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1885-86, 1886-87, 1887-88

PUNJAB STAMP REPORT,
1885 -1888 ..

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85-86



REPORT
ON THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE STAMP DEPARTMENT
OF THE
PUNJAB AND ITS DEPENDENCIES,

For the years
1885-86—1886-87 and 1887-88.

Published by Authority.

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1888.

READ—

- (1). The report by the Superintendent of Stamps, Punjab, on the Administration of the Stamp Department in the year 1887-88.
- (2). The Financial Commissioner's remarks on the same contained in his Secretary's letter No. 230 C., dated 14th August 1888.

THIS Report with the Review of the Financial Commissioner should have reached the Government Office on the 10th July, but was not received there till the 18th of August 1888. The Report, without the prescribed statements, was submitted in manuscript to the Financial Commissioner on or before the 11th of August 1888, and the complete printed copy seems to have been delayed a day or two after that date. It is understood that the late date on which the report reached the Financial Commissioner is due to delay in Press; and, as the delay was considerable, the Lieutenant-Governor requests that it may now be explained. His Honor would also wish that the explanations which the Deputy Commissioners of Simla and Dera Gházi Khan have been called upon to submit in regard to the absence of any report at all from those districts may be forwarded to Government for perusal.

2. The system of triennial reports having been extended to the Stamp Department with effect from 1885-86, the Report for the year under review is a complete one and contains a retrospect of the past three years.

3. During this period the gross and net revenue from Stamps, other than Postage and Telegraph Stamps, rose respectively from Rs. 33,65,952 and Rs. 30,68,136 realized in 1884-85 to Rs. 37,00,301 and Rs. 33,78,160 collected in 1887-88. The receipts of the year 1885-86 were, indeed, about Rs. 50,000 less than those of the preceding twelve months, but this decrease was only temporary, and the revenue obtained in each of the two following years was respectively Rs. 1,08,269 and Rs. 2,05,903 (gross) and Rs. 82,412 and Rs. 2,05,877 (net) higher than that of any previous year. As the Superintendent has stated, the Punjab Government had occasion in 1887 to make a special examination of the accounts of the Stamp Revenue of the Province for the 15 years ending with 1886-87 for the purpose of ascertaining whether the receipts under this head had increased commensurately with the development of the judicial system, the spread of education, and the expansion of trade and commerce in the Province during the same period. The results of that enquiry, which are reproduced in the present Report, appeared to the Lieutenant-Governor to be eminently satisfactory from the fiscal point of view; and His Honor was glad to be able to inform the Government of India that considering the backwardness of parts of the Province and the comparatively short period it has been as a whole under British rule, the revenue had, in his opinion, shown at least as much, if not more, elasticity than might have been expected. These remarks are corroborated by the experience of the year 1887-88, during which, as may be gathered from the comparison made above, the tendency of the revenue to increase was fully maintained, and the net collections were nearly two lakhs of rupees in excess of the highest amount ever realized before.

4. Turning to details, the Lieutenant-Governor observes that, whereas the revenue from Court Fees Stamps was higher than that of the previous year by only Rs. 56,077, the increase under the head of Non-Judicial Stamps amounted to Rs. 1,38,256. Indeed, the sale proceeds of Court Fees Stamps are not now much higher than they were six or seven years ago, when the receipts rose rapidly from Rs. 20,63,997 to Rs. 22,14,544 in 1880-81, and further to Rs. 23,32,694 in 1881-82. The realizations have since been as follows, and the Lieutenant-Governor

is disposed to agree with the Superintendent that "any great expansion in the future in the sale of Court Fees Stamps" is improbable:—

			Rs.
1882-83	...	...	22,37,496
1883-84	...	...	23,41,442
1884-85	...	...	23,52,744
1885-86	...	...	22,41,759
1886-87	...	...	23,27,538
1887-88	...	...	23,83,615

The increase in 1887-88 occurred chiefly in Siálkot, Gujránwála, Dera Ismail Khan, Amritsar, Jullundur and Gurdáspur, and is attributed by the Deputy Commissioners either to increased litigation or to the revised rules for the service of processes prescribed in the Chief Court's Circular No. 5 of 1887. In Lahore, on the other hand, there was a large decrease (Rs. 8,664) due, according to the Deputy Commissioner, to the fact "that licenses to legal practitioners are now granted on applications drawn up on papers on which stamps are affixed by the Superintendent of Stamps, Punjab, instead of, as heretofore, on applications bearing Court Fees Stamps." The Lieutenant-Governor agrees with the Superintendent and the Financial Commissioner that this explanation hardly seems to account for such a large reduction in the receipts, and would wish that a further report should be submitted on the subject.

5. The expansion under the head Non-Judicial Stamps has been greater. Ten years ago, that is to say in 1877-78, the sales of these stamps amounted to Rs. 7,79,563, or nearly two lakhs more than the receipts of 1872-73. In 1880-81 they rose to Rs. 9,98,601, or two lakhs higher still, and a further increase of Rs. 48,000 occurred in 1885-86. The average rate of progress has since been Rs. 1,10,000 per annum, the totals for the three years ending with 1887-88 being Rs. 10,46,270, Rs. 11,31,468 and Rs. 12,69,724.

By far the greatest portion of this revenue is of course derived from the ordinary impressed sheets. The receipts from these amounted in the year under report to more than 88 per cent. of the income from Non-Judicial Stamps and exceeded the receipts of 1885-86 and 1886-87 by nearly Rs. 2,15,000 and Rs. 1,39,000 respectively. In only three districts, *viz.*, Hissar, Simla and Jhang, was there any decrease as compared with the previous year, and even in these the falling off was insignificant.

The sales of Impressed Hundi Stamps aggregated Rs. 51,455 against Rs. 51,030, and Adhesive "one anna" or "Receipt" Stamps brought in Rs. 89,644 as compared with Rs. 88,233. "Foreign Bill," "Share Transfer" and "Notarial" Stamps collectively yielded Rs. 9,586, or Rs. 2,297 more than in the previous year.

6. It is not to be expected perhaps that the revenue from Non-Judicial Stamps, and more particularly from the ordinary impressed sheets, will continue much longer to advance at the rate at which it has progressed in the past; and the possibility of its even decreasing must not be overlooked in view of the experience of the past, which is conveniently tabulated in the diagram attached to the present report. Nevertheless, the Lieutenant-Governor thinks that the experience of the past 10 years would seem to show that the receipts are likely to remain at about the figure attained in 1887-88, if they do not rise above it. In so far as increase may be due to indebtedness in the agricultural classes it is no doubt to be regretted. But the Lieutenant-Governor inclines to the view that the progress made by the revenue in the past is due also in great measure to the growing trade and commerce, and consequently wealth, of the Province, and His Honor assumes that it was to the prosperity indicated by these conditions that the Superintendent referred when, notwithstanding his admission

of the existence of some distress amongst the cultivating classes, he attributed the increase of the Stamp Revenue in 1887-88 to a "general advancement of the Province in material prosperity."

7. The Miscellaneous Stamp Revenue of the year amounted to Rs. 37,052, or Rs. 8,694 and Rs. 11,725 more than in 1886-87 and 1885-86 respectively. The principal item is "Stamp duties taken in cash," including the duty on instruments impressed in the Superintendent's Office.

8. The subjects of stamp vend and discount dealt with in paragraph 12 of the Report have quite recently engaged the special attention of the Local Government in connection with an enquiry as to the possibility of increasing the Provincial Revenues. The conclusions arrived at by the Lieutenant-Governor on that occasion are stated in the following extract from a letter to the Government of India in the Financial Department, No. 185 S., dated 5th July 1888, and further discussion of the subject is here unnecessary:—

"2. I am now directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to submit, for the information of the Government of India, a copy of the correspondence noted on the margin, and to offer the following observations touching the questions noted below which have been fully discussed in the correspondence herewith submitted:—

"(1) What has prevented the successful working of the Rules of 1883 for the sale of stamps by Sub-Postmasters and Patwáris?

"(2) Can the payment of discount on the sale of Court Fee Stamps be discontinued?

"(3) Can the rates of discount at present allowed on other stamps be reduced? and

"(4) Can the number of stamp vendors be increased with a view to improving the Stamp Revenue?

"3. With regard to the first point, it will be noticed that it is reported that the scheme for licensing Patwáris has nowhere been successful; while in the case of Sub-Postmasters failure is said to have been the rule, and even moderate success the exception.

"The failure is ascribed to the following causes:—

"(a) That Sub-Postmasters and Patwáris have heavy duties of their own to perform, whereas the non-official vendor has more time to devote to the business, and is always ready to attend to customers. Again, the Patwári is constantly travelling about in his circle, and is not always readily found, while the ordinary vendor is generally in his shop waiting for purchasers;

"(b) that a person wishing to have a deed of any sort drawn up usually goes to the tahsil to ascertain what the proper stamp may be, and in this case he naturally buys of the *ex-officio* vendor at the tahsil. If, however, he finds it unnecessary to make any such enquiry, he generally goes for his stamp paper to a non-official vendor, who can also write the deed for him, and not to a Sub-Postmaster or to a Patwári, who is forbidden, under Rule 12 of the Rules for Patwáris and Kánúngs under the Land Revenue Act, to write, witness or attest deeds;

"(c) that the rates of discount are inadequate to attract this class of vendors; and

"(d) that the Rules of 1883 have perhaps not in all cases been made well known to Sub-Postmasters and Patwáris.

"With reference to the explanation given under (d), the Postmaster-General, Punjab, was asked whether the conditions on which Sub-Postmasters could become stamp vendors had been made known to them, and whether any further measures could be usefully adopted to develop the agency of his department for the purpose of selling stamps. Mr. Thomson has reported that he does not think there are many Sub-Postmasters ignorant of the fact that they may become licensed vendors of certain kinds of stamps, as information on the subject has been duly circulated. The real reason, he remarks, why Sub-Postmasters are not eager in the matter is that the trouble is great and the remuneration small.

"In view of the opinions expressed by the Financial Commissioner, and the note recorded by the Hon'ble Colonel Wace before his departure on furlough, Sir James Lyall is disposed to think that the policy of employing Patwáris as stamp vendors is of doubtful utility, and considers that no good results would be obtained by attempting to push this agency any further.

"With regard to the view that the sale of stamps by Postmasters might be promoted by increasing the rate of discount at present admissible (*viz.*, 2 per cent.) the Lieutenant-Governor desires me to say that he agrees with the Superintendent of Stamps that no advantage would be derived by adopting such a course, and that the existing concessions are as much as can be allowed for the sale of ordinary stamp paper.

"4. With regard to the second question, whether the discount on the sale of Court Fee Stamps can be discontinued, I am to say that the Lieutenant-Governor is disposed to agree in the views expressed by the Financial Commissioner and the Superintendent of Stamps that, so far as this Province is concerned, the abolition of discount would involve increased expenditure in the shape of additional pay to Treasurers and the employment of salaried vendors which would absorb the whole, or nearly the whole, of the savings made. Moreover, vendors on a fixed scale of pay would in all probability take little or no interest in promoting sales; whereas licensed vendors, whose earnings depend upon their sales, have a direct interest in fostering the vend and in meeting the convenience of the people.

"5. With reference to the next point for consideration, *viz.*, whether the rates of discount at present granted on the sale of other stamps cannot be reduced, I am to invite a reference to paragraph 9 of the memorandum by the Superintendent of Stamps, submitted to the Supreme Government with this office letter No. 330 S., dated the 10th October 1887, and to say that, looking to the fact that the sum earned by each vendor during 1886-87 was put down on an average at about one anna per diem, or less than Rs. 2 a month, and that any reduction in the rates of discount must therefore necessarily result in the renunciation of a great number of licenses, the Lieutenant-Governor considers that the rates of discount are not capable of reduction without danger to the Stamp Revenue of the Province.

"6. Lastly, with regard to the question whether the number of Stamp vendors cannot be increased with a view to improvement in the Stamp Revenue, I am directed to say that His Honor accepts the conclusions of the Financial Commissioner and Superintendent of Stamps that the number of vendors, exclusive of Patwáris and Sub-Postmasters, is quite sufficient for the reasonable convenience and requirements of the public, and that any large increase to the present number would, like any decrease in the existing rates of discount, reduce the earnings of vendors to such an extent that it would not pay them to continue to sell, and that a decline of the income from stamps would probably result from the surrender of a number of licenses."

9. The expenditure connected with Stamps calls for little remark. Naturally, with an increase of revenue a larger amount had to be paid as discount to stamp vendors. The cost of the Superintendent's Office was about Rs. 1,000 higher than in the previous year, and the miscellaneous charges increased by Rs. 1,701. The Report shows a small decrease in refunds and also in the charge for process-serving establishments; but according to the Finance Accounts of the year there was a slight increase (about Rs. 1,000) in the cost of process-servers. The suggestion of the Superintendent that the last mentioned item should not be shown as a charge against the Stamp Department in future annual reports should be submitted separately for the Lieutenant-Governor's orders. The question is not one which can be conveniently disposed of in reviewing an annual report.

10. A satisfactory decrease is observable in the number of offences against the Stamp Law, only 90 cases being reported against 140 in 1886-87. The Superintendent's attention should be drawn to the numerous typographical errors in the paragraph (13) of his Report in which this subject is treated.

11. The Lieutenant-Governor observes that whereas the sales of Postage (including Service Postage) Stamps have increased steadily year by year from Rs. 6,82,794 in 1882-83 to Rs. 10,63,626 in 1887-88, the demand for Telegraph

Stamps has fluctuated considerably and appears, on the whole, to be decreasing, as the following figures show :—

			Rs.
1882-83	...	...	4,16,627
1883-84	...	...	2,98,638
1884-85	...	...	3,31,774
1885-86	...	...	5,55,402
1886-87	...	...	2,43,494
1887-88	...	...	2,15,785

These fluctuations are probably due to the fact that the demand for Telegraph Stamps for State messages depends to a great extent on the character of public events.

12. The statistics of revenue and expenditure dealt with in the Report and in the above paragraphs have as usual been compared with the Finance Accounts submitted by the Accountant-General. In respect to revenue the two records practically agree, the net result of the comparison after making allowance for differences of classification being an excess of only Rs. 119 in the accounts. The accounts practically agree with the Report in respect to discount charges also, but under the heads "Refunds," "Miscellaneous" and "Processing Establishment" there are deficiencies in the latter of Rs. 666, Rs. 1,555 and Rs. 5,274 respectively, while the cost of the Superintendent's Office is Rs. 741 less in the former. The Superintendent has already been requested to see that future Reports are compared with the accounts and that all differences between the two are reconciled or explained.

13. The present report is a good one and, in His Honor's opinion, bears further testimony to the excellent administration of the Department by the present Superintendent, Mr. Trotter, under the supervision of the Financial Commissioner. Sir James Lyall has already communicated this opinion to the Government of India; and as the report for the past year is probably the last which will be submitted by Mr. Trotter, the Lieutenant-Governor desires to place finally on record the appreciation in which Mr. Trotter's services have been held by his predecessors, Sir Robert Egerton and Sir Charles Aitchison, and by himself. Mr. Trotter assumed charge of the Department in August 1877, and during his tenure of office the income derived from Judicial and Non-Judicial Stamps has increased by 31 per cent. and 103 per cent. respectively. Mr. Trotter's work as Superintendent of Stamps has been marked by extreme care and excellent judgment, and the republication of the Stamp Manual, which the Superintendent states is in press, will form a fitting close to an able administration of eleven years' duration.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of this Review, together with a copy of the Report, be forwarded to the Government of India in the Financial Department, and that a copy of the Review be forwarded to the Secretary to the Financial Commissioner for communication to the Superintendent of Stamps; also that the Review be published in the *Punjab Government Gazette*.

By order of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor,

H. C. FANSHAWE,

Offg. Junior Secretary to Government, Punjab.

From—D. C. JOHNSTONE, Esquire, Offg. Junior Secretary to Financial Commissioner, Punjab,
To—The Offg. Junior Secretary to Government, Punjab.

I AM directed to submit the Report on the Administration of the Stamp Department in this Province for the year 1887-88. In accordance with paragraph 2 of Secretary to Government's letter No. 407 S. of 10th September 1886, the Reports for 1885-86 and 1886-87 were brief, and the present is a detailed Report dealing more or less fully with the figures of the past three years.

2. The following table compares, under the heads "Judicial" and "Non-Judicial," the gross receipts, the charges, and the net receipts for the three years under report :—

YEAR.	"JUDICIAL."			"NON-JUDICIAL."			TOTAL.		
	Receipts.	Charges.	Net receipts.	Receipts.	Charges.	Net receipts.	Receipts.	Charges.	Net receipts.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1885-86	22,47,657	2,46,159	20,01,498	10,70,113	53,004	10,17,109	33,17,770	2,99,163	30,18,607
1886-87	23,34,889	2,65,129	20,69,760	11,59,509	56,986	11,02,503	34,94,398	3,22,115	31,72,283
1887-88	23,94,487	2,53,968	21,40,519	13,05,814	68,173	12,37,641	37,00,301	3,22,141	33,78,160

The figures for "Charges" will not agree with the Accountant-General's figures. The reason is given in this office letter No. 505 of 14th July 1888 and the copy of a letter from Mr. Trotter submitted with it. But, taking the figures as they stand, Mr. Elsmie remarks with satisfaction that an increase of $11\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in gross receipts, accompanied by an increase of only $7\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. in total charges, seems to imply not only economical management, but also that the Stamp revenue of the Province possesses a *real* and not inconsiderable elasticity.

3. It will be seen that Mr. Trotter has been at some pains to vindicate the management of the Department of which he is the head, both by instituting comparisons with other Provinces and by setting forth figures showing the rate at which the Stamp revenue of this Province has increased during the last 15 years. It does not appear necessary to discuss these matters in this place, as they have already been commented upon by Financial Commissioner in my letter No. 574 of 25th July 1887, forwarding copy of a memorandum drawn up by Mr. Trotter at the request of Government. Mr. Elsmie therefore, I am to say, need only express his concurrence with the Superintendent of Stamps in the opinion that at present, from a financial point of view, the "Punjab Stamp revenue is in a thoroughly sound and reliable condition." Whether it is a matter of congratulation that a source of revenue which depends chiefly on the amount of litigation carried on in the Province and on the number of written obligations of indebtedness executed by its inhabitants should continue to increase is a question which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in an annual report; but it may reasonably be expected that unless the wealth of country continues to increase very materially, the present rate of progress of the Stamp revenue can hardly be maintained for any great length of time.

4. With regard to the statistics of sales of court fee stamps in the past and the prospects for the future, Mr. Elsmie agrees with the Superintendent of Stamps that future increase in the revenue from this head will probably be gradual, and he is clear that further advances by leaps and bounds can hardly be wished for.

5. The causes assigned by Deputy Commissioners for increase or decrease, as the case may be, of revenue from court-fee stamps do not appear to Financial Commissioner to be on the whole sufficient; and the Financial Commissioner concurs in Mr. Trotter's remarks as to the inadequacy of the explanation offered for the decrease in the Lahore District, and as to the apparently exaggerated importance attached to the effect of the new Talabana Rules issued by the Chief Court in 1887. I am to intimate that the Deputy Commissioners of Simla and Dera Gházi Khan will be called upon to explain their failure to furnish the necessary reports for their respective districts.

6. As to recoveries in pauper cases, treated of by Mr. Trotter in the 6th paragraph of his Report, the Financial Commissioner thinks that the figures given show reason to believe that on the whole the interests of Government in most districts are being more and more carefully watched each year. The unadjusted balance at the end of 1884-85 was considerably in excess of the balance at the end of 1887-88. The realizations during the three years under report have proceeded at a constantly accelerated rate, the figure for 1887-88 being more than double that for 1885-86, and about 40 per cent. above that for 1886-87; and in the outstandings struck off as irrecoverable there has been even a more marked improvement.

7. In his seventh and eighth paragraphs, the Superintendent of Stamps alludes to the increased sales of non-judicial, and more especially of one-anna receipt, stamps. The last-named is obviously a matter for satisfaction, as it cannot be doubted that the comparatively small income from this source is more or less due to evasions of the law which requires the use of these labels in a great number of ordinary transactions. On the subject of the employment of village postmasters and patwáris as stamp-vendors the Financial Commissioner has recently reported (*vide* this office No. 339 of 2nd May 1888) on the comparative want of success that has attended the step, and has put Government in possession of his views. It appears that there was an increase in the number of patwári vendors in 1887-88; but even now they number less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per district. The reasons for the decline in sales of *hundi* stamps are probably correctly represented by Mr. Trotter, but there would appear to be some inconsistency in his remark that he prefers to believe that the large advance of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the sales of "general" impressed sheets during a year in which he admits that "the harvests were below the average in many parts of the Province," and that this "no doubt led to some distress amongst the cultivating classes and necessitated their borrowing money and executing bonds," is "rather indicative of a general advancement of the Province in *material prosperity*." In an agricultural country like India bad harvests in many parts of a Province can hardly consist with general advancement of material prosperity.

8. In his paragraph 11, Mr. Trotter asks for permission to exclude in future in his Annual Reports the item of cost of process-serving establishments. It is not known in this office precisely on what grounds it was directed that the item in question should be included in the Annual Stamp Reports; but *prima facie* there appears to the Financial Commissioner no sufficient reason for its inclusion. Apparently no argument can be urged in favour of the cost of process-serving establishment being taken as a set-off against Stamp Revenue, which would not equally make it necessary to treat in a similar way the total cost of the judicial administration.

9. In conclusion, I am to say that Mr. Elsmie is satisfied that the Stamp Department has been very efficiently managed by Mr. Trotter during the year under report.

REPORT

ON THE

ADMINISTRATION OF THE STAMP DEPARTMENT

OF THE

PUNJAB AND ITS DEPENDENCIES,

For the years 1885-86, 1886-87, and 1887-88.

1. *Introduction.*—In the Financial Commissioner's letter No. 6656 of the 27th September 1886, I was instructed to submit in future (commencing with the present year) a complete stamp report only once in three years; in other years the usual returns were to be accompanied merely by a brief note for incorporation in the Provincial Administration Report. The present paper therefore deals with the statistics of the three past years, but more especially with those of 1887-88, the figures of the two preceding years having already been briefly reviewed in the notes which accompanied the returns for those years. The usual tabular statements* giving the details of each district for the period under review, are annexed.

* A. Statement showing receipts, charges and other particulars.
B. Statement showing collections and balances in pauper cases.

2. *Summary of Receipts and Charges.*—The following table summarizes, in the usual manner, the principal heads of receipt and charge:—

		1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.
RECEIPTS.				
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
JUDICIAL	{ Sale of stamps ... Recoveries in pauper suits ... Miscellaneous ...	22,41,759	23,27,538	23,83,615
		4,414	7,034	9,910
		1,484	317	962
	Total	22,47,657	23,34,889	23,94,487
NON-JUDICIAL	{ Sale of stamps ... Stamp duties taken in cash ... Penalties ... Miscellaneous ...	10,46,270	11,31,468	12,69,724
		12,053	19,111	26,593
		10,848	8,594	8,977
		942	336	520
Total	10,70,113	11,59,509	13,05,814	
TOTAL RECEIPTS		33,17,770	34,94,398	37,00,301
CHARGES.				
JUDICIAL	{ Discount on sales ... Refunds ... Process-serving establishment ... Miscellaneous ... Office of Superintendent, Stamps, Punjab, (share of) ...	31,478	32,572	33,404
		22,488	28,315	19,721
		1,80,275	1,92,538	1,88,332
		5,622	5,390	5,737
		6,296	6,314	6,774
Total	2,46,159	2,65,129	2,53,968	
NON-JUDICIAL	{ Discount on sales ... Refunds ... Miscellaneous ... Office of Superintendent, Stamps, Punjab, (share of) ...	40,422	43,667	48,719
		6,122	6,844	11,086
		3,522	3,406	4,760
		2,938	3,069	3,608
		Total	53,004	56,986	68,173
TOTAL CHARGES		2,99,163	3,22,115	3,22,141
NET REVENUE.				
	Judicial	20,01,498	20,69,760	21,40,519
	Non-Judicial...	10,17,109	11,02,523	12,37,641
TOTAL NET REVENUE		30,18,607	31,72,283	33,78,160

The above table shows that the period under review was financially successful. The revenue from judicial stamps rose from Rs. 22,47,657 in 1885-86 to Rs. 23,34,889 in 1886-87, or nearly 4 per cent., and again from the latter amount to Rs. 23,94,487 in 1887-88 or about 2½ per cent. Under the head non-judicial the results are still more favorable, the increase being from Rs. 10,70,113 in 1885-86 to Rs. 11,59,509 in 1886-87, or 8½ per cent., and in 1887-88 to Rs. 13,05,814 or 12½ per cent. Taking the revenue in gross, the income rose from Rs. 33,17,770 in 1885-86 to Rs. 34,94,398 in 1886-87, and to Rs. 37,00,301 in 1887-88, equivalent in the former case to an increase of 5½, and in the latter of nearly 6 per cent. It is to be added that the receipts under the heads of both judicial and non-judicial stamp revenue were higher in the year which has just closed than had ever before been attained in the Punjab.

3. *Retrospect of Stamp Revenue for 15 years.*—Last year, in consequence of certain strictures by the Government of India on the supposed maladministration of the Punjab Stamp Department, as indicated by the revenue derived, I submitted, in obedience to the orders of the Honorable the Lieutenant-Governor, a special report reviewing the progress of the stamp revenue for 15 years. The conclusions arrived at on that report have not yet been communicated to me, but the statistics then collected, supplemented by those of the year which has since passed, may be utilized for insertion in this place for the purpose of illustrating the rapid growth, especially of late years, of this branch of the Punjab revenues. I start with the year 1872-73, *i.e.*, the year preceding that in which the office of Superintendent of Stamps was created in this Province, and then taking the 15 years following, grouped in triennial periods, we get the following results:—

				Judicial.	Non-Judicial.	Total.
				Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
	1872-73	...	...	17,08,294	5,94,221	23,02,515
ANNUAL AVERAGE	{	1873-74 to 1875-76	...	17,81,081	6,32,029	24,13,110
		1876-77 to 1878-79	...	19,25,529	7,47,465	26,72,994
		1879-80 to 1881-82	...	22,10,127	9,88,180	31,98,307
		1882-83 to 1884-85	...	23,18,389	10,12,219	33,30,608
		1885-86 to 1887-88	...	23,25,677	11,78,479	35,04,156
		1887-88	23,94,487	13,05,814	37,00,301
Percentage of increase in 15 years				40.16	119.75	60.70

The same results are illustrated in another way in the diagram annexed to this report, showing the curve of progress, from year to year, of the stamp revenue, both judicial and non-judicial, from 1872-73 to 1887-88.

I think the results above brought out conclusively show that the Punjab stamp revenue is in a thoroughly sound and reliable condition. There are probably few branches of the public revenues that have expanded so much within the same time.

4. *Comparison with other Provinces.*—The Government of India also made comparisons, unfavourable to the Punjab, with the stamp revenues of other Provinces; whereupon, in the report above-mentioned, I endeavoured to show, from statistics furnished by the Financial Department itself, that, using as a test the incidence of revenue to population, the Punjab was well in advance of other Provinces similarly situated. The latest published Finance and Reve-

nue Accounts of the Government of India (those for the year 1886-87), bear out the same conclusion thus :—

PROVINCE.	Population taken from Volume VI, page 44 of Hunter's Imperial Gazetteer, 2nd Edition.	STAMP REVENUE TAKEN FROM THE FINANCE AND REVENUE ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR 1886-87, PAGE 34.			PER MILLE.		
		Judicial.	Non-judicial.	Total.	Judicial.	Non-judicial.	Total.
		Rx.	Rx.	Rx.	Rx.	Rx.	Rx.
Punjab	18,850,437	2,35,462	1,13,167	3,48,629	12.49	6.00	18.49
North-Western Provinces and Oudh...	44,107,869	4,83,627	1,50,647	6,34,274	10.96	3.42	14.38
Central Provinces ...	9,838,791	1,03,852	42,604	1,46,456	10.56	4.33	14.89

5. *Sale of Court-fee Stamps.*—Returning to the period more immediately under review, the first item for consideration is the sale of judicial stamps, the income from which stood in 1884-85 at Rs. 23,52,744; in the following year it fell considerably, *viz.*, to Rs. 22,41,759, but in 1886-87 it nearly recovered itself, and in the year just closed reached Rs. 23,83,615, the highest on record. Considerable correspondence took place as to the causes of the sudden decline in the sale of court-fee stamps in 1885-86; but it is now plain that, whatever may have been those causes, they were of a temporary and accidental nature, such as may be expected to occur sometimes. A word of caution is, however, necessary here. The sale of court-fee stamps mainly depends upon the number of suits instituted in court, and of late years the institutions have increased so enormously that the Punjab is now the most litigious Province in India. Having attained this unenviable pre-eminence, a much further increase of litigation is not to be expected or desired. The Government must not, therefore, look for any great expansion in the future in the sale of court-fee stamps, but must remain content with the substantial increase of 40 *per cent.* which has taken place under this head of revenue during the last 15 years.

Comparing the sales with the number and value of suits instituted in the same manner as in previous reports, the results are as follow :—

		1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.
Sale of Stamps	Rs.	22,41,759	23,27,538	23,83,615
Suit instituted ...	Number ...	2,48,636	2,64,954	2,64,308
	Value Rs.	1,59,41,238	1,71,58,950	1,85,02,047

As was remarked by me before on more than one occasion, such comparisons are not of much value. I have no means of testing the accuracy of the statistics of litigation furnished to me by district officers; moreover, no regard is had to the court-fee stamps required in appeals and in criminal and miscellaneous cases. The results brought out are consequently very unequal, and sometimes indeed discordant. These remarks are illustrated by the above table; comparing the two first years, the increase in sales came to 3.8 *per cent.*, while the institutions increased by 6.5, and the value litigated by 7.6 *per cent.*, comparing the two last years, the increase of sales was 2.4 *per cent.*, accompanied by a slight *decrease* in the number of institutions, although their value increased by 7.8 *per cent.*

The following table shows the number of court-fee stamps of each value sold during the past three years:—

ADHESIVE.				IMPRESSED.													
Value.		NUMBER SOLD.			Value.	NUMBER SOLD.			Value.	NUMBER SOLD.			Value.	NUMBER SOLD.			
		1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.		1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.		1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.		1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.	
Rs.	As.			Rs.				Rs.				Rs.					
0	1	6,99,791	7,23,223	7,19,424	10	14,665	15,577	15,742	160	13	12	15	450	5	1	3	
0	2	17,098	13,060	12,100	15	5,946	6,320	6,801	165	12	13	11	475	8	8	7	
0	3	2,806	1,425	1,434	20	3,315	3,566	3,701	170	10	12	8	500	6	2	6	
0	4	6,55,658	6,33,310	6,40,934	25	1,477	1,537	1,489	175	20	21	15	525	4	5	2	
0	6	73,590	74,171	76,099	30	1,397	1,530	1,639	180	11	6	9	550	4	5	1	
0	8	10,71,157	10,69,899	10,77,815	35	982	1,009	1,054	185	13	12	14	575	7	...	2	
0	12	98,137	1,02,251	99,780	40	459	545	531	190	8	8	7	600	1	5	...	
1	0	94,343	92,217	93,102	45	439	471	506	195	6	11	6	625	2	1	5	
1	2	45,669	53,085	57,309	50	489	548	522	200	23	28	38	650	...	1	4	
1	8	55,504	61,556	67,417	55	137	152	139	205	7	5	3	675	2	3	1	
2	0	47,281	46,124	54,646	60	215	217	224	210	3	7	10	700	1	2	2	
3	0	39,671	46,161	49,271	65	134	138	135	215	2	5	4	725	...	4	2	
4	0	24,186	24,570	24,454	70	131	116	113	220	1	5	8	750	...	2	...	
5	0	2,564	1,074	76	75	119	136	138	225	11	10	14	775	4	3	1	
6	0	20,605	23,678	25,069	80	139	163	153	230	5	4	5	800	...	3	2	
7	0	1,964	445	128	85	110	112	122	235	3	6	2	825	...	5	...	
					90	78	92	101	240	8	4	1	850	1	3	...	
					95	68	54	79	245	1	1	5	875	2	1	...	
					100	144	141	123	250	7	4	6	900	6	2	5	
					105	25	34	41	255	1	3	3	925	...	...	...
					110	32	35	31	260	5	4	1	950	...	...	...
					115	25	25	31	265	5	3	2	975	...	...	...
					120	31	18	37	270	10	4	4	1,000	5	12	13	
					125	45	38	47	275	20	20	18					
					130	29	22	21	300	7	17	11					
					135	19	22	22	325	13	13	9					
					140	18	17	34	350	4	7	10					
					145	16	20	15	375	5	7	16					
					150	27	29	25	400	13	9	6					
					155	8	13	16	425	4	8	3					

Descending to district details, I find from Annexure A that in 1887-88 the amount realized by sale of court-fee stamps increased, as compared with the previous year, in 18 districts and decreased in 13. The districts in which the increase or decrease exceeded Rs. 3,000 are enumerated below:—

Increase.	Rs.	Decrease.	Rs.
Gurgaon	3,451	Hissar	3,792
Simla	7,015	Rohtak	3,541
Kangra	4,588	Delhi	4,799
Jullundur	8,490	Lahore	8,664
Ludhiana	3,334	Jhelum	5,447
Ferozepore	5,004	Rawalpindi	3,395
Mooltan	4,406	Hazara	4,805
Montgomery	3,819	Muzaffargarh	3,512
Amritsar	9,295		
Gurdaspur	8,416		
Sialkot	13,106		
Gujrana-wala	12,162		
Dera-Ismael Khan	10,397		

I proceed to give the explanations of these increases and decreases offered by district officers, merely premising that the Deputy Commissioners of Simla and Dera Ghazi Khan have sent in no reports at all—an omission for which there is the less excuse, now that such reports are required only every third year.

The Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon says the increase in his district “is principally due to the higher rate of court-fee stamps levied for issue of process by courts of different classes in accordance with Chief Court’s Circular No. 5 of 1887.” The Deputy Commissioners of Kangra, Jullundur and Ludhiana attribute their increased sales to the same cause. The increase in Ferozepore is said to be mainly due to the establishment of a Divisional Court in that district, and to the transfer of the Hissar District from the Delhi to the Ferozepore Civil Division. Mooltan ascribes the increase of sales “to increased litigation,” and Montgomery “to suits of larger value (though fewer in number than in the previous year) having been instituted.” So in Amritsar the increase is said to be “due to the institution of suits of high value.” Gurdaspur:—“The first point,” (*i.e.*, steady increase of sale of both judicial and non-judicial stamps) “is, I believe, due to the natural tendency of litigation to expand, and to the increase of trade, which I have observed is confined in one or two places (notably Batala) by local inspection and enquiry. Very probably increase here has its corresponding decrease elsewhere, but I can only speak of my own district. Increased trade dealings lead naturally to increased litigation, and I would point out that the following table shows increased number, but diminished value of suits. This confirms, I think, the conclusion that petty trade is on the increase here, and is a satisfactory feature of the administration, as indicating that the *land* has rest.” Sialkot:—“The increase is very much the same in both judicial and non-judicial stamps, and is to be attributed, in my opinion, to the general increase of prosperity in the district, and to a proportionate development of the litigious spirit. The harvests of the last two years have been slightly under the average, but I do not think this fact has affected the subject under report.” The Deputy Commissioner of Gujrana-wala says the increased sale of court-fee stamps “is consistent with the increase in litigation.” Dera Ismael Khan:—“It will be observed that civil litigation has increased in the year under review. This result is attributable partly to commercial activity caused by the opening of the railway, which may be regarded as a satisfactory circumstance, and partly perhaps also to the increase of the litigious spirit, which is *not* a satisfactory circumstance.”

Coming to districts in which there was a diminution in the sales of court-fee stamps, the explanations of district officers are the following. Hissar:—“The reason for this decrease is probably the good *kharif* harvests, which obviated the necessity of the agricultural community mortgaging their property to raise money, and at the same time it enabled them to pay their old debts, thus preventing money-lenders from instituting suits.” Rohtak:—“There has been

a gradual fall in the sales of court-fee stamps, for the last two years, due, 1st to those years being agriculturally unfavorable, which kept back money-lenders from suing their debtors, and 2nd to appeals of the Hissar District under Rs. 500 in value being heard at Rohtak during the whole of 1886-87, and only partially in 1887-88." Delhi:—"The decrease is stated to be attributable to the sickness which prevailed during the latter part of 1887-88." Lahore:—"The fall is chiefly due to the fact that licenses to legal practitioners are now granted on applications drawn up on papers on which stamps are affixed by the Superintendent of Stamps, Punjab, instead of as heretofore on applications bearing court-fee stamps." Jhelum:—"The decrease is due to the decrease in civil cases caused by a succession of rainless years. The money-lenders are waiting for a good harvest before realizing their debts." Rawalpindi:—"There has been a continual decrease in the number and value of suits since the close of the settlement operations. The rights of the people having then been more carefully and correctly recorded, the necessity for litigation has become less. In consequence of this there has also been a corresponding continual decrease in the sale of judicial stamps. This, however, has been fully made up for by a continual increase in the sale of non-judicial stamps. The particularly large decrease in the number of suits this year may be attributable to bad harvests in parts of the district: agriculturists had no stock of grain in hand, and so it would have been useless for money-lenders to sue for their outstandings." Hazara (as I understand him) ascribes his decrease to diminution of litigation. A similar reason is assigned in Muzaffargarh.

The only comments I have to make on the above explanations are, that some district officers have assigned perhaps too much effect to the new scale of *talabana* fees introduced in 1887; and that, as regards Lahore, the explanation offered appears quite inadequate to account for such a large diminution in the sale of court-fee stamps as Rs. 8,664.

6. *Pauper cases*.—Detailed particulars of collections of stamp duty and unrealized balances in pauper cases will be found in Appendix B. The year 1885-86 opened with an aggregate balance of Rs. 29,570; new cases were admitted in that year amounting to Rs. 12,795, in 1886-87 to Rs. 15,437, and in 1887-88 to Rs. 13,714; the realizations in the three years were Rs. 4,390, Rs. 6,974 and Rs. 9,863 respectively, and the amounts struck off as irrecoverable under the authority of Commissioners were Rs. 13,119, Rs. 5,531 and Rs. 3,180 respectively; leaving (after deducting Sheriff's commission) a balance unadjusted at the close of 1887-88 of Rs. 28,327. In six districts alone were the balances in excess of Rs. 2,000.

					Rs.
Delhi	...	...	...	...	5,976
Peshawar	...	...	...	...	2,642
Ludhiana	...	...	...	...	2,260
Umballa	...	...	...	...	2,107
Gujranwala	...	...	...	...	2,055
Sialkote	...	...	...	...	2,038

7. *Sale of Non-judicial Stamps*.—There has been a satisfactory progressive increase in the sales of every kind of non-judicial stamp during the three years under report, the last year of the period heading the receipts of any previous year, and *more than doubling* the income derived from the same source 15 years before. The figures are as follow:—

		1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Adhesive ...	One-anna or "receipt"	84,988	88,233	89,644
	Foreign Bill	5,264	5,375	5,483
	Share transfer	317	49	590
	Notarial	...	1,865	3,513
Impressed ...	Hundi	50,971	51,030	51,455
	Ordinary	9,04,730	9,84,916	11,19,039
Total		10,46,270	11,31,468	12,69,724

8. *Adhesive Stamps*.—The steady increase in the sale of one-anna or (as they are commonly called) “receipt” stamps is very satisfactory, and now reaches the high rate of Rs. 4-12 per thousand of the population. I attribute this in large measure to the authorization in 1886-87 of all Postmasters to sell stamps of this kind in the same manner as ordinary postage stamps. Sales of foreign bill stamps are almost confined to the districts of Hissar, Delhi, Lahore and Amritsar; and those of share transfer stamps to Delhi, Simla, Lahore and Rawalpindi. Notarial stamps were introduced into this Province in 1886-87 for use in stamping the attestations of powers-of-attorney by civil officers, the fees for which were formerly taken in cash.

9. *Impressed Stamps*.—The demand for hundi stamps has practically remained stationary for the past three years, the increase in the sales being very small; hundies are being gradually displaced by currency notes and post office orders, and a decline rather than an increase in the demand should be looked for, especially now that it has been ruled that hundi paper may not be used for promissory notes, or for any instruments, save hundies. The great bulk of the sales of non-judicial stamps consists, of course, of the ordinary impressed sheets, which now bring in the handsome annual revenue of upwards of 11 lakhs of rupees. The income of 1887-88 exceeded that of the previous year by 13½ per cent. All districts contributed to this increase, save Hissar, Simla and Jhang, where there was a small decrease, the largest increase occurring in the following districts:—

<i>Increase.</i>	<i>Rs.</i>
Hoshiarpur	13,374
Sialkot	13,047
Ferozepore	12,120
Jullundur	8,542
Rawalpindi	8,248
Dera Ismail Khan	7,827
Jhelum	7,067
Gurdaspur	6,621
Lahore	6,306
Bannu	6,012
Gujrat	5,517
Peshawar	5,073
Ludhiana	5,002

I proceed to extract the remarks of the Deputy Commissioners of the above districts on these increases. Hoshiarpur:—“The remarkable increase under this head may be attributed, (1) to the high prices of grain prevailing during nearly the whole year, which very likely compelled the people to take loans and to execute bonds; (2) to the enormous number of mortgags deeds executed in the last month of *Jeth*. From what I have been told, I am of opinion that, owing to the legal restrictions placed in the way of sales of lands in execution of money decrees, the bankers dealing with the agriculturists have adopted a plan by which they can get possession of their debtors' lands through the assistance of the courts, which it is nearly impossible for the debtore to get back. To gain their objects, which the agriculturists can hardly understand, they induce the zemindars against whom they hold money-decrees, by offering a further loan in cash, to mortgage their lands as collateral securities in lieu of the decrees and other debts with interest on very easy terms, varying from 4 annas to 8 annas *per cent. per mensem*, with a stipulation that, if within a certain period, the mortgage money or interest be not paid, the mortgagees will be put into possession. In the majority of cases the debtors are certainly made defaulters, and they will necessarily be deprived of their lands, which there is little hope of their ever being able to recover. It is for this reason mainly that impressed sheets were sold so largely. However, in this District bankers do not, as a general rule, lend money on book accounts, but on bonds; this may, therefore, be another ground for an increase of sale under this head.” Sialkot—see remarks quoted above in paragraph 5, which apply to both judicial and non-judicial stamps. Ferozepore attributes the increase to large loans “raised by the agriculturists on account of the bad agricultural year.” Jullundur:—“The cause of the increase.....is attributed partly to bad crops and partly to prevalence of high prices currents of edible grains and scarcity of fodder

throughout the year, on which account the *zemindars* stood (as a matter of course) in need of loans to greater extent than previously." Rawalpindi attributes the increase "to bad harvests in part of the district." Dera Ismail Khan:—"The increased sale of non-judicial stamps has been due partly, no doubt, to the commercial activity above noted, (*i.e.*, caused by the opening of the railway), but partly also, I regret to say, to the depressed state of the agricultural classes in parts of the district owing to deficient rainfall." Jhelum:—"The increase.....is due to two causes, *viz.*, (*a*) larger number of bonds having been executed or renewed by the cultivators in favor of the money-lenders, for new debts necessitated by want or old debts renewed, (*b*) the increasing distrust, on the part of civil courts of money-lenders' *bahis*, and a greater resort to bonds on money-lenders' part in consequence." Gurdaspur—see remarks in paragraph 5 above, which apply to stamps of both kinds. Lahore—The explanation given is not intelligible: "this increase is chiefly due to a greater number of documents involving high duty having been sent for impressment by the Alliance Bank, Examiner North-Western Railway, legal practitioners and others." This might explain an increase under the head of "stamp duties taken in cash" but can in no way account for an increased sale of ordinary stamped paper. Bannu:—"The increase in the receipts of non-judicial stamps is attributed to the poverty of the *zemindars* and people during the year..... owing to the failure of harvests." Gujrat:—"Probably due to a large amount of dealings of the *zemindars* with the money-lenders, and to other bonds being written due to a succession of bad harvests." Peshawar:—"Due to the larger exchange of property by sale, mortgage, gift, &c." Ludhiana:—"The increase under this head, though a satisfactory feature of the stamp revenue, may be regarded as indicating the growing state of indebtedness of the population, which renders it necessary for them to make alienations of land in favor of the money-lenders. There is no doubt an increasing tendency on the part of the money-lenders to require substantial security for their money, and the old system of long-running accounts on *bahis* is giving place to the more secure system of debts on bonds with lands hypothecated as security."

The harvests were below the average in many parts of the Province during 1887-88, and this, no doubt, led to some distress amongst the cultivating classes, and necessitated their borrowing money and executing bonds; but I do not think the number of such instruments executed was so much greater than in the previous year as to account for more than a very small proportion of the unexpected large increase of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the sale of stamped paper. I prefer to believe that this great rise is rather indicative of a general advancement of the Province in material prosperity.

10. *Miscellaneous Stamp Income.*—The miscellaneous sources of stamp income during the three years under report were the following:—

	1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Stamp duties taken in cash ...	12,053	19,111	26,593
Penalties ...	10,848	8,594	8,977
Other items ...	Judicial ...	317	962
	Non-judicial ...	942	520
Total ...	25,327	28,358	37,052

Of the above, the only item requiring notice is the first, which includes the duty paid on account of instruments and skeleton forms stamped with

labels and colored impressions in my own office. The work of my stamping press is steadily increasing, as the following figures show :—

	1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.
Documents stamped with impressed labels	5,510	10,384	9,819
Skeleton forms stamped with colored one-anna impressions ... ..	...	72,647	115,761
Stamp duty realized on above Rs.	5,168	17,643	25,953

11. *Charges.*—So much for receipts ; for the charges briefer comments will suffice. They are comprised under four main heads, *viz.*, (1) Discount on sales, (2) Refunds, (3) Process-serving establishments, and (4) Miscellaneous, including a proportionate share of the cost of my own office. The amount paid as discount to stamp vendors has necessarily varied with the sales. Refunds are regulated by legislative enactments and Government rules, and the amount refunded varies somewhat capriciously from year to year. The next item has given me considerable trouble, and has led to considerable correspondence which appears to me profitless. Process-serving establishments are not under my control, and I have no means of checking this item in the annual returns of district officers ; and in not one single instance has the amount so returned been found eventually to correspond with, or even to approximate to, that shown in the public accounts prepared by the Accountant-General. I think it was a mistake from the beginning to show the cost of these establishments as a charge against the Stamp Department in the annual reports of this office, and I should be glad to receive permission to exclude this item in all future reports. Process-serving establishments are judicial and not stamp establishments, and are shown as such in the public accounts. The charges of my own office are shown below :—

	1885-86.		1886-87		1887-88.	
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.
Salary of Superintendent ...	8,163	7 0	7,200	0 0	7,680	0 0
Office establishment ...	3,148	9 10	3,330	13 5	3,397	12 8
Contingencies ...	584	4 8	681	2 10	973	0 5
Printing and Stationery ...	860	4 8	575	15 4	1,049	12 0
Travelling and tour charges ...	762	2 0	1,008	14 ..	917	3 9
TOTAL ...	13,518	12 2	12,796	13 7	14,017	12 10

These charges have been distributed rateably in the usual manner between (1) judicial, (2) non-judicial, and (3) postage and telegraph stamps, thus :—

	Year.	Judicial.	Non-judicial.	Postage and Telegraph.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Gross sales	1885-86	22,41,759	10,46,270	15,25,843
	1886-87	23,27,538	11,31,468	12,58,376
	1887-88	23,83,615	12,69,724	12,79,411
Proportionate share	1885-86	6,296	2,938	4,285
	1886-87	6,314	3,069	3,414
	1887-88	6,774	3,608	3,636

12. *Stamp Vend.*—The number of persons licensed to sell stamps during each of the three years under report and the aggregate amount paid them as discount on their purchases are as follow :—

	Number of vendors.			Discount paid.		
	1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.	1885-86	1886-87.	1887-88.
Officials ...	189	195	193	Rs. 34,535	Rs. 35,296	Rs. 39,063
Sub-Postmasters ...	111	88	95	323	600	655
Patwaris ...	2	4	42	...	...	...
Others ...	1,618	1,633	1,687	37,044	40,343	42,405
TOTAL ...	1,920	1,920	2,017	71,902	76,239	82,123

Official vendors are district Treasurers, and their authorized agents ; they sell both judicial and non-judicial stamps, and indeed have a monopoly of the sale of the former, but are not allowed any discount on the sale of postage stamps. The discount earned by men of this class averaged rather more than Rs. 202 in 1887-88. Efforts have been continued to induce village postmasters to undertake the sale of ordinary stamped paper, but not with much success. The total number who took out licenses last year was 95, and their earnings for the year averaged less than Rs. 7. Special enquiries were instituted by Government last year as to the causes of the failure of the scheme. Village postmasters may take out licenses to sell stamps either under the ordinary rules, receiving discount, like other vendors, at 5 per cent., or under the special rules, whereby they receive an advance of stamps up to a value of Rs 50, on being licensed, and thereafter receive discount at the rate of 2 per cent. on their purchases, the stamps being sent to them from the treasuries through the post in registered parcels at the expense of the Stamp Department, and their remittances being made by money-order also at the expense of the Stamp Department ; but in neither form do postal officials come freely forward for licenses. The following remarks from the report of the Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur on this subject may be said to apply generally to the Province as a whole :—“ The failure of Sub-postmasters and Patwaris to come forward freely and take out licenses to sell non-judicial stamps formed the subject of special enquiry and report lately. The general conclusion was that Sub-postmasters seldom found it worth their while to compete with licensed vendors, while Patwaris did not care to incur the trouble of selling stamp paper while they are forbidden to write bonds or deeds. The rules are generally known.” As regards Patwaris, the special rule in respect to them relates only to the sale of one-anna adhesive labels, and has been from the first practically a dead-letter. Patwaris have their hands so full under the new revenue rules that they have no time to attend to the sale of stamps ; moreover the sanction of the Financial Commissioner is required in each case before a license can be given to a Patwari, and district officers are unwilling, under the circumstances, to apply for such sanction. And now that post masters of all grades are authorized to sell one-anna adhesive stamps freely without license, there is no longer necessity or advantage in employing the Patwari agency. Ordinary vendors of non-judicial stamps increased in number from 1,618 in 1885-86 to 1,633 in 1886-87, and to 1,687 in 1887-88, and their average earnings in each of those years were Rs. 22-14, Rs. 24-11 and Rs. 25-2, respectively. The distribution of vendors is perhaps somewhat unequal in different districts, but on the whole, I think the number now licensed is amply sufficient for the reasonable wants of the people, and for the advantage of the revenue.

13. *Frauds and Breaches of the Stamp Law.*—The number of persons punished magisterially for offenses against the stamp law in each of the years under report was—116 in 1885-86, 140 in 1886-87 and 90 in 1887-88, all save 4 in the first year by simple fine ; of the excepted 9 were punished by imprisonment and 2 by imprisonment and fine. Of other frauds the Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak reports that a petition writer was committed for refusing a

court, fee stamp abstracted from a file in the Munsiff's Court, but was acquitted by the Sessions Judge. In Kangra a village postmaster licensed to sell stamps absconded with an advance of Rs. 50 which he had received under the special rule, and a warrant has been issued for his apprehension. The Deputy Commissioner of Shahpur also brought to notice that in a file received back from the Chief Court, where it had been lying for several years in appeal, some stamps had been abstracted and replaced by washed ones that had been previously used; this case is still under enquiry. Otherwise the Department has worked smoothly during the last three years.

14. *Postage and Telegraph Stamps.*—The sales of postage stamps, both ordinary and service, have greatly increased, while those of telegraph stamps have still more remarkably fallen. The causes for these variations will doubtless be explained by the heads of those departments. The figures are :—

	1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Postage, ordinary	6,67,139	7,06,338	7,43,575
Do. service	3,03,302	3,08,544	3,20,051
Telegraph	5,55,402	2,43,494	2,15,785

15. *Stock balances.*—The value of the stock of stamps in our several depôts at the close of each of the three last years was as follows, and the balances may be taken roughly as rather more than sufficient for a year's consumption :—

	1885-86.	1886-87.	1887-88.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Judicial	29,43,675	31,17,254	29,70,085
Non-Judicial	14,50,790	14,57,033	15,91,154
Postage, ordinary	5,85,187	5,94,620	7,55,840
Do. service	2,23,342	2,59,436	2,66,302
Telegraph	5,98,156	5,05,936	5,45,499

16. *Miscellaneous Business.*—During the year 1887-88, I visited 16 districts and inspected 35 stamp depôts and 17 record offices. During the same year revised rules relating to the supply, custody and distribution of stamps, were promulgated by Government, and I was consequently enabled at length to complete the revised Stamp Manual of the Punjab, which from a variety of causes had had to be postponed from time to time for several years. This work is now in the press, and I hope will very shortly be issued.

LAHORE :

19th June 1888 } .

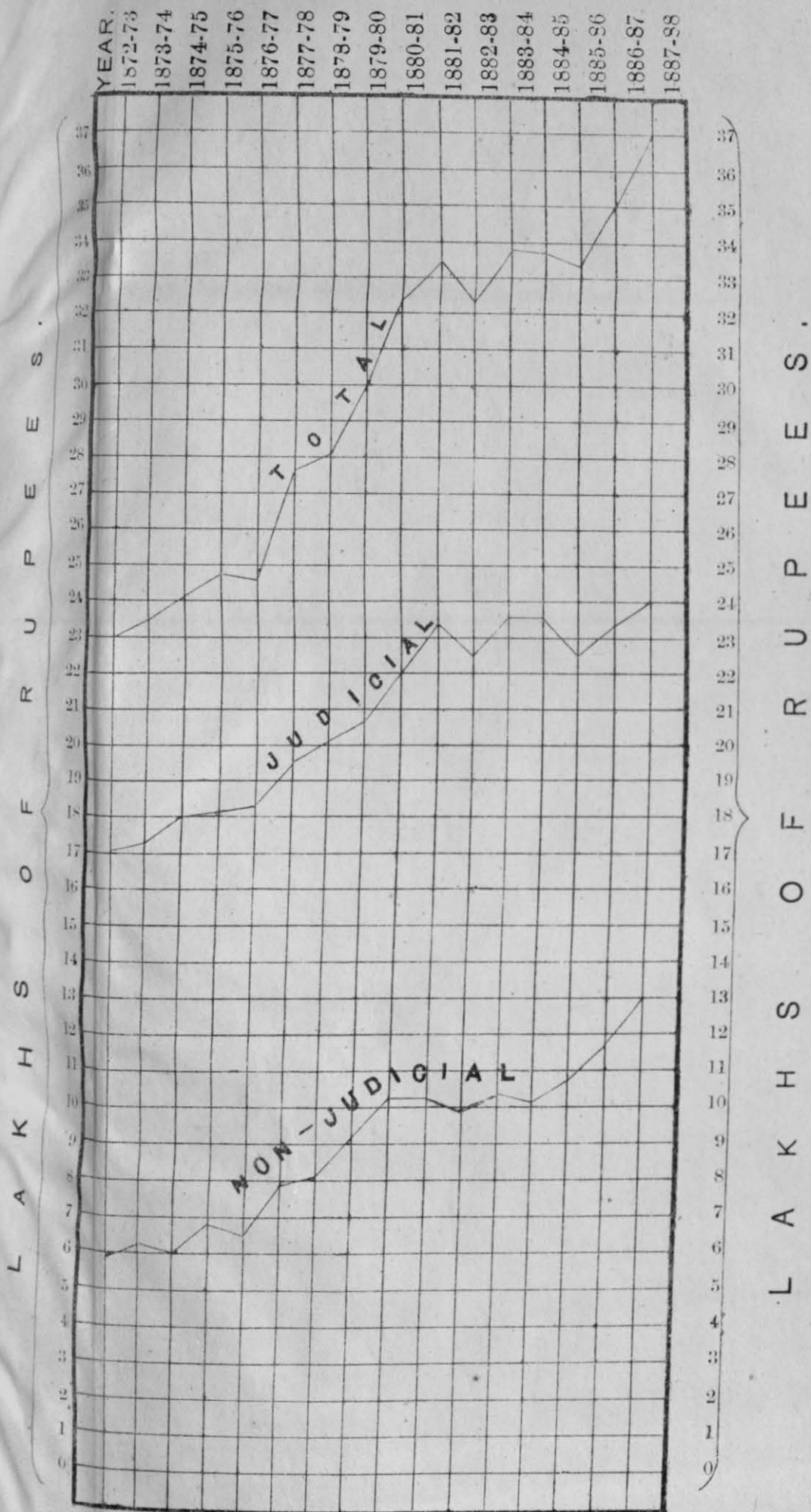
E. W. TROTTER,

Superintendent of Stamps, Punjab.

DIAGRAM.

Illustrating the Progress of the Punjab Stamp Revenue.

FROM 1872-73 TO 1887-88.



APPENDIX B.

STATEMENT OF COLLECTIONS OF STAMP DUTY ON PAUPER SUITS IN THE
PUNJAB, FOR THE OFFICIAL YEARS 1885-86, 1886-87 AND 1887-88.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DISTRICT.	Year.	Balance at the close of last year.	Balance since ascertained.	Total of columns 3 and 4.	Amount realized in the year.	Amount erased under Commissioner's sanction during the year.	Amount of Commission paid to Sheriff.	Total of columns 6 to 8.	Balance remaining due, column 5, minus column 9.
Hissar	1885-86	91	...	91	73	...	...	73	18
	1886-87	18	...	18	...	...	...	...	18
	1887-88	18	...	18	...	...	...	...	18
Rohtak	1885-86	33	236	269	36	...	...	36	233
	1886-87	233	...	233	8	...	...	8	225
	1887-88	225	19	244	19	...	...	19	225
Gurgaon	1885-86	439	...	439	73	...	1	74	365
	1886-87	365	...	365	...	228	...	228	137
	1887-88	137	...	137	...	...	...	...	137
Delhi	1885-86	4,472	1,741	6,213	59	2,855	1	2,915	3,298
	1886-87	3,298	1,469	4,767	78	...	1	79	4,688
	1887-88	4,688	2,103	6,791	815	...	...	815	5,976
Karnal	1885-86	38	116	154	56	90	...	146	8
	1886-87	8	...	8	...	...	...	...	8
	1887-88	8	...	8	...	...	...	...	8
Umballa	1885-86	947	669	1,616	620	55	...	675	941
	1886-87	941	1,573	2,514	276	...	...	276	2,238
	1887-88	2,238	522	2,760	...	653	...	653	2,107
Simla	1885-86	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1886-87	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	1887-88	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kangra	1885-86	303	319	622	235	230	5	470	152
	1886-87	152	718	870	35	...	...	35	835
	1887-88	835	435	1,270	318	245	6	569	701
Hoshiarpur	1885-86	2,577	457	3,034	309	659	...	968	2,066
	1886-87	2,066	1,021	3,087	623	171	...	794	2,293
	1887-88	2,293	300	2,593	1,087	98	...	1,185	1,408
Jullundur	1885-86	551	1,354	1,905	88	22	2	112	1,793
	1886-87	1,793	173	1,966	127	...	3	130	1,836
	1887-88	1,836	620	2,456	684	27	14	725	1,731
Ludhiana	1885-86	2,248	1,849	4,097	327	768	7	1,102	2,995
	1886-87	2,995	1,412	4,407	302	1,323	3	1,628	2,779
	1887-88	2,779	526	3,305	420	617	8	1,045	2,260
Ferozepore	1885-86	95	322	417	70	88	1	159	258
	1886-87	258	140	398	26	253	1	280	118
	1887-88	118	715	833	76	90	2	168	665
Mooltan	1885-86	...	92	92	5	...	...	5	87
	1886-87	87	277	364	162	...	...	162	202
	1887-88	202	135	337	56	...	...	56	281
Jhang	1885-86	...	8	8	...	8	...	8	...
	1886-87	...	18	18	18	...	...	18	...
	1887-88	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Montgomery	1885-86	377	87	464	7	16	...	23	441
	1886-87	441	75	516	...	41	...	41	475
	1887-88	475	...	475	6	89	...	95	380
Lahore	1885-86	4,123	204	4,327	180	3,017	...	3,197	1,130
	1886-87	1,130	1,347	2,477	919	695	...	1,614	863
	1887-88	863	497	1,360	282	...	...	282	1,078

APPENDIX B.—concluded.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DISTRICT.	Year.	Balance at the close of last year.	Balance since ascertained.	Total of columns 3 and 4.	Amount realized in the year.	Amount realized under Commissioner's sanction during the year.	Amount of Commission paid to Sheriff.	Total of columns 6 to 8.	Balance remaining due, column 5, minus column 9.
Amritsar	1885-86	589	406	995	223	36	...	259	736
	1886-87	736	148	884	229	278	...	507	377
	1887-88	377	633	1,010	373	237	...	610	400
Gurdaspur	1885-86	334	170	504	109	...	...	109	395
	1886-87	395	87	482	123	152	...	275	207
	1887-88	207	569	776	227	127	3	357	419
Sialkot	1885-86	656	386	1,042	232	...	...	232	810
	1886-87	810	923	1,733	200	347	1	548	1,185
	1887-88	1,185	2,042	3,227	917	272	...	1,189	2,038
Gujrat	1885-86	1,426	281	1,707	131	1,057	...	1,188	519
	1886-87	519	227	746	123	...	...	123	623
	1887-88	623	417	1,040	308	...	...	308	732
Gujranwala	1885-86	1,886	104	1,990	124	...	...	124	1,866
	1886-87	1,866	811	2,677	671	...	11	682	1,995
	1887-88	1,995	367	2,362	307	...	...	307	2,055
Shahpur	1885-86	13	42	55	42	...	...	42	13
	1886-87	13	814	827	89	...	...	89	738
	1887-88	738	408	1,146	217	22	...	239	907
Jhelum	1885-86	126	725	851	271	...	...	271	580
	1886-87	580	1,372	1,952	230	...	...	230	1,722
	1887-88	1,722	...	1,722	911	...	...	911	811
Rawalpindi	1885-86	550	311	861	93	624	...	717	144
	1886-87	144	206	350	22	...	...	22	328
	1887-88	328	876	1,204	768	183	...	951	233
Hazara	1885-86	62	255	317	231	...	...	231	86
	1886-87	86	25	111	67	...	...	67	44
	1887-88	44	12	56	...	...	...	...	56
Peshawar	1885-86	5,540	760	6,300	512	1,654	4	2,170	4,130
	1886-87	4,130	273	4,403	467	1,158	2	1,627	2,776
	1887-88	2,776	1,445	4,221	1,255	322	2	1,579	2,642
Kohat	1885-86	16	123	142	62	31	...	93	49
	1886-87	49	115	164	125	8	...	133	31
	1887-88	31	181	212	148	14	...	162	50
Banna	1885-86	334	1,116	1,450	109	358	2	469	981
	1886-87	981	1,924	2,905	1,702	234	34	1,970	935
	1887-88	935	236	1,171	338	163	7	508	663
Dera Ismail Khan	1885-86	230	354	584	68	65	1	134	450
	1886-87	450	66	516	83	432	1	516	...
	1887-88	...	157	157	36	...	...	36	121
Dera Ghazi Khan	1885-86	1,514	217	1,731	40	1,486	1	1,527	204
	1886-87	204	96	300	102	198	...	300	...
	1887-88	...	178	178	154	21	3	178	...
Muzaffargarh	1885-86	...	88	88	5	...	...	5	83
	1886-87	83	127	210	167	13	3	183	27
	1887-88	27	321	348	141	...	2	143	205
Total	1885-86	29,570	12,795	42,365	4,390	13,119	25	17,534	24,831
	1886-87	24,831	15,437	40,268	6,974	5,531	60	12,565	27,703
	1887-88	27,703	13,714	41,417	9,863	3,180	47	13,090	28,327



