

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

HISTORY OF LAND REVENUE ASSESSMENT

The present Sonipat district was a part of two districts before 1912. The Sonipat area was a part of Delhi district upto 1912. It was included in the Rohtak district in September, 1912. Gohana tahsil remained a part of Rohtak district till the formation of Sonipat as separate district in 1972.

The system of revenue administration in the district was the same as applied to the rest of northern India during the last 300 years. During the reign of Akbar, northern India was divided into administrative circles by Raja Todar Mal for revenue purposes. The main features of assessment in these circles were : measurement of all arable and productive land in terms of standard *bigha*; an estimate of gross produce per *bigha*, based on the elaborate classification of soils according to their productiveness and other advantages; and the conversion of State share of the gross produce to money rates calculated on the basis of ten years' prices. The system continued with minor changes under the Mughals and the British.

Settlements of Sonipat tahsil

According to the *District Gazetteer of Delhi*, 1912, the early revenue administration of the Sonipat tahsil was crude, not to say arbitrary. For collection of revenue, strong pressure was brought to bear on the subordinates beginning with the tahsildar, who was personally held responsible for the arrears. The pressure was passed on to the *Zamindars* in the shape of quartering *sawars* on the villages till the revenue was paid. In the circumstances, complaints were made about cultivators *en masse* deserting the villages during or at the end of the short lease. In order to give relief, the assessment was reduced from Re. 1 to 12 *annas* per *kacha bigha* of *Khadar* lands and 12 *annas* in *Bangar* lands. Even the incidence of these indulgent rates worked out to about Rs. 4-12-0 and Rs. 3-10-0 per acre.

Summary Settlements

The early revenue arrangements seemed to have been made as far as possible on the basis of the ten existing arrangements without considering whether these arrangements were just or not or whether the changed circumstances demanded any modification in the rates of assessments. In the early days, the settlement was more or less continuous and was intended apparently to last for a few years or until it broke down. For example, in Sonipat tahsil, the settlements were made; (a) on the existing demand before 1817 (b) by first summary settlement from 1817-18 to 1824-25, (c) by a series of

agreements from 1825-26 to 1829-30, and (d) by second summary settlement from 1830-31 to 1840-41. Despite these settlements, there were several cases of the break down of the settlements and the years were noted as *tahsil-Kham*. The villages were, therefore, farmed out for collection of land revenue.

These settlements were bound to be empirical, because there were no regular records and the initial assessments were made on the basis of the sums recovered from farmers. Further, the assessments were pitched too high for collection and there was no machinery for ensuring elasticity in collection.

During the above settlements, Sonipat tahsil shared the misfortunes of Panipat. The summary assessments were equally harsh, the measures taken for realization were equally oppressive and unsuccessful. In fact, in 1839, the tahsil was so badly in debt to the treasury that the Government adopted the common remedy of repudiating its own exactions by striking off the large balances which were practically irrecoverable. The notes were made on each village with recommendations for new assessment. The following extract contains an interesting reference about settlements made in those days¹ :—

“Sonipat Bangr is the finest, most populous, and best cultivated *Parganah* in the district. It contains 97 *khalsa* villages, of which 77 are irrigated from the canal, and the greater part of the remaining 20 have more or less irrigation from wells. Water varies, on an average, in depth from 35 to 70 feet, but most of the villages without the canal are at the junction of the *Parganah* with the *khadar* or low lands, and water, therefore, is seldom more than 35 feet deep. They could all have the canal, but the outlay of capital is more than small villages at a distance can afford, and to those adjoining the *khadar* it is not worth the expense. Canal irrigation is carried to very considerable extent, probably exceeding half the whole cultivated area. Independent of the actual amount of irrigation, every village benefits more or less in proportion to its distance from the canal, the constant percolation from it affecting the soil, and increasing its productive powers most surprisingly. Wells to a considerable distance which were formerly dry are now amply supplied with water. The population of the *Parganah* bears a very good proportion to the area, and at the same time is very equally spread over its surface. These circumstances, and its extensive irrigation, have rendered it a perfect garden. You may ride for miles, and see nothing but the most splendid cultivation. The survey returns of 1825 give an area of 1,05,381

1. *Gazetteer of the Delhi District*, 1883-84. p. 161.

acres of culturable land, of which 69,692 acres was then cultivated. Irrigation from the canal has since probably doubled, and of course, the cultivation has greatly increased. The revenue of Sonipat *Bangar* of 1243 Fasli, was Rs. 2,57,549-9, which gives the acreage rate of Rs. 2-0-7½ and Rs. 2-15-2 on the then cultivated land. With reference to its *malguzari* area, it is the highest assessed *Parganah* in the district; with regard to its resources, or its cultivation, the lowest".

The Regular Settlement (1842—44)

The regular settlement of Sonipat tahsil was made from 1842—44 by Mr. Edmonstone. The demand for Sonipat tahsil was fixed at Rs. 3.50 lakh; whereas the total demand of Delhi district was fixed at Rs. 7.50 lakh. The settlement gave a reduction in the *Bangar* of Rs. 2,949 and in the *Khadar* of Rs. 19,761, on the regular Government demand. The payments on the cesses and police were increased, in the *Bangar* by Rs. 10,051 and in the *Khadar* by Rs. 4,908. There was a net reduction of Rs. 7,751. The Settlement Officer considered these reductions necessary. It was ascertained that in the *Khadar* area the district officers and their subordinates had been baffled in realizing the demands of the Government.

During the revolt of 1857, the revenue records were destroyed. By way of punishment, the estates of all rebels were escheated and 3 villages in Sonipat tahsil with other rebel areas of Delhi district were subjected to summary settlement. But these assessments proved to be too heavy and before the second settlement was undertaken, the reduction in assessment was granted on the ground of over assessment. Relief was sufficiently given only in the *Khadar*, the assessment there with one or two exceptions, for which there were special reasons, was moderate. The *Bangar* assessment was too high, although the reduction of Rs. 23,000 was also made in the *Bangar*.

After this, there were no more reductions. The total balances being Rs. 2,942, an insignificant amount which remained unpaid on the one or two villages of *Khadar* which by some oversight had remained heavily overburdened. The balances (Rs. 1,456) in the *Bangar* also were very insignificant.

The Second Regular Settlement (1872)

The revision of the first regular settlement began in 1872 under the auspices of Mr. Oswald Wood, who submitted the assessment reports for two southern tahsil of the then Delhi district. In 1878, he was relieved by Mr. R. Malonachie who wrote the remaining assessment report for Sonipat tahsil and

wound up the operations in 1880. The principles of assessment as embodied in Act XXIII of 1871 were followed. Instead of a two-thirds asset standard, half the net asset standard was adopted in this revision. The records were thoroughly revised. Both the record of rights and other statistical records were prepared in forms.

The revised settlement had two remarkable features, namely: (1) introduction of fluctuating assessment in a few villages affected by the Najafgarh *Jhil* and (2) institution of dry assessment in the canal villages supplemented by a fluctuating owner's rate.

The settlement was sympathetic and the demand was slightly raised. The incidence of land revenue, therefore, worked out to Rs. 1-13-6 per acre. The Punjab Government sanctioned the revision settlement and placed the Delhi district in the first class in the State.

The Third Regular Settlement (1910)

The third regular settlement began in 1906 and was completed in 1910 by Major H.C. Beadon, the Settlement Officer. During these operations revision of the measurements of the 1880 maps was done.

In the Sonipat tahsil, it was found unnecessary in 88 per cent of the villages to resort to re-measurement because the old settlement records were brought up-to-date by the new well known process of correction, colloquially termed *tarmim*. In a few villages, even an abbreviated system known as *tarmim sarsari* was pursued. In the riverain tract where boundaries had been generally obliterated by floods, the village maps were redrawn. The record of rights was drawn up according to the Punjab Land Revenue Act, 1887. A forecast report was also prepared by Beadon, which satisfied the Government that a revision settlement was advisable on account of increase in prices (15 per cent), extension of irrigation (20 per cent) and a small extension of cultivation (3 per cent). The assessment circles for Sonipat tahsil were *Khadar* and *Bangar*. The *Khadar* circles comprised the low lying riverain tracts; the *Bangar* circles were the uplands down which the canals passed. Among these circles the soils were classified into *chahi*, *nahri*, *sailab*, *bhur* and *barani*. The soil rates were fixed accordingly.

On the whole the assessments were reasonable and moderate for Sonipat tahsil. The new assessment for the then Delhi district aggregated to Rs. 15,79,377 which meant an increase of 22.5 per cent over the previous settlement. In the Sonipat tahsil the well irrigation in *Khadar* area increased by

45 per cent; in the northern *Bangar*, the increase was largely due to a different principle of assessment, whereby canal land had been subjected to a wet assessment instead of the former fluctuating owner's rate being considered part of the land revenue.

A special set of rules for 25 villages of Sonipat tahsil situated within reach of the Yamuna, provided that the land revenue had to be remitted or imposed on the land washed away or thrown out by river action. For these villages, the *burd baramad* (alluvion and diluvian) files were prepared in December after the river had receded to its winter level.

Assignment of Land Revenue

The assignment of land revenue fell into two classes, viz (a) those which were granted before the Revolt and continued afterwards, when it was proved that the assignees had taken no part in the Rising and (b) those who were granted after the Revolt generally for loyal service. The former included a large number of petty assignments for the upkeep of shrines and groves.

During the second regular settlement, all these assignments were very carefully scrutinized and recorded in six separate registers having regard to the nature of the assignments, as shown below:—

- (i) Perpetual *mafis* granted before 1857 which were alienable;
- (ii) Perpetual *mafis* granted after 1857 which were not alienable;
- (iii) Quasi-perpetual *mafis* which were held during the pleasure of the Government;
- (iv) Conditional *mafis* which were granted subject to the assigned revenues being spent on the upkeep of religious institutions;
- (v) Conditional *mafis* which were granted subject to the land being kept under trees; and
- (vi) Temporary *Mafis* which were to be resumed as they lapsed.

It must be noted that all assignments (*mafis*) were grants of land revenue only (*mafis* and *jagirs*) and that the ownership over the land remained with the Government. They were grants not of land but land revenue only.

The details pertaining to fixed land revenue of the Sonipat tahsil during 1912-13 to 1932-33 were as follows:—

| Year | Demand | Collections | Percentage on demand of collection | Collection during the year on previous year | Total of column 3 and 5 |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | (Rs.) | (Rs.) | (Rs.) | (Rs.) | (Rs.) |
| Average 1912-13 to 1915-16 | 4,28,169 | 4,27,531 | 75.0 | 216 | 4,27,747 |
| Average 1916-17 to 1920-21 | 4,52,334 | 4,47,555 | 79.13 | 938 | 4,48,493 |
| 1921-22 | 4,59,898 | 4,58,182 | 99.63 | 1,131 | 4,59,313 |
| 1922-23 | 4,60,011 | 4,59,178 | 99.81 | 1,289 | 4,60,467 |
| 1923-24 | 4,60,442 | 4,59,864 | 99.87 | 546 | 4,60,410 |
| 1924-25 | 4,61,231 | 3,69,738 | 89.16 | 454 | 3,70,192 |
| 1925-26 | 4,61,935 | 4,42,111 | 95.70 | 1,929 | 4,44,040 |
| 1926-27 | 4,61,181 | 4,59,148 | 99.00 | 272 | 4,59,420 |
| 1927-28 | 4,61,610 | 4,58,431 | 99.00 | 1,115 | 4,59,546 |
| 1928-29 | 4,61,820 | 4,34,275 | 94.00 | 1,273 | 4,35,548 |
| 1929-30 | 4,61,778 | 4,32,938 | 94.00 | 8,533 | 4,41,471 |
| 1930-31 | 4,61,532 | 2,84,939 | 62.00 | 442 | 2,85,381 |
| 1931-32 | 4,61,053 | 3,61,990 | 78.00 | 49,484 | 4,11,474 |
| 1932-33 | 4,61,057 | 4,26,040 | 92.4 | 6,866 | 4,32,906 |

Settlements of Gohana tahsil (including Kharkhoda areas)

The early settlements of the tahsil were based on the method laid in Regulation IX of 1805 A.D.

Summary Settlements

Gohana Tahsil with Kharkhoda and Mandauthi areas was settled in 1820 by Mr. T.T. Metcalf and Mr. Fraser. During the currency of the next batch of settlements, the old canals was re-opened and the revenue survey of

Gohana and Kharkhoda-Mandauthi areas took place in A.D. 1826-27. Before the revenue survey was completed, all the tahsils of the then Rohtak district were summarily settled once again by Mr. J.P. Gubbins and Mr. J.C. Prant. While the summary settlements were in process, Regulation V of 1832 did away with the control of the Resident in Delhi, by making the territory west of the Jamuna subject to the High Court and Board of Revenue of the North-West Province. Finally, the last summary settlements of the Rohtak district were made by Mr. S. Fraser and Mr. C. Gubbins in 1835 and 1838.

The revenue of the summary settlements was undoubtedly pitched too high throughout the district. The estates and rates fixed during the Summary Settlement on the cultivated area of A.D. 1838 were 80 and Rs. 1-15 *annas* and 11 paise respectively. The Kharkhoda-Mandauthi villages, a part of the then Sampla tahsil, were put to summary settlements. The demand of each settlement for the Kharkhoda-Mandauthi area was as follows:

| | Revenue in respect of Kharkhoda-Mandauthi Villages |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | Rs. |
| 1st Summary Settlements | 1,83,707 |
| 2nd Summary Settlements | 1,72,284 |
| 3rd Summary Settlements | 1,71,006 |
| 4th Summary Settlements | 1,76,104 |

Regular Settlements

A 30-year regular settlement of Kharkhoda-Mandauthi areas was made in 1837-38 by Mr. C. Gubbins and the regular settlements of Gohana tahsil was made in 1838-39 by Mr. M.R. Gubbins. The result of the new settlements, as compared with the last summary settlements, gave an increase of Rs. 20,929, as follows:—

| Tahsil | Revenue of the last summary settlements | Revenue of the Regular Settlements |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| | (Rs.) | (Rs.) |
| Gohana (83 Estates) | 2,39,542 | 2,42,613 |
| Sampla (68-Kharkhoda-Mandauthi Estates) | 1,76,104 | 1,93,962 |
| Total : | 4,15,646 | 4,36,575 |

The new demand was never collected in full. It remained in force apparently some two or three years; while the outstanding balances had been remitted. During the later years of the currency of the summary settlements, cultivation in Gohana tahsil increased due to the opening of the canal.

The high revenue authorities wisely and rightly considered that the settlement proposed could not work at all; and under their orders a complete revision of assessment was carried out with the following results, as compared with that first proposed:—

| Tahsil | Regular settle- ment demand | Revised demand |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| | (Rs.) | (Rs.) |
| Gohana | 2,42,613 | 2,27,016 |
| Sampla (58 Estates only) | 1,93,962 | 1,76,676 |

Two-thirds of the lightening of the burden was made in the estates of the then Rohtak tahsil; while a little reduction was needed in Gohana where a canal irrigation was rapidly extending. Due to the new policy of the Government, the cultivation in Gohana tahsil increased by 38½ per cent.

By Act VIII of 1846 it was provided that the currency of the Rohtak Settlement should last till July 1st, 1870. Before this Act was passed, the Rohtak district had been temporarily abolished in May, 1841 but it was re-established in March, 1842. Between 1834 and 1845, a Revised Record of Rights (which must be distinguished from the Revised Assessment of 1838—40) was made.

After 1st War of Independence, the remissions took place entirely in the famine years of 1861-62 and 1868-69. The suspensions given in Gohana tahsil, over and above the remissions, were very small.

2nd Regular Settlement (1873—1879)

The second regular settlement for Gohana tahsil was made between 1873 and 1879 by Mr. Purser who held charge for the operations for 3 years. The remaining operations were completed by Mr. Fanshawe in 1880. There were 4 assessment circles (1. Western rain-land, Central canal, Eastern rain-land and Eastern canal) of Gohana tahsil. The settlement came into force for 30 years with effect from the *khari* of 1879. It provided the authorities

with excellent maps on the triangular system for the production of which Mr. Purser was famous. The land revenue was raised to Rs. 2,85,663 which was an increase of 27.2 per cent for Gohana tahsil over the last demand. This was a wet demand. The assessment imposed in 1879 was (by the orders of the Government) a dry assessment. Concurrently with its introduction the system of owners' rates was introduced on the canal lands.

Progressive demands were disallowed in the revised settlement, except in the case of one village, three villages in Gohana tahsil and one in Sampla which were severely affected by saline efflorescence received initial settlements for five years only. The remuneration of *zaildars* and *ala-lambardars* was paid by a deduction of one per cent of the revenues of the villages for which they were responsible. Five years after settlement that demand of the four villages temporarily settled was raised by Rs. 1,052, but already deductions had taken place in another direction.

3rd Regular Settlement (1909-10)

The revision of settlement was effected between 1905 and 1910 by Mr. E. Joseph as settlement officer and it came into force in the year 1909-10. Of the 532 villages of the Rohtak district, 236 were remeasured, on the square system, generally on the scale of 40 *gathas* to the inch or 16 inches to the mile. The maps of the remaining 296 estates were amended and brought upto date. Measurements had been done throughout of the *Pakka* or *Shahjahani bigha* which was equivalent to $\frac{5}{8}$ th of an acre. The records of this settlement were probably as accurate as those of its predecessor but neither time nor money was allowed for producing them on the same magnificent scale.

The owners' rate was consolidated with occupiers' rates, since the land owners themselves never observed the distinction and charged the cultivators the whole cost of the water. The rates of the land revenue were somewhat raised on the consideration of the average irrigation done while a provision was made for imposing a slight increase of the demand in case of further extension of canal irrigation.

Areas served by the wells were also leniently treated. New wells had been admitted to protective leases, excepting them from wet assessment for a period varying from 20 to 40 years. The provision was made to relieve the existing wells of wet assessment when these fell out of use.

The land revenue (Initial) was fixed at Rs. 3,56,945 where as the final assessment of the revenue was Rs. 3,75,979 during the Third Settlement. There was an increase of 31 per cent of final demand over expired assessment.

The details pertaining to land revenue assessed in the Gohana tahsil during 1901-02 to 1932-33 are as under:—

| Year | | Demand | Collection | Percentage on demand of collection | Collection during the year on account of previous year | Total of the columns 3 and 5. |
|-------------------------------|----|-------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| I | | II (Rs.) | III (Rs.) | IV (Rs.) | V (Rs.) | VI (Rs.) |
| Average 1901-02 to 1905-06 | .. | 2,11,583 | 1,90,555 | 90.08 | 4,674 | 1,95,229 |
| Average 1906-07 to 1910-11 | .. | 2,67,031 | 2,52,292 | 93.48 | 25,057 | 2,77,349 |
| Average 1916-17 to 1920-21 | .. | 3,68,055 | 3,47,994 | 95.00 | 31,373 | 3,79,367 |
| 1921-22 | .. | 3,68,588 | 3,68,588 | 100.00 | 7,893 | 3,76,481 |
| 1922-23 | .. | 3,69,731 | 3,69,731 | 100.00 | .. | 3,69,731 |
| 1923-24 | .. | 3,69,995 | 3,69,995 | 100.00 | .. | 3,69,995 |
| 1924-25 | .. | 3,70,305 | 3,62,282 | 98.0 | .. | 3,62,282 |
| 1925-26 | .. | 3,71,580 | 3,63,915 | 97.0 | 62 | 3,63,977 |
| 1926-27 | .. | 3,71,707 | 3,71,702 | 100.0 | 194 | 3,71,896 |
| 1927-28 | .. | 3,71,709 | 3,71,164 | 99.0 | 5 | 3,71,169 |
| 1928-29 | .. | 3,71,760 | 3,71,413 | 100.0 | 197 | 3,71,610 |
| 1929-30 | .. | 3,71,474 | 2,61,624 | 95.0 | .. | 2,61,624 |
| 1930-31 | .. | 3,71,277 | 2,29,978 | 62.0 | .. | 2,29,978 |
| 1931-32 | .. | 3,72,928 | 3,22,297 | 89.0 | 2,037 | 3,24,334 |
| 1932-33 | .. | 3,74,173 | 3,58,986 | 95.9 | 14,376 | 3,73,362 |

Special Assessment on Land Put to Non-Agricultural Use

In the case of agricultural land, the return to the State under the land revenue settlements is fixed after taking into account factors such as soil, yields, prices, rainfall, rental statistics and economic condition of the area. But when land is put to non-agricultural uses like constructing a residential building or

erecting an industrial plant, the owner of the land gets an unearned increment, particularly if the land is situated within or in the vicinity of growing towns and cities. This increment in land values can generally be attributed to the expenditure incurred out of public revenues on constructing roads and railways and general development of the area. The land-owners are not fully entitled to this increment in values and it is only fair that this increment should be shared with the Government. It was with this object that the Punjab Land Revenue Act, 1887 was amended by the Punjab Act XIII of 1952 which provided for special assessment of land "put to use different from that for which an assessment is in force or when the land has been put to use for non-agricultural purposes such as brickkilns, factories, houses, landing grounds and other similar purposes". The work of special assessment of non-agricultural lands was started in July, 1955.

Since a very elaborate procedure was provided for carrying out the special assessment operations extending over a number of years, it was decided to levy special assessment on *ad hoc* basis as a multiple of the existing land revenue with effect from *Kharif* 1955 and for this purpose, the Punjab Land Revenue (Special Assessment) Act, 1955, was enacted.

While the work of special assessment was in progress, a defect was observed in the Punjab Act XIII of 1952 in as much as it did not permit the levy of special assessment on land put to non-agricultural use if it was not already assessed to land revenue. In other words, the town sites escaped assessment. Accordingly, the Punjab Land Revenue (Amendment) Act XIX of 1958 was passed to provide for assessment of lands except village *abadi deh* (inhabited site of village) whether or not already assessed to land revenue. Certain exemptions were also provided.

Section 48 of the Act XIX of 1958 provides that special assessment on a category and class of sites of land put to non-agricultural use in an assessment circle or part thereof shall not exceed $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the average net letting value ; or 2-4 per cent of the average market value ; or in the case of sites lying vacant and out of use, 1 per cent of the average market value.

The net letting value is derived after making the following deductions from the prevailing annual rent of such sites :—

- (i) Fair remuneration at 6 per cent for the capital invested on building or machinery or both after deducting the depreciation on their value ;
- (ii) house tax ;
- (iii) property tax ; and
- (iv) maintenance charges not exceeding one month's gross rent.

On publication of the preliminary assessment reports, a number of representations were made to Government regarding the harshness of the levy. Government, therefore, took the following decisions on April 4, 1961 :—

(i) The rate of levy at present should not be up to the maximum limit of 25 per cent prescribed in the Punjab Land Revenue (Amendment) Act, 1958 ; it should not exceed $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent of the estimated average net letting value. Where, however, this levy has to be made according to the Act, it should be modified also in the same proportion as above.

(ii) Exemption should be given to the following cases :—

- (a) All hilly areas notified as such by Government ;
- (b) Sites on which new factories are built, for a period of 10 years (i.e. each factory will be exempted for 10 years from the start of working of the factory).

(iii) Substantial relief should be given in the following cases :—

- (a) Compound and courtyard areas surrounding the building and used for purposes such as flower-beds, kitchen garden, grassy lawns, fruit plants, etc.;

- (b) The owner-occupied residential houses and bungalows.

The work of special assessment in areas outside *lal lakir* (line to demarcate the inhabited site of village, not assessed to land revenue) has since been completed. The following statement gives the areas, sites and revenue estates outside the *lal lakir* to be brought under special assessment and income therefrom :—

| Tahsil | Area | Sites | Number of villages (Revenue estates) effected | Special Assessment | |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | | Total | Immediately recoverable |
| | | | | Rs. | Rs. |
| Gohana | 371 acres, 10 biswas, 14 biswansis, and 63 sq. ft. | 734 | 38 | 3,269 | 3,104 |
| Sonipat | 576 acres, 2 bighas, 15 biswa, 11 biswansis, and 8 sq. ft. | 3,977 | 48 | 15,181 | 14,640 |

The enforcement of the special assessment was suspended with effect from *Kharif* 1964.

Surcharge on land revenue .—The Punjab Land Revenue (Surcharge) Act, 1954, had been enacted for the levy of a surcharge from the *rabi* harvest of the agricultural year 1953-54. Under the Act, every land-owner who paid revenue in excess of ten rupees was liable to pay a surcharge thereon to the extent of one quarter of land revenue if the amount payable by him as land revenue did not exceed 30 rupees, and two-fifth of the land revenue if it exceeded 30 rupees.

As the surcharge levied from 1955 proved to be inadequate to meet heavy financial obligations created by various development schemes, it became necessary to augment the State revenue in every possible manner and hence a special charge was levied under the Punjab Land Revenue (Special Charge) Act, 1958, from the *rabi* harvest of agricultural year 1957-58. The rate of special charge was based on the income tax pattern with different slabs for different categories of land-owners. The slab rates were such that the incidence of special charge mainly fell on those who could afford to pay it. While the land-holders paying revenue (land revenue plus surcharge) up to Rs. 50 had been exempted from the provisions of the Act.

OTHER ENACTMENTS

A cess on commercial crops namely, cotton, sugarcane and chillies at the rate of Rs. 4 per acre in the case of land which was irrigated by canal water and Rs. 2 per acre in the case of other land, had been levied from *kharif* 1963 under the Punjab Commercial Crops Cess Act, 1963. Areas under commercial crops, sown solely for domestic use up to one *kanal* in the case of chillies and 2 *kanals* in the case of sugarcane or cotton were exempted from this levy.

An additional surcharge on the land revenue at the rate of 50 per cent was levied for the development of Kurukshetra University/town,—*vide* the Haryana Land Revenue (Additional Surcharge) Ordinance No. 2 of 1967. Initially, this had been levied for one year, i.e. for *kharif* 1967 and *rabi* 1968, but it was extended for *kharif* and *rabi* harvests of the agricultural year 1968-69 according to the Haryana Land Revenue (Additional Surcharge) Act, 1969. The levy of surcharge was further extended up to 1973-74,—*vide* the Haryana Land Revenue (Additional Surcharge) Amendment Act, 1970, but it could only be collected up to 1972-73 on account of the enforcement of the Haryana Land Holdings Tax Act, 1973.

Haryana Land Holdings Tax Act, 1973.—The Haryana Land Holdings Tax Act, 1973, came into force on June 16, 1973. The Act consolidated various

levies into a single tax known as Land Holding Tax. The levies consolidated are : —

- (i) Surcharge, under the Punjab Land Revenue (Surcharge) Act, 1954 ;
- (ii) Special Charge, under the Punjab Land Revenue (Special Charges Act, 1958 ;
- (iii) Cess on Commercial Crops, under the Punjab Commercial Crops Cess Act, 1963 ; and
- (iv) Additional Surcharge, under the Haryana Land Revenue (Additional Surcharge) Act, 1969.

The State Government took the view that the collection of these levies had become cumbersome not only for the revenue agency but also for the cultivators. To meet the situation the Haryana Land Holdings Tax Act, 1973, consolidated the above 4 levies into a single tax known as the Land Holding Tax. However, the Land Holding Tax shall not be levied and charged on land which is liable to special assessment under section 59 of the Punjab Land Revenue Act, 1887, or the Punjab Land Revenue (Special Assessment) Act, 1955. Further, during the period the above tax is levied and charged, the land shall not be liable to payment of land revenue by way of general assessment under the Punjab Land Revenue Act, 1887, or the payment of Local Rate under the Punjab Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1961. The Act brought out a concept of holding on the basis of a family rather than the individual as a unit for the purposes of imposition of tax and provided for graded taxation on the basis of the size of the holding. The present rates of land tax are as under :—

Class of land
(Specified in
Schedule I)
comprising the
land holding

RATE OF TAX

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I | <p>.. (a) Seventy paise per 0.05 hectare for the first one hectare ;</p> <p>(b) One rupee per 0.05 hectare for the next four hectares ; and</p> <p>(c) One rupee and thirty five paise per 0.05 hectare for the remaining land.</p> |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

1

2

II .. (a) Sixty paise per 0.05 hectare for the first one hectare ;

(b) Ninety paise per 0.05 hectare for the next four hectares ; and

(c) One rupee and twenty paise per 0.05 hectare for the remaining land.

III (a) Forty paise per 0.05 hectare for the first one hectare ;

(b) Fifty paise per 0.05 hectare for the next four hectares ; and

(c) Sixty paise per 0.05 hectare for the remaining land.

IV (a) Twenty five paise per 0.05 hectare for the first one hectare ;

(b) Forty paise per 0.05 hectare for the next four hectares ; and

(c) Fifty paise per 0.05 hectare for the remaining land.

V (a) Ten paise per 0.05 hectare for the first one hectare ;

(b) Fifteen paise per 0.05 hectare for the next four hectares ; and

(c) Twenty paise per 0.05 hectare for the remaining land.

The Sonipat district which was formed on December 22, 1972, comprised the following assessment circles with their different classification of land during 1988-89 :—

Classes of land

| Tahsil | Assessment circle | Class I | Class II | Class III | Class IV | Class V |
|---------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------|-------------------------------------------|
| Sonipat | <i>Khadar</i> | <i>Nahri</i> | <i>Chahi & Sailab</i> | <i>Barani</i> | .. | <i>Bhud, Banjar, Kallar, Thur and Sem</i> |
| | <i>Bangar</i> | Do | Do | Do | .. | Ditto |
| | <i>Nehri I</i> | Do | <i>Chahi & Abi</i> | Do | .. | Ditto |
| | <i>Nehri II</i> | Do | Do | Do | .. | Ditto |
| Ganaur | <i>Khadar</i> | <i>Nahri</i> | <i>Chahi & Sailab</i> | Do | .. | Ditto |
| | <i>Bangar</i> | Do | Do | Do | .. | Ditto |
| | <i>Nahri I</i> | Do | <i>Chahi & Abi</i> | Do | .. | Ditto |
| | <i>Nahri II</i> | Do | Do | Do | .. | Ditto |
| Gohana | <i>Eastern</i> | <i>Nahri</i> | <i>Chahi</i> | Do | .. | Ditto |
| | <i>Western</i> | Do | Do | Do | .. | Ditto |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|----------------------|----|----|------------------------------------------------|
| Kharkhoda Khadar Sub-tahsil | Nahri | Chahi & Sailab | Do | .. | Bhud, Banjar, Kallar, Thur and Sem |
| Bangar | Do | Do | Do | .. | Ditto |
| Nahri I | Do | Chahi & Abi | Do | .. | Ditto |
| Nahri II | Do | Do | Do | .. | Ditto |

COLLECTION OF LAND REVENUE

As the district came under the British in the beginning of the 19th century, the assessment and collection of revenue was not in a good state and was much left to be desired. During the early settlements which were very rough and ready proceedings, Sadar Malguzars were engaged for a *patti* or an estate and they were made responsible for the payment of cash assessment. Sadar Malguzars, in turn, were allowed to make what arrangements they could for collection from their co-partners. The most drastic process known to the Revenue Code for this area of the North-Western Provinces was constantly and indiscriminately applied when villages fell into arrears, and the abuses of the sale law became a scandal for the administration. If the Sadar Malguzar was in default, the whole *patti* or estate for which he was engaged was put up to auction, and all private rights of ownership annulled in favour of the purchaser who was very frequently the Tahsildar or one of his underlings. Indeed, it is said that by some strange misapprehension the rule applicable to cases of sale for arrears of revenue appears to have been extended not only to the sales of estate under decrees of Court for private debts, but even to the private transfers of the Sadar Malguzars. The powerful machinery of Government was thus rapidly breaking up communities which had survived the crushing exactions of the petty tyrannies which it had replaced. The extent of the evil may be gauged by the extraordinary nature of the remedy applied with very partial success in 1821. In that year the Holt Mackenzie Commission was appointed with power to annul, should equity require it, any public or private transfer of land which had taken place before September 13, 1810. The Regulations of 1822, based on the proposals of the Commission, swept away the worst feature of the sale law.

Under the first regular settlement, Lambardars were required to collect land revenue from concerned communities of land-owners. There were 1,958

Lambardars in the then Rohtak district or one to every 50 land-owners when the revised settlement was taken up by Fanshawe. All the Lambardars wherever possible were appointed headmen to compose the claims of rural claimants in the regular settlement. Thuledars who were representatives chosen by the people in their own councils as distinct from the Lambardars who were only appointed by the Government, got themselves recorded as Lambardars and so obtained hereditary status and some remunerations. The Police Commission Report of 1902-03 proposed a reduction in the number of Lambardars. The acceptance of this proposal resulted in subsequent vacancies not being filled.

The *Zaildari* system was introduced in 1880 to assist Lambardars in the realisation of revenue arrears. The following statement gives the information about *Zails* of Sonipat tahsil existed during 1912 :—

| Tahsil | Zail | The No. of villages in the Zail | Land revenue demand ¹ |
|---------|----------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | (Rs.) |
| Sonipat | Sardhana | 25 | 52,025 |
| | Juan | 22 | 49,000 |
| | Ganaur | 26 | 53,200 |
| | Larsauli | 20 | 42,550 |
| | Kheora | 23 | 43,450 |
| | Sonipat | 24 | 35,045 |
| | Bhatgaon | 21 | 50,770 |
| | Rohat | 34 | 72,030 |
| | Rai | 25 | 39,475 |
| | Jakhauli | 21 | 39,675 |

In the original constitution of *zails*, great care was taken to give effect to local tribal influence and leading men from the dominant tribes of the *zail* were appointed *zaildars*.

The Ala lambardars who were also appointed in 1879 proved to be failure and in 1909, it was decided to do away with them gradually and since the beginning of the third Settlement vacancies were not filled. In their place, it was decided to create *Sufedposhi Inams*. The *Zaildars* and *Safedposh* supervised the collection of land revenue. They were paid a share, usually one per cent, of land revenue, which was set aside for the purpose. The agencies of *Zaildari*

and *Safedposhi* were abolished in 1948, revised in 1950 but again abolished in 1952. During 1988-89, only *lambardars* were responsible for the collection of land revenue. Prior to the enforcement of Land Holdings Tax Act, 1973, a *lambardar* was paid *pachotara*, a cess at the rate of 5 per cent of land holding tax. Since various levies had been consolidated into land holding tax, the rate of *pachotara* had been fixed at 3 per cent of the new tax.¹ In case, the *lambardar* was unable to collect the tax, he made the written petition to the Tahsildar who helped him in its recovery. Besides, the *lambardar* also collects dues pertaining to the Minor Irrigation and Tubewells Corporation, consolidation fee and *abiana* and is paid commission at the rate of 1, 5 and 3 per cent, respectively. The total number of *lambardars* in the district on March 31, 1989 was 1,636.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION AND LAND RECORDS

For the purpose of revenue management, the State is divided into various districts and a district is subdivided into tahsils. A tahsil is further sub-divided into *Kanungo* Circles, *Patwar* circles and revenue estates. Thus the unit of revenue administration is an estate which is usually identical with the village. Each of them was separately assessed to land revenue and has a separate record of rights and register of fiscal and agricultural statistics. All its proprietors were by law jointly responsible for the payment of land revenue, and in their dealing with the Government they were represented by one or more *lambardars*. Estates are grouped into *patwar* circle each of which is under the charge of a *patwari*. The *Kanungo* supervises the work of *patwaris*. The following *Kanungo* circles, *patwar* circles and revenue estates existed in the district during 1988-89 :—

| Tahsil | Kanungo Circles | Patwar Circles | Revenue Estates |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Sonipat | Sonipat-I | 17 | 43 |
| | Sonipat-II | 14 | 30 |
| | Rai | 13 | 44 |
| | Murthal | 12 | 38 |
| Gohana | Gohana No. I | 14 | 24 |
| | Gohana No. II | 12 | 24 |
| | Mundiana | 16 | 26 |
| | Baroda | 12 | 19 |
| Ganaur | Ganaur | 15 | 38 |
| | Purkhas | 14 | 29 |
| Kharkhoda (Sub-tahsil) | Kharkhoda | 22 | 45 |
| Total : | 11 | 161 | 360 |

(1) The land revenue (land holdings) tax was abolished in Haryana on 16th October, 1986.

The tahsil-wise details of the staff attending to revenue work in the district are given below :—

| Tahsil | Tahsildar | Naib-Tahsildars | Office Kanungos | Field Kanungos | Patwaris |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------|
| Sonipat .. | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 55 |
| Gohana .. | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 54 |
| Ganaur .. | 1 | .. | 1 | 2 | 29 |
| Kharkhoda (Sub-tahsil) .. | .. | 1 | .. | 1 | 22 |

For the purpose of revenue administration, as already mentioned in Chapter X, the district is under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner whose title as Chief District Revenue Officer, is 'Collector', a term which indicates his responsibility for the realisation of all government revenues. The Collector is bound to preserve from encroachment every private right in the soil which has been created or confirmed by the State. Where the demand was fixed for a term only, he was not only to collect it but also to look forward to a time when it would be revised and hence he is to record, in a systematic manner, statistical information which will facilitate its equitable assessment. He must ensure and assist in the measures to prevent the damage to crops from causes which are in any degree controllable by man. He must encourage and assist in every effort made by a right holder for the development of his estate. He is assisted by District Revenue Officer in all revenue matters and administration.

The Tahsildar is an important functionary. He is in charge of a tahsil for revenue work including revenue judicial work. He has to control the *patwar* and *Kanungo* agency, to collect dues punctually, to point out promptly to the Collector any failure of crops or seasonal calamity which renders suspension or remission necessary and to carry out within his own sphere other duties connected with revenue administration. He is a touring officer and his tours afford him ample opportunities to deal, on the spot, with partition cases and other matters connected with appointment of Lambardars, lapses of government dues assignments, etc.

The Patwari is an inheritance from the old village system¹. He is appointed for a circle consisting of one or more villages. Besides the proper maintenance of records, the Patwari is required to report to the Tahsildar any calamity affecting land, crops, cattle or the agricultural classes, and to bring to his notice alluvial and di-alluvial action of river, encroachments on Government lands, the death of revenue assignee and pensioners, progress of works made under the agricultural loans and similar laws, and the emigration or immigration of cultivators. He undertakes surveys and field inspections, aids in all other Government activities like distribution of relief, etc., prepares the *baachh* (distribution of revenue over holdings) papers showing the demand due from each land owner to the village *jama* (land revenue demands). When dues collections are in progress, he must furnish all information that may be required to facilitate the collections. He himself is not permitted to take any part in the collection of the dues except when any Lambardar refuses to accept the *dhal baachh* (total demand from each land owner) and no immediate alternative arrangement can be made.

The Patwari is under the immediate supervision of a circle supervisor known as Kanungo who has also been functioning since medieval times. The Kanungo is responsible for the conduct and work of Patwaris. He constantly moves about his circle, supervising the work of Patwaris, except in the month of September when he stays at tahsil headquarters to check *jama* bandis received from Patwaris.

The Office Kanungo is the Tahsildar's revenue clerk. His chief work is the maintenance of the statistical revenue records. He has also the charge of the forms and stationery required by Patwaris, keeps the account of mutation fee, records the rainfall and maintains the register of assignees of land revenue and other miscellaneous revenue registers. He is the custodian of all the records received from the Patwaris. A well-ordered Kanungo's office is an important factor in the revenue management of a tahsil.

At district headquarters, there is a District or Sadar Kanungo assisted by a Naib Sadar Kanungo. The Sadar Kanungo is responsible for the efficiency of Kanungos and should be in camp inspecting their work for at least 8 days in every month from October to April. He is the keeper of all records received from Kanungos and Patwaris. He maintains with the help of his assistant, copies of the prescribed statistical registers for each assessment circle, tahsil and the whole district. The responsibility of Tahsildar and Naib Tahsildar for the inspection and correctness of the work of Kanungos and Patwaris is, however, not affected by the duties of the Sadar Kanungo.

1. He was, under section 3 of the Land Revenue Act, a "Village Officer" and not a Government employee. Patwaris were formally paid from the cess on the land revenue but in 1906 the State took over the charge and abolished the *Patwar* cess and the *Patwar* fund.

LAND REVENUE AND SPECIAL CESSSES

Land Holdings Tax¹

The Land Holdings Tax Act, 1973 was enforced in 1973 and thereafter the collection of land revenue, surcharge, special charge, cess on commercial crops, additional surcharge and local rate were stopped and only land holdings tax was collected.

The collection of land holdings tax during 1979-80 to 1982-83 is as under :—

| Year | Total Revenue from land (excluding cesses) |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------|
| | (Rs.) |
| 1979-80 | 23,95,861 |
| 1980-81 | 16,92,794 |
| 1981-82 | 17,41,704 |
| 1982-83 | 16,25,606 |

LAND REFORMS

Agrarian Reforms

It has been felt for long that agrarian reforms were necessary. With the attainment of Independence it became clear that a sound land policy should take up the question of ameliorating the conditions of the tenants; it should also consider laying down a ceiling to land holding. The landlords became restive fearing that they would be deprived of the lands which had been cultivated for years by their tenants. They started bringing these lands under their direct management. They also began to partition their lands or transfer them in the names of their relatives and friends with a view to reducing the areas of their holdings. All this resulted in harassment to the tenants whose position became shaky.

The history of land system in the State reveals that there were three parties who shared rights in land, viz. the State, the proprietor and the tenant. The long-standing interest of the State lay in its claim to a share of the produce of the land from its cultivators.

No material change occurred in the system of land holding between 1910 1947. Villages with small holdings were the rule except for a few *zamindari*

1. Land holding tax was abolished in 1986.

type of villages. Relationship between the landlords and the tenants was generally satisfactory, though it tended to lean in favour of the landlords. This position became different after Independence when Government decided to introduce suitable land reforms. A great deal of land was cultivated by peasant proprietors of small holdings convenient for self-cultivation or it was held by intermediaries who got it cultivated through tenants but who had themselves no interest in the land beyond getting their rent. The tenants were mainly occupancy tenants, tenants-at-will or *Adna Malik*s. All these combined formed a sizeable proportion of the rural population. Their lot had to be improved in pursuance of the Government policy of 'land for the tiller'. Accordingly the following laws were enacted:—

- (i) The East Punjab Utilization of Lands Act, 1949
- (ii) The Punjab Abolition of Malkiat and Talukadari Rights Act, 1952
- (iii) The Punjab Occupancy Tenants (Vesting of Proprietary Rights) Act, 1952
- (iv) The Punjab Security of Land Tenures Act, 1953
- (v) The Punjab Bhudan Yagna Act, 1955.
- (vi) The Punjab Resumption of Jagirs Act, 1957
- (vii) The Punjab Village Common Lands (Regulation) Act, 1961

Under the East Punjab Utilization of Lands Act, 1949, the Government enforced the optimum utilization of cultivable land, and any land left uncultivated for 6 or more consecutive harvests was acquired and leased out for a term ranging from 7 years to twenty years for cultivation, priority being given to Harijans.

Under the Punjab Abolition of Ala Malikiyat and Talukdari Rights Act, 1952, the rights of an *ala malik* in the land held by an *adna malik* were abolished and the *adna malik* was required to pay compensation for proprietary rights.

The Punjab Occupancy Tenants (Vesting of Proprietary Rights) Act, 1952 declared all occupancy tenants as owners of the land.

The main purpose of the Punjab Security of Land Tenures Act, 1953, is to (i) provide a 'permissible area' to a land-owner/tenant which he can retain for self-cultivation, (ii) provide security of tenures to tenants by protecting them against ejectment, (iii) ascertain surplus area and secure resettlement of ejected tenants of those areas, (iv) fix the maximum rent payable by tenants, and (v) confer rights on tenants to pre-empt and purchase their tenancy in certain circumstances.

Its object being to effect agrarian reform and to give security to the tenants, the Act provided for the settlement of tenants on the land declared surplus and also fixed a ceiling on the total holding of a land-owner. It not only reduced the acreage which could be reserved but also specifically prohibited ejectment of tenants from all un-reserved areas, except in case of default in payment of rent or improper cultivation. Section 9-A enacted,—*vide* Act XI of 1955, provided that no tenant liable to ejectment would be dispossessed of his tenancy unless he was accommodated on a surplus area or otherwise on some other land by the State Government. Rent was limited to one-third of the crop or its value or to the customary rent, if that was lower. However, payment for services provided by the landlord was excluded from the computation of rent. The Act further extended the opportunities for tenants to become owners. A tenant of 4-year standing acquired a right of pre-emption at sales or foreclosures; but more important than that, tenants of 6-year standing were allowed to buy un-reserved area from their landlords at three quarters of the 10 years average of prices of similar land. The payment of compensation, however, could be made by the tenant either in lump sum or in six-monthly instalments not exceeding ten.

Government was further empowered to utilise the surplus area of both land-owners and tenants for the re-settlement of ejected tenants, landless labourers and small land-owners. All areas owned by a local owner above 30 standard acres and by a displaced person above 50 standard acres were assessed as surplus. A small owner, who had up to 30 standard acres, may not eject a tenant under the Act from 5 standard acres unless the tenant has been settled by Government on surplus area.

In this way, the Act aims at creating what is called a class of small 'land-owners', i.e. holders of land not exceeding the permissible area (30 standard acres in the case of local owners and 50 standard acres in the case of displaced persons from Pakistan). The utmost emphasis has been laid on self-cultivation which means cultivation by a land-owner either personally or through his wife or through such of his relations as may be prescribed, or under his supervision.

By March, 1983, an area of 4,600 hectares was declared surplus in the district. Out of this area 3,190 hectares of surplus land was exempted due to other reasons. Land measuring 1,386 hectares was made available for distribution. The area of 575 hectares was allotted to 575 Harijans. The remaining land of 811 hectares was allotted to other persons.

The Punjab Bhudan Yagna Act, 1955 was passed to promote the Bhudan movement with the object of resettling landless cultivators on land received through voluntary donations. An area of 2 hectares of land was received in Bhudan movement by March 31, 1989.

Under the Punjab Resumption of Jagirs Act, 1957, all *jagirs*, *mafis* and jagir pensions except military *jagirs* or grants made to religious or charitable institutions granted on or before August 4, 1914, were resumed.

In 1972, on the recommendations of the Central Land Reforms Committee, the Haryana Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1972 was enacted. The Act repealed the provisions of two earlier Acts in so far as these relate to the ceiling on land holdings and utilization of surplus area.

The new Act provides for the assessment of permissible area in relation to a family instead of an individual and reduces the permissible area limit to 7.25 hectares of land under assured irrigation capable of growing at least, two crops in a year, 10.9 hectares of land under assured irrigation capable of growing atleast 1 crop in a year or 21.8 hectares in respect of any other land including *banjar* and land under orchards. In case the family comprises more than 3 minor children an additional area at the rate of 1/5 of the permissible area of the primary unit is permitted for each additional member provided that the total does not exceed twice the permissible area of the unit. The head of a primary unit has also been given a right to select for each of his major sons (or widow and minor children of pre-deceased son) area equivalent to the permissible limit of primary unit. Further, unlike the Punjab Security of Land Tenures Act, 1953, the new Act provides for vesting the rights of surplus area in the Government and for its utilization for settlement of tenants and other economically weaker sections of society like members of the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes, landless persons, agricultural workers and others.

By March, 1989, an area of 228 hectares was declared surplus. The area of 54 hectares was allotted to 47 Harijans and the remaining area of 115 hectares was distributed to 113 persons.

Consolidation of Holdings

Alongside the reform of the land tenure, are the measures for reducing strip farming and fragmentation of holdings. A characteristic feature of peasant land tenure and cultivation over a length of time had been the fragmented holdings which usually consisted of small and often, many strips of land, lying between the fields of other peasants. This had been the case with farms of both tenants and peasants who owned land. The tiller naturally found it difficult to look after his crops scattered at different places and it was also cumbersome to maintain long channels and water courses intact. Systematic and large-scale development was not possible when the holdings were small and fields lay scattered.

The process of bringing together small and fragmented pieces of land into a compact block for better and intensive cultivation is known as consolidation of holdings. It saves the tiller to a great extent from wasteful supervision

and irrigation of scattered holdings. It enables him to avail of the facilities of modern agricultural implements and extend tractor cultivation in consolidated holdings. It is only through the consolidation of holdings that the land lying scattered in tiny strips can assume a compact and standard shape. Uneconomic, neglected and inaccessible holdings are re-grouped into a consolidated, composite and homogeneous block. A lot of virgin land is also reclaimed by the Government as a corollary to the scheme. The circular and approach roads increase the mobility between houses and the provision of land for institutions like Panchayat Ghars and schools promotes the social welfare programmes. In fact, consolidation brings about a revolution in both the economic structure of land tilling, and the mobility and social possibilities of the village.

The work of consolidation of land holdings had been taken up in the undivided Punjab by the Cooperative Department during 1930 but in the absence of legislation, it did not make much headway. To make good this deficiency, the State Government enacted the East Punjab Holdings (Consolidation and Prevention of Fragmentation) Act, 1948, and created a separate Consolidation Department in 1949. The work relating to consolidation of land holdings was started in 1950 in Rohtak (Sonipat) District. Out of the total 353 villages, the work of consolidation of land holdings had been completed in 341 villages. During 1982-83, the work was in progress in 2 villages. Now no village is left in this district where consolidation is to be completed except 3 villages, which are unfit for consolidation being Subject to urban area.

OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE, STATE AND CENTRAL

State Sources of Revenue

The State Government derives its revenue from various other sources, which are described briefly.

Stamp Duty.—This duty is collected under the Court Fees Act, 1870 and the Indian Stamp Act, 1899. Both the Acts have been amended a number of times. The court Fees Act, was amended by the Court Fees (Haryana Amendment) Act, 1974, while the Indian Stamp Act was amended by the Haryana Act No. 7 of 1967. The Acts require the Collector (Deputy Commissioner), District and Session Judge and Sub-Judges to ensure that the applications for all suits and other relevant documents are properly Stamped according to schedule.

Registration Fee.—The Deputy Commissioner is the Registrar in the district. The Tahsildars and Naib-Tahsildars are Sub-Registrars and Joint Sub-Registrars, respectively. Appeals from the orders of the Sub-Registrar are heard by the Registrar. The Inspector General of Registration, Haryana, Chandigarh exercises general superintendence over all the registration offices in the state and has power to make rules consistent with the Indian Registration Act, 1908.

Excise and Taxation.—For the administration of Excise and Taxation Acts, the district in March, 1989, was under the charge of the Deputy Excise and Taxation Commissioner who was assisted by 8 Excise and Taxation Officers and 14 Assistant Excise and Taxation Officers. He was further assisted by 7 Inspectors on the excise and side, and 42 Inspectors on taxation side.

To check the sales tax evasion, the following Sales Tax barriers were on March 31, 1989:—

| Serial No. | Name of the Sales Tax Check Barrier |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
|------------|-------------------------------------|

- | | |
|----|-----------------|
| 1. | Kundli |
| 2. | Saidpur |
| 3. | Akbarpur Barota |
| 4. | Nahra-Nahri |
| 5. | Shiv Puri |
| 6. | Garh-Malikpur |
| 7. | Sohati |
-

Apart from checking evasion of sales tax the staff posted at the check barriers is also entrusted with the work of checking the vehicles under the Punjab Passengers and Goods Taxation Act, 1952.

The State and Central Acts enforced by the Excise and Taxation Department in the district on excise side are ;

- (i) The Punjab Excise Act, 1914
- (ii) The Punjab Local Option Act, 1923.
- (iii) The East Punjab Molasses (Control) Act, 1948
- (iv) The Opium Act, 1878
- (v) The Dangerous Drug Act, 1930
- (vi) The Indian Power Alcohol Act, 1948
- (vii) The Medicinal and Toilet Preparations (Excise Duties) Act, 1955.

On the taxation side, the State and Central Acts administered by the department in the district are:—

1. The Haryana General Sales Tax Act, 1973
2. The Punjab Passengers and Goods Taxation Act, 1952
3. The Punjab Entertainment Duty Act, 1955.
4. The Punjab Entertainment (Cinematograph Shows) Act, 1939.
5. The Punjab Motor Spirit (Taxation of Sales) Act, 1939
6. The Central Sales Tax Act, 1956
7. The Prize Competition Act, 1955

Sales Tax.—It is a tax on the sale or purchase of movable goods in one form or another. It is levied under the Haryana General Sales Tax Act, 1973 which has replaced the Punjab General Sales Tax Act, 1948, since May 5, 1973. Some of the commodities which are generally consumed by relatively poor sections of people have been exempted from taxation, whereas luxury goods which are consumed by the well to do people are taxed at a higher rate. Thus foreign liquor and Indian made foreign liquor are taxed at 20 per cent and motor vehicles, auto-cycles, refrigerators, clocks and watches, iron and steel safes and almirahs, radios and radio-parts, gramophones, tape recorders etc are taxed at the rate of 10 per cent.

The important goods exempted from the tax are electric energy, agricultural implements, fertilizers, vegetables (except when sold in tins, bottles or cartons), fresh fruit, sugar, textiles, goods sold to the Indian Red Cross Society, St. John Ambulance Association, the Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE), United Nations Technical Assistance Board, Save the Children Fund Association, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, World Health Organisation and co-operative societies certified by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

Special concessional treatment has been given to a few selected items such as foodgrains, declared goods¹, ready-made garments, tractors, pesticides, raw wool, knitting wool and raw hides.

Central Sales Tax.—The Central Sales Tax Act, 1956, provides for levy of tax on sales made in the course of inter-state trade and commerce. The states have been authorised to administer this Act on behalf of the Government of India. The entire collection of this tax is appropriated by the states. This

1. Goods which are of special importance in inter-state trade have been termed as declared goods.

central fiscal enactment has given the States a major source of revenue which is increasing day by day. The rate of tax was 4 per cent on inter-state sale to registered dealers or on declared goods to registered or unregistered dealers and 10 per cent on inter-state sale to unregistered dealers. Under Section 8(5) of the Central Sales Tax Act, 1956, the State Government has been empowered to reduce the rate of tax on certain classes of goods, or class of dealers or traders if it is expedient to do so in the interest of the state.

Passengers and Goods Tax.—The Punjab Passengers and Goods Taxation Act, 1952 came into force on August 1, 1952. The Act provides that a tax shall be levied on all fares and freights in respect of passengers carried and goods transported in transport vehicles for the public in the state. The rate of tax, which was 25 per cent of the fare or freight paid by a passenger, was enhanced to 35 per cent on July 21, 1967 and to 40 per cent on October 7, 1969. In 1977-78 it was 60 per cent of the fare and freight. However, in some cases the levy is charged in lump sum.

Entertainment Duty.—The Punjab Entertainments Duty Act, 1936 was replaced by the Punjab Entertainments Duty Act, 1955, on November 4, 1955. The rates of duty have been changing over the years. The rate of tax on the payment of admission to a show, which had been 50 per cent since 1961-68, was raised to 60 per cent from December 12, 1970 and further to 75 per cent from January 19, 1971. The rate was revised to 100 per cent from January 15, 1973. This rate stood further revised with effect from September 1, 1977 to 125 per cent¹. Its incidence falls on persons who witness the entertainment.

Property Tax.—This tax was levied under the Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax Act, 1940. It is charged at the rate of 10 per cent of the annual rental value of the buildings and lands situated in the rating areas. A surcharge of 50 per cent of tax was levied from 1967-68. The self-occupied residential units are, however, exempt from the levy of the tax to encourage construction activities in the State with effect from April, 1976. Due to the merger of House Tax in the Property Tax, the rate of tax was enhanced to 20 per cent, whereas the rate of surcharge had been reduced to 25 per cent. The rate of property tax on self occupied houses is 10 per cent.

The Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax Act, 1940 was repealed by the Government with effect from April, 1, 1977 through an Ordinance. The Ordinance has, however, lapsed as it was not replaced by an Act within the time prescribed under the Constitution of India. The Act *ibid* has, therefore, been revived with effect from July 7, 1977.

¹It was made 100 per cent for 30 per cent seats in a cinema hall provided these are comprised in complete rows, with effect from December 15, 1978.

Professions Tax.—Every person who has been carrying on a trade, either by himself or through an agent or representative, or who has followed a profession or calling or who is in employment either wholly or in part, within the State, is liable to pay for each financial year (or a part thereof) professions tax under the Punjab Professions, Trades, Callings and Employment Taxation Act, 1956. The maximum limit of the tax was Rs. 250 per annum and the minimum Rs. 120. However, no tax was charged from the persons whose annual income was below Rs. 6,000.

The Punjab Professions, Trades, Callings and Employment Taxation Act, 1956 has been repealed since April, 1977.

Show Tax.—The Punjab Entertainment Tax (Cinematograph Shows) Act, 1954 came into force on May 4, 1954. This show tax is levied on exhibitors for every show on the number of occupied seats of a cinema house. A uniform policy was prescribed for the State of Haryana and rates of show tax were changed to 10 percent of the entertainment duty on June 18, 1974. It was reduced to 9 percent from March 8, 1979.

Motor Spirit Tax.—This tax was levied under the Punjab Motor Spirit (Taxation of Sales) Act, 1939. The rate of tax has been changed number of times. In 1970-71, It was six paise per litre on petrol and other motor spirit items. However, since July 21, 1967, the stage of levy of tax has been shifted from 'last sale' to 'first sale' within the State. This change has minimised the difficulty experienced earlier by traders and only depots of oil companies who make 'first sale' pay the tax.

The present rate of tax is 12 paise per litre on high speed diesel and 15 paise per litre on petrol.

The collections from the above stated taxes, viz. Excise Tax, Property Tax, Passengers and Goods Tax, Motor Spirit Tax, Sales Tax, Professions Tax and Central Sales Tax in the district during 1986-87 to 1988-89 are given below :

| | 1986-87 | 1987-88 | 1988-89 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | (Rs.) | (Rs.) | (Rs.) |
| Excise Tax .. | 76,74,46,311 | 17,14,98,700 | 20,18,66,874 |
| Property Tax .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Passengers Tax & Goods Tax .. | 3,52,55,826 | 4,01,13,100 | 4,96,61,540 |
| Entertainment duty ... | 59,59,334 | 63,04,400 | 53,58,776 |
| Show Tax .. | 5,18,782 | 5,61,300 | 4,67,720 |
| Mobile Spirit Tax .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Sales Tax .. | 58,09,055 | 7,61,10,400 | 10,94,96,047 |
| Professions tax .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Central Sales Tax .. | 6,80,92,684 | 7,31,19,800 | 9,22,16,198 |

CENTRAL SOURCES OF REVENUE

Central Excise Duties.—The Central Excise is administered by the Union Government. The Sonipat district has two Central excise range, i.e. Sonipat and Kundli range. Both the ranges come under the charge of Assistant Collector, Central Excise, Rohtak. He is under the Collector of Central Excise, Delhi.

The main sources of Central Excise revenue in the district are electric bulbs, iron and steel, oxygen gas, vegetable products, hand tools, duplex board, electric wires and cables.

Income Tax.—The Indian Income Tax Act, 1922, has been replaced by the Income Tax Act, 1961, with effect from 1st April, 1962. There are Income Tax Officers. whose duty is to collect this tax. The Office was established at Sonipat on 15th November, 1965. The Income Tax Officer, administers Income Tax, Estate Duty and Gift Tax.

Estate Duty.—The Estate Duty Act, 1953 came into force on 15th October, 1953. The duty was leviable on the estate of those persons who died after this date. Proceedings for levy have to be initiated within five years of death, but no time has been fixed for completion of assessment. The Collection made under this Act in the district from 1980-81 to 1982-83 is given below:—

| Year | Collection |
|---------|------------|
| | (Rs.) |
| 1980-81 | 40,000 |
| 1981-82 | 77,000 |
| 1982-83 | 1,30,000 |

The Estate duty was abolished in March, 1985.

Wealth Tax.—The wealth Tax Act, 1957 came into force from assessment year 1957-58. The tax is levied if net wealth exceeds Rs. 1 lakh in case of individuals and Rs. 2 lakh in case of Hindu undivided family.

Gift Tax.—The Gift Tax Act was enforced from 1st April, 1958. It is levied on gifts, moveable or immoveable, whose value exceeds Rs. 5,000.