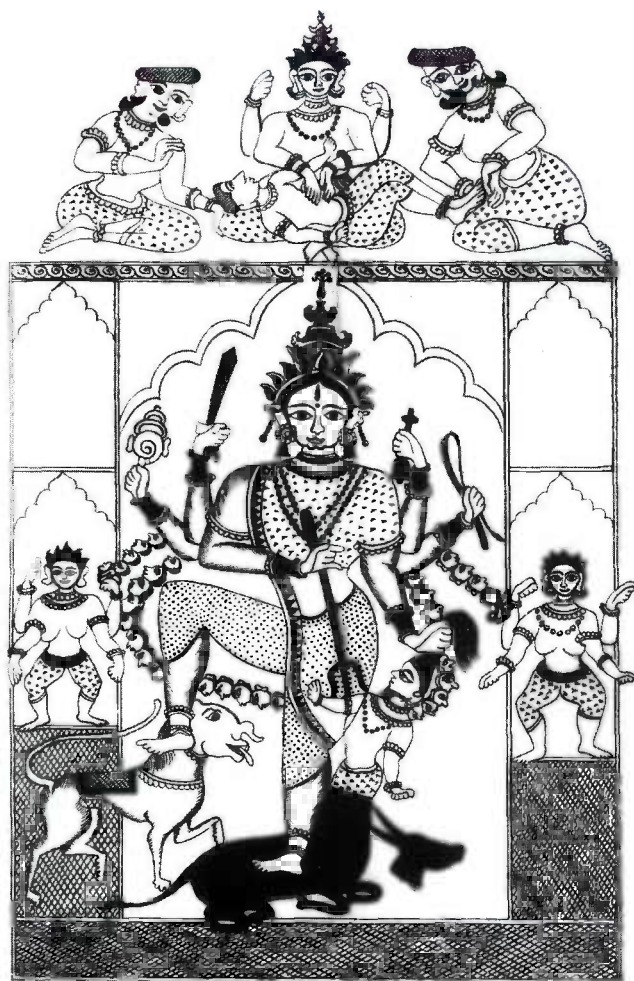


Selections from the records of the Government of India 1849-1937



- An immense storehouse of knowledge on 19th century India
- Originally printed in very limited numbers
- Detailed information on government activities at all levels
- The most complete set of *Selections* in the world

Editor: John Sims, India Office Library, London

With a new introduction by Lionel Carter, former Librarian of Cambridge University's South Asia Centre

 **IDC**
PUBLISHERS

Selections from the records of the Government of India, 1849-1937

“A remarkable and immensely valuable reference source”

In 1849 the Government of the North-Western Provinces started to publish public documents that were “calculated to gratify laudable curiosity or to stimulate to further enquiry”. Other Indian provinces soon followed this example. *The Selections from the records of the Government of India* covers a wide range of subjects, forming an immense storehouse of knowledge on 19th century India. They are of interest to a broad group of users, including historians, economists and anthropologists.

When the first ‘*Selections*’ were published they joined a considerable volume of official publishing that was already taking place. The *Selections* were particularly important because they became a regular set of papers covering the entire field of government activity in India right down to the district level. Indeed the series went beyond the Indian subcontinent as it included many documents relating to countries with which India was traditionally connected. No doubt there were particular reasons why the series developed so extensively and so rapidly. In its final years, prior to its abolition in 1858, the East India Company was not popular and the *Selections* may have been regarded as way of helping to improve its image. Then again, the Company shared the contemporary enthusiasm for collecting and collating diverse pieces of information, reflected in its creation of a Statistical Department in 1847.

History

Interestingly enough, the decision to produce the *Selections* was not the result of an order from the Company in London. Rather, it came about as a matter of administrative convenience in the North-Western Provinces. In 1849 the government there decided to print, in a uniform size, papers or parts of papers “which may appear worthy of preservation”. The documents initially chosen dated back to the early years of the 19th century and it is clear that the authorities wished to provide their officers with useful background information and precedents for their daily work. In 1851 the Government of Bengal decided to produce a similar collection of “interesting documents”, followed in early 1853 by the Government of India. The Punjab had begun a series in 1849, Bombay in 1852 and Madras in 1854.

In the early days there was clearly uncertainty as to whether some of the material collected was suitable for publication. We owe it to Lord Dalhousie (Governor-General 1848-56) for laying down the position unambiguously at the end of 1853, when he was faced with a request for issues of the *Selections* from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Dalhousie ordered that copies of all *Selections* printed should be offered for sale. “In this way,” he declared “a double purpose will be answered – information will be circulated, and the expense of publication will to some extent be recovered.”

Given the somewhat haphazard manner in which the *Selections* came into being, it is hardly surprising that the individual government’s publications do not conform to any set pattern. However, the Government of India’s *Selections* tend to concentrate on administration reports while those from Bombay are heavily biased towards settlement reports. They also include Middle Eastern material as Bombay was primarily responsible for India’s relations with the region until 1873. The Madras series includes important Dutch 18th century records while the North-Western Provinces’ *Selections* include records from the Benares residency from 1787 to 1795.

Although the Bombay series continues until 1937, it is confined to land settlement papers after 1890. Effectively the *Selections* came to an end as the First World War broke out. No reason for this cessation has been found in the India Office Records. However, it seems likely that a significant factor was a change in attitude with respect to the secrecy of government documents in the years leading up to the War.

Scope

IDC Publishers’ microfiche edition of the *Selections* comprises more than 2,000 items. The documentary forms include technical reports, administration reports of political agencies, annual reports of government departments and land settlement reports. The subject areas covered by the *Selections* are vast and a few examples taken at random might include: a report on the sanitary state of the Island of Bombay, documents on the navigation of the Godavari River, correspondence relating to the education of Muslims and their employment in public services, a report on the forest administration in British Burma and a paper on cattle diseases. Due to the wide range of subjects this series is relevant to researchers in various disciplines, such as history, economics, anthropology, sociology, geography, demography, environmental studies and archaeology. It also contains important materials for students of agriculture and public health.

Completeness

The London authorities went to considerable trouble to secure a full set of the *Selections*. Comparison with the holdings of the *Selections* in the Imperial Library in Calcutta shows that the set in the British Library (the source of this microfiche edition) is the more complete. Although the *Selections* are no more than copies of the source documents, they come into their own where the original document no longer exists or was never sent to London. It may therefore be reasonably claimed that the *Selections from the records of the Government of India* is a remarkable and immensely valuable reference source.

Lionel Carter

Former Librarian of Cambridge University’s South Asia Centre

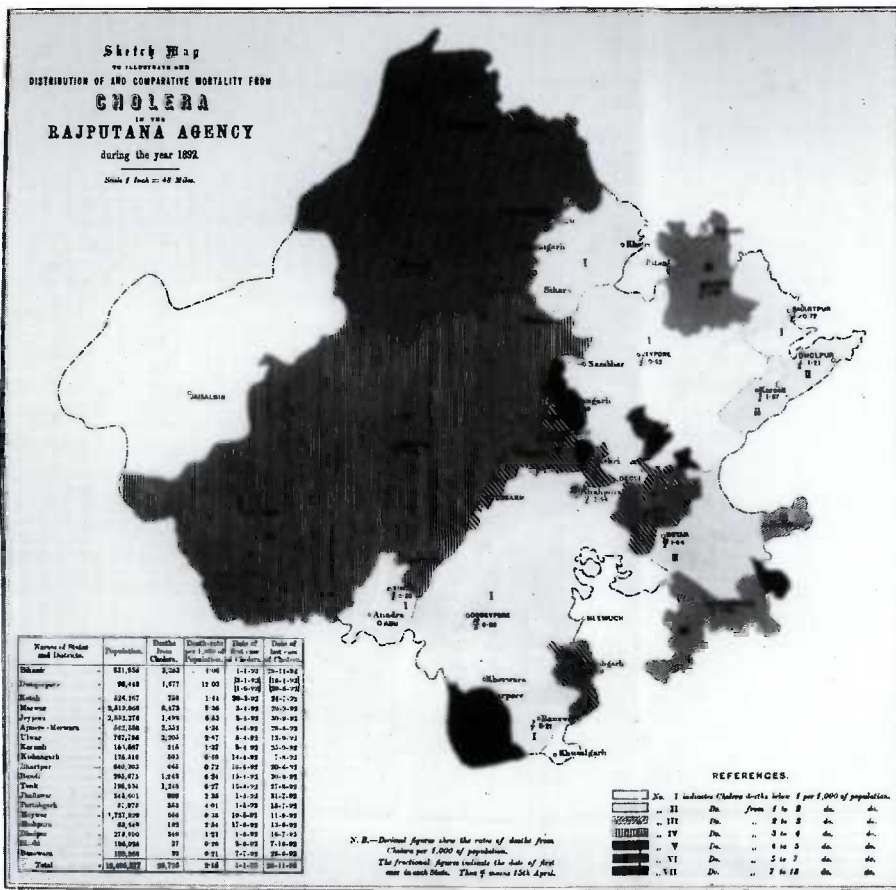


Illustration from: Rajputana sanitary report for 1892.

General information

- Scope 346 volumes containing 2,119 items
- Number of fiches 3,055
- Size of fiches 105 x 148 mm.
- Film type Positive silver halide
- Reduction ratio Varies, depending on the size of the original
- Internal finding aids Eye-legible headers with the item numbers as listed in the bibliography
- External finding aids Customers who order the complete collection receive the bibliography *Selections from the Records of the Government of India*, compiled by John Sims.

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Contents

Main series and subseries	No. of items	Fiches with maps	Total no. of fiches
A. India	475	27	885
Selections from the records, Govt. of India	472	27	877
—, Military Department	3	-	8
B. Bengal	80	7	145
Selections from the records, Bengal Govt.	64	7	88
—, P.W.D. Irrigation Branch	1	1	6
—, [untitled]	7	2	31
—, Railway Department	1	-	2
—, Board of Revenue, L.P.	6	-	16
—, Bihar and Orissa	1	-	10
C. Bombay	861	88	1316
Selections from the records, Bombay Govt. (Old series)	16	1	28
—, (New series)	817	84	1261
—, Police Branch of the Judicial Dept.	14	2	11
—, Police Branch, new series	4	-	3
—, Irrigation series	9	4	15
—, Political Department	1	-	1
D. Madras	210	28	468
Selections from the records, Madras Govt. (1st series)	10	3	12
—, [2nd series]	98	8	196
—, [3rd series]	68	9	160
—, Public Works Dept.	2	3	15
—, New (revenue) series	10	1	33
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Selections from the records, Mysore Commissioner's Office	7	-	5
F. North-Western Provinces	302	7	151
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Selections from the records of Govt., North-Western Provinces	116	2	38
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—, 2nd series	105	2	45
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G. Oudh	4	-	5
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H. Punjab	172	8	86
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Selections from the records, Punjab Govt.	10	2	7
—, and its Dependencies, new series	24	5	25
—, [untitled]	3	1	16
—, and its Dependencies, confidential series	11	1	7
—, Financial Commissioner	54	-	12
—, Financial Commissioner, new series	29	-	34
I. Sind	5	-	2
Selections from the records of the Commissioner in Sind	5	-	2
J. Travancore	3	1	4
Selections from the records of Travancore	3	1	4
Totals	2,119	158	3,055