. Ghoshal of L. S. College, Muzaffarpur. Under orders of Government Shri S. V. Sohoni, I.C.S., who was once Commissioner of Tirhut Division had looked into the drafts and helped me with some suggestions.

I am particularly grateful to Shri Mahesh Prasad Sinha who as Minister of Transport and Industries had always been helping me with his valuable guidance. Shri Laliteshwar Prasad Shahi, M.L.A. (now Deputy Minister of Industries) and Shri Dip Narain Singh, Minister for Power and Irrigation had also looked into the drafts and given me their suggestions.

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PATNA :

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} P. C. ROY CHAUDHURY.