

REPORT

ON

THE CENSUS OF BRITISH BURMA.

Taken on the 17th February 1881.

PART I.—The Enumeration and Compilation of Results.

I.—INTRODUCTION.

THE second general census of British Burma, and the first synchronous census of the whole of the Indian Empire, was taken on the night of the 17th February 1881. Since the last regular enumeration of the people in 1872 eight-and-a-half years had elapsed, and it was possible on the present occasion to include within the scope of a census large numbers of the wilder races and inhabitants of the mountainous regions of the province for whom previously the annual population returns of the Thoogyees or revenue-collectors had to be accepted in lieu of any more elaborate counting. The census which has now been taken represents, with as much accuracy as can yet be attained in a country like Burma, and with the agency at the disposal of the executive authorities, the actual facts existing on the night of the 17th February.

2. Before proceeding to discuss in detail the circumstances connected with the enumeration, it may be useful to describe briefly the steps which preceded the formation of definite plans for the census of the province.

3. In 1877, on receipt of a despatch from the Secretary of State regarding a proposed general census of India to be taken in 1881, a Committee, consisting of three officers who had been specially employed in connection with the last Indian census, was appointed by the Government of India to consider the whole subject. Their report, submitted early in 1878, was circulated to local Governments and Administrations for an expression of opinion on the recommendations of the Committee; and, among other points, attention was especially drawn to the following, namely, the possibility of taking the census everywhere on the same day, the date to be fixed for the general enumeration, the form of schedule to be used, and the possibility of getting it satisfactorily filled in, the agency to be employed in taking the census, and whether it should be paid or not. In reply the Chief Commissioner stated that, except in the case of the Karens of the north-east corner of the Tenasserim division and of the wild tribes of Northern Arakan, the census might be taken throughout the province on the same day, and that, even in those tracts, it would be possible to complete the enumeration within two or three days of the date fixed. Though February was undoubtedly an inconvenient month for British Burma, the matter appeared to have been fully considered by the Committee, and it was therefore accepted as settled that the census would be taken at that time of the year. Except in minor particulars, which were subsequently modified, the form of schedule proposed was generally approved, and no difficulties were anticipated in getting it satisfactorily filled in by the enumerators. Again, though perhaps in a few of the larger towns some part of the agency might have to be paid, it was thought that the existing establishment of revenue-collectors and village headmen would be sufficient to carry out the work.* The conclusions of the Government of India on the recommendations of the Committee and the reports of the local Governments were communicated to the Secretary of State, and in March 1880, on the arrival of a reply to this despatch, a copy of the schedule prescribed for general adoption throughout the empire was circulated,* with the request that local Governments

would submit drafts of proposed instructions to be issued for the guidance of the census enumerators.

4. The most important points which had up to this time been decided were that the census should be taken in the month of February synchronously in all provinces; that the form of enumerator's schedule used and the tables adopted for compilation should, as much as possible, conform in shape to English models, at the same time that they permitted comparison with the figures of former enumerations in India; that the agency, so far as was possible, should be unpaid, and that there should be a preliminary enumeration of the population before the night of the census. It had also been determined to appoint a Census Commissioner for the whole of India to supervise the preliminary arrangements, the operations of the census itself, and the tabulation of the returns; while under him and subordinate to the local Governments were to be placed provincial Deputy Superintendents of the census.

5. On receipt of the prescribed form of schedule and the orders already referred to regarding the preparation of draft instructions for enumerators, the Commissioners of divisions were asked to report on the subject, and in April the Chief Commissioner selected a Committee to draw up the instructions and prepare a practical and detailed scheme for carrying out the census within the province on the lines laid down by the Government of India. The draft instructions and the form of schedule finally decided on were submitted to the Government of India for approval on the 21st May^b, and on the same date a circular was issued to Commissioners, accompanied by copies of the schedule^c and of the rules for the guidance of enumerators, with orders at once to set about preparation for the census in the manner therein prescribed. This circular, which was the groundwork of all subsequent arrangements^d, is printed in the appendix, but before proceeding to a detailed account of the actual work, the plan laid down will be briefly sketched.

6. As has been mentioned, the census was to be synchronous, that is to say, it was to be taken on one and the same night, or, at any rate, the enumeration was to represent as accurately as possible the state of things existing on that night. The schedules were also to be filled up by the enumerators, as had been done in 1872, and not, except in special cases, by householders themselves. It was necessary therefore that there should be a large number of enumerators, and that the work to be done by each should be well within his powers and accurately defined. The first step accordingly was to divide the country into enumerator's blocks or clusters of houses, and district officers were to effect this with the aid of the Thoogyees or revenue-collectors' population-rolls, in which are shown the names of villages, houses, and householders, consulting with subordinate officers as to details and having careful regard in parcelling out each revenue circle into blocks to the proximity or otherwise of houses and villages, and to the decision that an enumerator's block was not ordinarily to contain more than 60 houses. From 10 to 15 enumerator's blocks were to be combined into census circles and placed under the charge of a supervisor. A group of census circles formed a "charge," generally superintended by the township officer. Special arrangements had to be made to secure the enumeration of all persons not resident within the ordinary village blocks, such as the boat population, fishermen, travellers, foresters, bamboo and timber cutters, catch-boilers, and the like. The blocks and circles determined, the next step was to appoint the enumerators and supervisors who were generally to be selected, the enumerators from Kyaydaungyees or village headmen, or from village elders and others of respectability, and the supervisors from the Thoogyees or revenue-collectors, the Yazawootgoungs or circle police, the superior officers of the regular police, and, where official agency was insufficient, from among intelligent traders or other respectable non-officials. The next process was to enter in the schedules the names of the householders according to the Thoogyees' population-rolls, and issue the schedules from the district office to each enumerator, who, after receiving careful instruction in the proper method of filling in the several columns, was, on the 1st January, to begin to enter in the forms the necessary particulars

^a Appendix B (4).

^b Appendix B (5).

^c Appendix B (6).

^d Appendix B (7).

130. Subjoined is a table showing the actual number of followers of each religion in 1872 and in 1881. The figures given for 1872 under the head of Nat-worshippers include a few "others."

		Buddhists.		Nat-worship- pers.		Hindus.		Mahomedans.		Christians.	
		1872.	1881.	1872.	1881.	1872.	1881.	1872.	1881.	1872.	1881.
ARAKAN.	Akyab ..	185,266	230,046	30,153	20,186	2,655	8,812	58,263	99,548	334	1,114
	Northern Arakan ..	1,495	2,160	7,216	12,091	65	228	11	5	8	15
	Kyaukpada ..	129,702	133,782	10,323	11,042	185	229	3,920	4,246	47	54
	Saundway ..	47,660	56,458	4,941	4,888	86	124	2,121	2,509	17	31
	Total ..	3,64,023	422,396	52,633	48,207	2,991	9,393	64,315	1,06,308	401	1,214
PEGU.	Rangoon Town ..	66,294	67,131	111	34	14,108	35,871	12,067	21,169	6,165	9,741
	Hanthawaddy ..	323,434	408,016	Nil.	470	934	7,908	518	4,085	7,438	7,227
	Tharrawaddy ..	..	270,552	..	2,145	..	1,985	..	1,110	..	2,363
	Prome ..	257,463	313,261	15,198	5,819	791	978	1,122	1,795	298	484
	Total ..	..	1,058,960	..	8,468	..	16,742	..	28,159	..	19,815
IRRAWADDY.	Thonegwa ..	..	274,237	..	558	..	723	..	1,650	..	6,804
	Bassein ..	392,758	337,317	471	20,967	711	4,851	2,671	4,925	16,078	21,324
	Henzada ..	468,786	311,741	602	121	878	703	977	1,192	5,969	4,308
	Thayetmye ..	137,252	148,629	14,065	14,100	2,029	2,620	1,174	1,861	1,396	2,349
	Total ..	..	1,071,924	..	35,746	..	8,897	..	9,628	..	34,875
Total Pegu and Irrawaddy divisions.		1,555,987	2,180,884	31,247	44,214	18,951	55,639	18,529	37,787	37,344	54,690
TENASSERIM.	Moulmein Town ..	25,739	28,276	42	..	11,040	12,853	7,504	9,307	2,147	2,640
	Amherst ..	186,742	283,072	315	685	1,441	6,690	3,681	7,599	1,289	3,040
	Tavoy ..	69,363	82,187	Nil.	855	394	250	792	828	1,278	1,368
	Mergui ..	42,226	47,523	..	2,838	15	273	3,592	4,130	1,359	1,795
	Shwaygyin ..	128,006	158,149	189	9,932	291	958	423	855	676	1,250
	Toungoo ..	74,698	93,997	1,143	12,612	1,535	2,086	1,001	1,962	7,889	18,191
	Sailew ..	1,147	5,100	24,945	24,788	..	35	9	105	15	31
	Total ..	527,821	698,304	26,634	51,160	14,716	23,145	17,002	24,786	14,554	28,315
Total for the Province		2,447,831	3,251,584	110,514	143,581	36,658	88,177	90,841	168,881	52,299	84,219

Christians by sect and race (Final Form IIIA).

131. At the recent census the attempt was made to ascertain both the races and the sects to which all the Christians of the province belong. Entries in the schedules were not unfrequently erroneous or wanting, and the figures published on this subject cannot lay claim to absolute accuracy. Persons of mixed European and Eastern race generally dislike to record themselves as Eurasians, and no doubt some of this class may have been treated as European British subjects. On the other hand, the omission of the words British subject in the schedule entries may have led to the placing of some persons of pure English blood under the head of Eurasians.

132. Eleven sects are represented in the schedules including "Episcopalian," which probably means the Episcopal Church of Scotland. There are also a few unspecified.

* The entries for 1872 against Hanthawaddy, Bassein, and Henzada are the figures for the old districts of Rangoon, Bassein, and Myanong respectively.

217. The Burmese in their traditions claim for themselves a western origin and a connection with the solar races of India. It is no doubt probable that the lower part of the valley of the Ganges was formerly occupied by people speaking languages of the class sometimes called Mramma before the advent of the Aryans, but, as regards the Burmese, it seems more natural to believe, as Sir Arthur Phayre writes, that they passed from the table-lands of Central Asia round the Eastern Himalayas. A kingdom was formed at Tagoung, and thence, it is said, a portion of the people went westwards into Arakan, while the Burmese, moving southwards, founded fresh kingdoms in Prome and Toungoo, where the language is still supposed to be spoken in greater purity than elsewhere in Burma. The Burmese must have come in contact with the Talaiings perhaps a thousand years ago and obtained from them their literature and religion, as has been already mentioned.

218. The Arakanese differ but little in feature or form from the Burmese, and, though their spoken language is so dissimilar from that of the latter as to be almost unintelligible, when written it is the same in almost all respects. Judging from the fact that the people of Arakan pronounce their words as they are spelt, among other things preserving the "r," which the Burmese pronounce "y" in sound, and retaining with its natural sound the inherent vowel "a" which on the east of the Arakan Yoma is pronounced in several different ways, we may conclude that in Arakan we meet the older form of the language. Fifty-nine persons, 56 in Akyab and 3 in Kyauk-pyoo district, are returned as Rajbansis. The Arakanese call them Mrammagyee. They are of Arakanese extraction and are descended from persons who fled away a century ago to Chittagong, and there founded a village called Nawyapara. By race they are considered to be more Arakanese than Chittagonian, but in language, habits, and clothing they more resemble the Bengalis. By religion they are Buddhists. In the language table they are placed under the head *Bengali*.

219. The so-called Tavoy language is nothing more than the dialect spoken by the descendants of an Arakanese colony planted at Tavoy in early times before the Burmese had conquered the intervening Talaiings or had advanced so far to the south. Few persons, only 1,848, are recorded as speaking Tavoy, and most probably many, though speaking the dialect, gave their language as Burmese.

220. The Yaws are also a people not differing much from the Burmese either in race or language. They live on a western tributary of the Irrawaddy, about the latitude of Pagan, and have been described as the pedlars of Upper Burma. The 41 Yaws shown in the tables are probably immigrants; nine were found in the province in 1872.

221. The Yabein is almost indistinguishable from the Burmese in feature, and though they speak of a Yabein language, and Captain Forbes, in a paper on the Tibeto-Burman languages (Royal Asiatic Society), quotes the names of their numerals, names which differ entirely from the Burmese terms, it would seem that, even if they ever had a language of their own, it is now extinct, or become modified into a mere dialect of Burmese. The only practical distinction between the Yabein and the Burman at the present day is that the former are rearers of silkworms, an occupation seldom or never adopted by the pure Burman. Very few persons, only 486, are returned as talking Yabein. I did not feel justified in altogether refusing them a place in the final form, as Arakanese had obtained a separate column, but have classified them, as has been stated, with the Burmese.

222. The Choungthas, or "children of the stream," as this name imports, are but a part of the Arakanese nation and speak a similar language. They also profess Buddhism. Why they reside in the hills is not clear. It is variously thought that they are an advanced guard of the Arakanese, posted to check the incursions of the hill tribes, or that they are a part of the latter left behind during their descent into the plains. They are gradually leaving the hill country for cultivation in the level country of Akyab. In fact, of 2,841 Choungthas, 1,671 are found in the Akyab district, and of these many have reached the plains. In 1872 there were 9,684 of this class.

of whom only 75 in 1,000 are females. The proportion of women arriving from Upper Burma is considerably larger. There are 372 females and 622 males.

245. The next point to be observed is the composition of the district populations in British Burma. The following table illustrates the subject by means of a few of the districts taken at random.

Statement showing for certain districts the proportion per cent. of their respective populations born in the different districts or countries mentioned in the first column.

Birthplace.	NAME OF DISTRICTS.							
	Akyab.	Kyaukpoo.	Rangoon town.	Hanthawaddy.	Thonegwa.	Henzada.	Amherst.	Tavoy.
Akyab ...	76.39	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Amherst ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	81.60	...
Bassein ...	...	...	...	...	2.04	2.06	...	...
Hanthawaddy ...	...	...	...	68.15	1.02	...	...	...
Henzada ...	...	...	...	...	...	81.50	...	...
Kyaukpoo ...	8.88	94.88	...	...	...	...	...	...
Moulmein Town ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6.38	...
Prome ...	...	...	...	5.8	1.29	1.41	...	...
Rangoon Town ...	...	...	86.41	5.81	2.87	...	...	...
Shwaygyin ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.45	...
Tavoy ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	97.77
Tharrawaddy ...	...	...	...	5.8	...	1.60	...	...
Thayetmyo ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Thonegwa ...	...	...	...	...	70.60	5.1	...	...
Bengal ...	18.64	...	8.92	92	41	...	1.81	...
Malras ...	49	...	28.88	1.15	...	...	1.84	...
Shan States and Siam ...	02	...	...	1.00	...	...	2.04	...
China ...	...	...	2.42	85	...	...	40	...
Upper Burma ...	83	2.20	9.64	19.02	17.49	10.93	2.16	...
England ...	...	...	75	...	...	...	...	...

NOTE.—This table has to be read by vertical columns. If the fractional parts of the district population born in each district or province were entered, the total of each column would be 100.00. To have entered all minute fractions would, however, have destroyed the clearness of the statement without adding to its use as an illustration of the distribution according to birthplace of the inhabitants of districts.

246. It will be noticed in the above statement that 76 per cent. of the resident population of Akyab are natives of the district, while 18.6, chiefly Chittagonians, are from Bengal. Immigrants from Upper Burma are very few in number. Pegu, with its abundance of uncultivated fertile land, has a greater attraction for the latter people, who would with difficulty understand their own language as spoken by the Arakanese. Kyaukpoo, though boasting the possession of a partially developed earth-oil industry, is not an attractive field of labour. Indeed, at the time of the census, three per cent. of the natives of the district were seeking a livelihood in Akyab district. Rangoon town illustrates a totally different state of things. Only 36 per cent. of the persons enumerated there in February were natives of the town. The latter, as will be seen a little further on, migrate largely to other parts of the country, and few who are born elsewhere in the province care to make Rangoon their home. The natives of India living in the town are more numerous than the natives of Rangoon itself. Probably of few even among Eastern cities can it be said that 64 per cent. of the inhabitants were born outside their limits. Of the agricultural districts appearing in the above table, Hanthawaddy possesses the largest proportion of foreigners, drawn thither by abundance of remunerative labour and plentiful supplies of land. Nineteen persons in every hundred of the population, or 81,841 out of 427,720 are from Upper Burma, nearly 6 per cent. are persons who were born in Rangoon, and over 2 per cent. are Natives of India. In Henzada and Thonegwa also there are large numbers of Upper Burmans, the figures being 84,769 and 49,694 respectively. The district of Tavoy is at present the least attractive of all to immigrants. Only a little over two persons in 100 of the population were born out of the district; yet Tavoy is said to offer a fine field to the coffee or tea-planter. Capital is as yet not forth-

