CHAPTER I.

(i) The Rebellion of Baja Tilokchand in 1760.
On September 27, 1760, the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong were ceded to the British East India Company by Mirzasim, the Nawab of Bengal, 'for all charges of the Company and provisions for the field.'¹ The Directors of the Company at London observed this cession as 'a noble object' and directed the officials of the Company at Bengal to take 'such prudent measures' as would secure to them the quiet possession of those territories.² But the situation deteriorated in the closing months of the year 1760 and the Company had to employ force for the proper maintenance of their control in the districts of Burdwan and in the neighbouring district of Birbhum.

Even before 1760, in 1759, Huge Watts, who had gone to Burdwan for revenue purposes³ had the occasion to see for himself the lawless condition of the place. He reported to Governor Holwell at Calcutta some of the engagements that took place between the army of Raja Tilokchand of Burdwan and the forces of the Company.

¹ The revenues of the districts of Burdwan and Murda were 'mortgaged and assigned over to the Company' as a token of gratitude by Mirzafar for instituting him to the 'Masnad'(i.e. the throne) of Bengal after the battle of Plassey in June, 1757. (Letter to Court, dated January 10, 1758—para 100, pp. 279—vide Fort William—India House Correspondence—Vol. II 1757–59, ed. by H.N. Sinha).
In these engagements the Company's forces suffered considerable loss. Watts wrote to Calcutta, 'We have greatly wroted.' The Council in Bengal acted very promptly on receipt of this information from Watts and directed, 'that a detachment of one hundred and thirty Europeans and three hundred Sepoys do proceed to Burdwan to be joined by a party of three hundred Sepoys under the command of Lieutenant Nollikins ...' It is not definitely known whether any engagements took place between Lieutenant Nollikins's army and the forces of Raja Tilokchand. Because, we find that the Raja wrote to the Company on August 7, 1760, that 'his only support is in the Company's favour.'

It is worth mentioning here that Raja Tilokchand of Burdwan was one of the wealthiest zamindars of Bengal and 'wielded all the power of a feudal chieftain in his district.' The Company pursued the policy at that time 'to continue the zamindars and the tenants in their places' and to collect the revenues regularly from them. But Raja Tilokchand was not very regular in the payment of his revenues and for the fear of the payment of the same, he often absconded himself from Burdwan. He had been repeatedly asked by the Company to repair to Burdwan and be regular in the payment of revenues, but he remained defiant. As a consequence, Governor Vansittart informed Tilokchand on November 7, 1760, that troops would be sent to bring him by force and in the event of his
defence he would be deprived of his zamindary. Alarmed at this Raja Tilokchand sent his vakil Rajchandra Roy to the Presidency at Calcutta on December 16, 1760, for the settlement of his revenue dues with the Company.

In the meantime, it was reported to Governor Vansittart that Raja Tilokchand was recruiting men into his service and fifteen thousand peons, pikes ... were already in pay. The cause of this recruitment, whether for the collection of revenues or for other purposes, was then surely known. Some argued that the fear of deprivation from his ancestral zamindary of Burdwan instigated Tilokchand to an armed rebellion with the Company.

On the other hand, we find that the relationship between Nawab Mirkasim and the Zemindars of Bengal was far from being cordial. Soon after his accession to the 'masnad' (On October 30, 1760) Mirkasim found to his dismay that the treasury was bankrupt. Naturally he kept a 'watchful eye' in the department of his finances. To replenish his resources Mirkasim might have demanded an over-rated assessment from the zemindars. Gholam Hossain's estimate of Mirkasim that he was an enemy to the zemindars is well known.

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Gholam Hossain, the noted author of 'Seir-Mutaqherin' observed, 'Mir-Qasim Khan, in his heart, had been all times an enemy to Zemindars.' (Vide Seir-Mutaqherin-Vol.II,PP.393-English translation published by R. Cambrey & Co., Calcutta).
Mirkasim, it appears, often reported to the Company against Raja Tilokohand for the non-payment of his revenues. In November 1760, he reported that the Raja of Burdwan (i.e. Tilokohand) had appropriated the revenues of the Zemindars of Chitwa Barda and Chandrokona. It is to be remembered that though Mir Kasim had already surrendered Burdwan to the East India Company in September, 1760, the Company at that period was not well acquainted with the revenue matters of this district. He was so critical of the Raja of Burdwan that he advocated the policy of his (i.e. Raja Tilokohand's) chastisement as he was of 'bad caste.' It is not known at the present state of research, on what ground, Mirkasim referred to Raja Tilokohand of Burdwan as originating from a 'bad caste.'

Mirkasim apprehended that Assad-saman-khan (meaning Lord Lion of the times), the Raja of Beerbhoom, and Raja Tilokohand of Burdwan were in league against the 'Nabob' and the Company as well. He reported to Calcutta in November 1760 that 'the Zemindar of Burdwan has had intentions, and has conferences with the Beerbhoom Raja, and they had agreed to act in conjunction.' But the Company had different impression about the Raja of Burdwan. In their view, '...the Burdwan Zemindar is but a young weak man and his people are of no consequence.'

Raja Tilokohand of Burdwan was born in 1733 and in 1760 was of twenty-seven (27) years of age. He died in May 1770. (Vide - 'Bardhaman Rajbansanuocharita' by Rakhal Das Mukhopadhyay-the Chapter on Raja Tilokohand-published by the Bardhaman Raj-First Edition - 1321 (B.S).
The Nawab, however, thought otherwise. According to him, the zamindars were all cheats and 'only wait an opportunity to' surprise the Company.

Perhaps, Mirkasim was right. An engagement took place between the Company's forces and the combined armies of the Raja of Burdwan, led by Missery Khan (the general of the forces of the Raja of Burdwan), and of Assad-zaman-khan, the Raja of Beerbhoom, on the night of December 29, 1760 at the pass of the river Banka between Burdwan and Sangotgola, a place difficult of access.

It is to be noted here that in the opinion of Cholam Hossain, none of the zamindars of Bengal were so powerful 'whether by the number of his troops or by his personal character of bravery' as Assad-zaman-khan, the Raja of Beerbhoom. It is also true that Assad-zaman-khan, threw off the allegiance of Nawab Mirkasim and sent an invitation to Emperor Shah Alam to come to Bengal.

We are fortunate in getting an account of the engagement that took place between the Company's forces and the combined armies of Raja of Burdwan and the Raja of Beerbhoom from the letter of Captain Martin White, who was the leader of the Company's forces at that time at Burdwan. The letter dated December 29, 1760, was addressed to the President of the Bengal
Council from the Camp at 'Battassy-ka-bag', a place, now difficult
to point out. Captain White also mentioned in his letter that
some 'Sannyasis and Faquirs' (Hindu and Mahomedan religious
preachers) participated in that engagement on behalf of the Raja
of Burdwan. But this statement of White was not borne out by
subsequent references. Therefore, we are not in a position to
ascertain whether the 'Sannyasis and Faquirs' did play any role
in that engagement.

Captain White stated in his despatch that he was on his way
to Beerbhoom through Burdwan to join Major York, to prevent the lands
being plundered by the Maratha General Shao Bhat. On the 25th of
December, he was at Burdwan and demanded rupees ten thousand from
Raja Tilokchand upon a bill of the Company, to purchase the
provisions for the Company's forces at Burdwan. Captain White also
assured the Raja that strongest care would be taken of the people
of Burdwan and the country as well, but out of necessity he was to
pass near his (i.e. the Raja's) capital i.e. the town of Burdwan.

On the other hand, Raja Tilokchand insisted on Captain
White's going back, because he thought that 'his troops would dispute'
the passage of White. Captain White declined to return and a man
was again sent to the Raja for the money already sought for. At last
Raja Tilokchand ordered the money to be given to Captain White,
but Missry Khan, the general of the troops of Raja Tilokchand, somehow managed to seize the amount. White was further informed by his 'secret people' that the Raja's troops were trying to prevent his junction with Major York and they had ten guns on their possession.

This intelligence was enough for Captain White to realise the real state of the situation and all of a sudden, on the night of December 29, 1760, he ordered his troops to march. The army of Raja Tilokchand was not prepared for this sudden night attack and was completely defeated, leaving behind all the ten pieces of guns which they had in their possession. Captain White's army suffered no casualty but of the opponent about five hundred were killed and double the number were wounded.

Immediately after the engagement White wrote to Raja Tilokchand 'to stay in his house and rest in safety.' But the Raja fled away with his family out of fear of being chastised at the hands of the Captain's forces leaving behind all the arms and ammunitions he had in his possession, (of whom the reference of seventy guns can be made). In White's opinion about ten thousand men were in arms against the Company's forces. After the engagement, Captain White posted safeguards for the safety of the people and their property. Raja Tilokchand was made responsible
for all losses that the Company sustained at this engagement and was asked to compensate for all the ammunitions that were utilised by the Company's forces during the skirmish. 21.

The Council in Bengal, in their letter of January 16, 1761, reported this incident to the Court of Directors of the Company at London. They observed that, '.... the Raja (i.e. Tilokchand), who no doubt had designed to prevent the junction of our troops, opposed with all his forces the passage of our detachment over a river near Burdwan.' They also reported their Directors that it did not cost much for Captain White to give the forces of the Raja 'a total defeat.' 22 Again in January 1761, Mirkasim warned the Company of the possible combination of forces of the Raja of Burdwan, the Raja of Beerbhoom and the Maratha General Sheo Bhat against the Company. But it can safely be assumed that Tilokchand, the Raja of Burdwan, was not a party to this combination of forces, because only on December 29, 1760, i.e. hardly a few days ago he had been completely defeated at the hands of Captain White. The letters that passed between the Raja of Burdwan and the Officials of the Company during this period bore a clear testimony to the sluggish attitude of the Raja to the Company. 24

Assad-zaman-khan, the Raja of Beerbhoom, was still left undefeated. An expedition sent under Major York early in January 1761 failed to overcome the resistance put forward by Assad-zaman-khan who followed the tactics of guerrilla war-fare. But when Captain White came from Burdwan and joined in the operation, the refractory
chief was subdued and was compelled to pay a huge indemnity.²⁵ Later on, Assad-zaman-khan extended his allegiance to the Nawab of Bengal.²⁶ Very significant is an entry in the British record which runs to the effect that Raja Tilokchand of Burdwan along with Assad-zaman-Khan, the Raja of Beerbhoom, 'broke out in open revolt' soon after the cession of the district of Burdwan to the Company by Mirkasim.²⁷ It is difficult to say if the reference has a bearing to the operations described above.

But Gholam Hossain, the noted author of 'Seir-Mutaqherin', who had mentioned in details the engagement that took place between the Company and Assad-zaman-khan, made no mention of Raja Tilokchand of Burdwan, as one of the participants in the rebellion. The silence of Gholam Hossain (who claimed to be an eye witness of the battle between the Company and the Raja of Beerbhoom)²⁸ in not mentioning the part played by Raja Tilokchand during the engagement with the Company cannot be accounted for.

The omission may be explained by stating that the Raja of Burdwan was already defeated at the hands of Captain White prior to the final engagement that took place between Assad-zaman-khan, the Raja of Beerbhoom and the combined forces of Major York and Captain White in January, 1761. It is to be remembered here that after defeating the forces of Raja of Burdwan on December 29, 1760,
Captain White joined the army of Major York at Beerbhoom early in January, 1761 and carried on a successful campaign.

Grant, in his 'Analysis of the Finances of Bengal' had made a reference to this revolt of Raja Tilokchand of Burdwan. He observed that only Rs.523,691-0-0, being the total revenue of Burdwan in 1760, were brought to the treasury 'after defraying the expenses of reducing the rebellious Raja to proper subjection.' But the rebellion was not the only cause of this meagre receipts.

The Marathas had seasonally attacked Burdwan during these years. Raja Tilokchand wrote to the Company in 1760, 'How I can relate to you the present deplorable situation of this place. Three months the Marathas remained here burning, plundering and laying waste the whole country ... The inhabitants have lost almost all they were worth.' Therefore, the Maratha inroads can well be cited as another cause of the scanty collections.

After the rebellion of 1760, Raja Tilokchand was not dispossessed of his zemindary by the Company for his hostile character to the Company. The Officials of the Company were wise enough to follow a policy of friendship with the Raja of Burdwan and this policy paid due dividends to the Company in future. Firminger, when assessing the British policy in Bengal in 1760 came to the same conclusion and observed, 'the English,
however, perhaps wisely, chosen to look upon the Raja as still their friend.'

At this point a question arises whether the rebellion of 1760 was the first hostile reaction against the British rule in Bengal. The combined armies of the Raja of Burdwan and the Raja of Beerbhoom were defeated owing to absence of effective combination of armed forces and discipline. There was no doubt that they also lacked modern tactics of war-fare, modern arms and ammunitions. But there was no want of sincerity in executing the operations. It would be difficult to maintain, at this moment, that this rebellion reflected 'a higher ideal of freeing the country from the yoke of the Company-Raj.' Dr. S.B. Chaudhury, was, perhaps, correct when he observed that 'the revolution in many ways anticipated the zemindary movements against the British power in Bengal.' Because, we find that Raja Tilokchand, the Raja of Burdwan, was afraid of being dispossessed from his ancestral zemindary of Burdwan for not being punctual in the payment of his revenues and Assad-zaman-khan, the Raja of Beerbhoom, was unwilling to pay the over-rated land revenue of Nawab Mirkasim.
REFERENCES

7. Ibid, No. 481.
8. "(i) "Calendar of Persian Correspondence (C.P.O)"
   (ii) Long - No. 533.
10. Long - No. 504.
12. Long - No. 508.
13. Ibid - No. 512.
15. Ibid - No. 516.
16. Select Committee Proceedings, January 5, 1761.
21. (i) Select Committee Proceedings, January 5, 1761.
(ii) Long No. 558.
24. Ibid No. 539.
25. (i) Dr. N.L.Chatterjee in "Bengal Past and Present" vide Vol. No. 48, pp. 112-113.
(ii) Dr. S.B.Choudhury - "Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India - 1765-1857" - pp.2.
31. "Introduction to the Bengal portion of the Fifth Report"—
    by W.K. Firminger, pp. 148-149.
32. "Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India—
    1765-1857"—by Dr. S.B. Choudhury—pp. 2.
33. Ibid.
CHAPTER I.

(ii) "Early Revenue Experiments in Burdwan and its Consequences (1760-70)."
The revenues of the districts of Burdwan and Huddesa were 'mortgaged and assigned over to the Company' as a token of gratitude by Nawab Mirja'far for instituting him to the 'masnad' of Bengal after the battle of Plassey in June 1757. This was reported to the Court of Directors of the Company at London by the Council at Fortwilliam in their letter of January 10, 1758.

Raja Tilokchand*, the Raja of Burdwan, was perhaps not happy with this assignment and was not regular in the payment of his land revenues to the Company. Luke Scrafton, the Agent at the Murshidabad Darbar, wanted to be firm in his dealings with the Raja and demanded that the Raja should give in writing the exact date on which he would tender payments of the revenues. In the event of his non-compliance with the wishes of the Company, Scrafton even suggested in July 1758, that a 'Company of Sepoys' should be marched to his district and 'when once he is thoroughly intimidated, he will be very regular in his payments.' But soon the Company realised that it was 'too troublesome a task for an European to collect the payments' and appointed Nunda Comar (the

* Tilokchand (1744-1770) is referred to either as Raja or Zemindar in the contemporary British records.
famous 'Nun-Comar' in British Records) of Hooghly, a 'tussuldar' (i.e. a revenue collector) on behalf of the Company on August 19, 1758 for the same purpose. Nunda Comar's main business was to collect the 'Kistybundy' (instalments) payments regularly from the Rajas, whose territories were assigned over to the Company.* The Council, in their letter of December 31, 1758 (addressed to the Court of Directors at London) expressed the hope that with this measure they would be able to collect the revenues 'without trouble and disputes'.

Nunda Comar was not fortunate enough to show his ability as a revenue collector on behalf of the Company. Because shortly after his appointment (August 1758), the revenues of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong were ceded to the Company by Nawab Mirkasim on September 27, 1760, as a prize to the Company for the deposition of Mirja'far from the 'maanad' of Bengal. The above districts were ceded to the Company 'for all charges of Company and their ...army and provisions for the field etc.'

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* Nunda Comar carried on 'treacherous' correspondence with the Maratha General Sheo Bhat, Raja Tilokchand of Burdwan and the 'Shah zada's people' during the year 1760.

(Vide - i) Long - 'Selections etc.' - No. 553, pp. 257.  
ii) Foreign Department - 'Secret Proceedings' - 1772, pp. 281-82.  
iii) Vansittart's Minute of July 31, 1762.  
iv) Dr. S.B. Choudhury - 'Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India -1765-1857,' - pp. 3.
The Company was to bear all littls and to receive all profits arising out of the revenues of these districts. It was also stipulated in the agreement that was concluded with Mirkasim and the Company that the Company should retain all Zemindars and ryots, of the ceded districts, in their respective positions. It is important to note here that the district of Burdwan when ceded to the Company was stated to yield a clear revenue of Rs. 3175,391 - 0 - 0. The district of Burdwan, 5174 Square Miles in extent, was one of the most fertile places ceded over to the Company and in the opinion of Grant, '... was the most compact, best cultivated ... and by far the most productive' compared to any other districts of equal magnitude within the Subah of Bengal.

Naturally this fertile and economically solvent district was often the target of the Maratha invaders. Since the time of Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, the Marathas almost seasonally plundered Bengal and its neighbouring areas. Tilokchand, the Raja of Burdwan, in August 1760, reported to the Company of the deplorable state of the District of Burdwan owing to these Maratha inroads. Maratha General Sheo Bhat, in December 1760, sent troops to Burdwan, but his forces was defeated at the hands of Captain White.

In December 1760, Raja Tilokchand, along with Assad-zaman-khan, the Raja of Beerbhoom, revolted against the authority of the Company.
The combined forces were defeated by Captain White. But the Company
instead of ousting the Raja of Burdwan from his zemindary, followed
a policy of friendship and retained him in his former place and
position. Firminger, the noted historian of the early British Rule
in India, also supported the policy of maintaining the Raja of
Burdwan in his ancestral zemindary because in later years Burdwan
became one of the most beneficial British pockets in Bengal.

Despite the sympathetic policy shown by the Company to
Raja Tilokchand, the Raja very soon fell into arrears with revenue
balance of Rs. 265,000 - 0 - 0 in February, 1761. The Company
therefore decided to send 'one Mr. Sumner' to collect the revenue
arrears and to secure the Company's acquisitions there. Tilokchand
was unwilling to receive Mr. Sumner at Burdwan and for fear of
payment of the revenue balances he absconded himself from his
zemindary. But the Company informed the Raja that in the event
of his absence from his estates he would be deprived of his ancestral
zemindary of Burdwan and at last in April 1761, an engagement was
made by Raj Chandra Roy, the Diwan of the Raja of Burdwan, at
Calcutta, on behalf of Raja Tilokchand.

Yet Mr. Sumner was sent to Burdwan on the ground to survey
the cause of the desertion of tenants from the Zemindary of the
Raja of Burdwan. The Company desired that Mr. Sumner should act
in accordance with the wishes of the Raja, but the Raja complained
of 'hardships' suffered at Mr. Summer's hand.\textsuperscript{11} Soon after, the Company realised the necessity of posting one of its servants at Burdwan and an English Official styled 'resident' was placed over there in March, 1761. The main functions of the resident was concerned with revenue and judicial matters. The policy of the Company at this time was to make the Raja of Burdwan as much as possible, responsible for the administration of his own estates.\textsuperscript{12} The Council in Bengal expressed the same desire and informed Tilokchand, in their letter of November 20, 1761, to appoint such a 'Diwan' as would satisfy him in his purposes.\textsuperscript{13}

The first English resident stationed at Burdwan was John Johnstone.\textsuperscript{*} We find the name of Johnstone as the first British resident of Burdwan in Raja Tilokchand's letter addressed to Governor Vansittart at Calcutta.\textsuperscript{14} The duty of the resident was

\textsuperscript{*} Johnstone\ldots was dismissed from the Company's Service on a charge of accepting bribes (Vide: (i) Letter from Court, at February 8, 1764, para 2, (ii) Calendar of Persian Correspondence - Vol.1, No.2668). Later on, it appears, he was taken back to service in his former rank and position (Vide: Letter from Court dated May 9, 1764, para 31) but in the following year of 1765 he resigned (Letter to Court, dated September 30, 1765, para 28) and went back to England.
to supervise revenue and judicial matters of the Raja of Burdwan.\textsuperscript{15}

The revenue and judicial proceedings were regularly recorded.

Johnstone introduced at Burdwan the system of revenue farming by public auction of lands. Lands were let out at public sale in 1762 to the highest bidders, who were mostly irresponsible farmers, for three consecutive years. Johnstone and his associates thought that by this method of revenue farming of public auction of land the Company would gain a net profit of Sa. Rs.\textsuperscript{13}00,000 - 0 - 0, within the three years of the contract. But they were mistaken, perhaps, in their assessment of land revenue and in 1764(i.e.within two years of the introduction of this farming system) there accumulated a revenue balance of Sa. Rs.\textsuperscript{16}54,134-0-0 from Burdwan.\textsuperscript{*} It was clear that the contractors of land revenue had failed. Finding no other way Johnstone levied an impost of nine annas per bigha on all 'bazee-zeemin'\textsuperscript{**} lands to cover up the deficiencies in the stipulated land revenue.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{verbatim}
\textsuperscript{*} During the years of the farming system by public auction of lands, the following balances accumulated :
  In 1762 a balance of Sa. Rs.\textsuperscript{8}92,563-10-15.
  In 1763 a balance of Sa. Rs.\textsuperscript{7}61,571- 1-11.
  In 1764 a balance of Sa. Rs.\textsuperscript{9}58,911-12-13.
  (Vide - 'Introduction to the Bengal portion of the Fifth Report' - by W.K.Firminger-pp.152).

\textsuperscript{**} 'Bazee-zeemin' were such lands as were mostly uncultivated and waste lands and were allotted to the ryots mostly 'free-of-rent' by the Zeminders.(See Appendix V for a detailed survey of the 'bazee-zeemin' lands in the zemindary of Burdwan).
\end{verbatim}
Johnstone argued that the 'out-cry' (i.e. the public auction of lands) was an economic law of competition for the realisation of real value of lands. It was expected that the bidders would come forward to pay enhanced prices for better quality of lands. The Company, then new in Bengal with the charge of land revenues, was not in a position to ascertain the actual prices of lands of lands and also to verify which were more fertile or less productive.

Firminger, arguing on behalf of these officers of the Company, observed that '... the farming system was the method recommended to them by the native officials.' It is worth mentioning here that the fertile portions of Burdwan lands were farmed by the agents of Messrs. Johnstone, Ray and Bolte and a considerable part were farmed by the 'muttaseddees' or clerks of the Company. Few or no bidders did appear for the land which were required by Johnstone and his associates as they (i.e. the bidders) were unwilling to incur their displeasure by giving a bid to those lands. Subsequently, farming of lands by the Company's officers were prohibited and it was stated by the Court of Directors that, 'the Europeans were no longer allowed to hold farms on their own account or in the name of their dependents.'
Observing the adverse effects of the farming system (introduced by Johnstone at Burdwan) on the revenues, the Court of Directors, in their letter of May 17, 1766 (addressed to the Council in Bengal) remarked that the revenue farming by public auction of lands should be stopped. They also advocated the principle of the settlement of Burdwan lands with Raja Tilokchand. Instructions were given not to interfere with the Raja either in the collection of land revenues or in the administration of justice.

The policy of putting the lands up for public sale ruined many families of Bengal. Hary Verelst, who in 1765, was appointed the resident of Burdwan viewed that out of fear of dispossession of their ancestral estates many of the farmers under the Raja of Burdwan exceeded the real value of the lands and consequently failed in depositing their land revenues to the Company. He also observed that 'the greatest part of the province fell into the hands of a set of rapacious wretches.'

During the period of this farming system, even the lands that were under the direct management (i.e. 'khas') of the Company yielded a meagre revenue. In 1764 the revenue was Rs. 500,000-0-0 less than that was realised during the time of Nawab Aliwardi Khan in 1752. Naturally, the Directors of the Company abolished this method of revenue farming by public auction of lands and advocated
the principle of settling the 'Malguzzary' (i.e. land revenue) directly with the Raja of Burdwan in the best terms possible. 22

The Company received the perpetual grant of 'diwani' of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Emperor Shah Alam on August 12, 1765. But this grant had 'no immediate effects upon the administration of the ceded districts'. 23 During the autumn of 1765 Verelst was appointed the resident of Burdwan. He, however, did not stay at Burdwan even for a year. But during this short period he introduced some constructive measures for the betterment of Burdwan lands.

He abolished the system of public auction of lands and engaged men of 'substance and character' to take over the charge of collections. He was determined not to dispossess the tenants of their lands if they paid due attention to their lands and the payment of land revenue. Verelst's experiment in the field of land revenue administration at Burdwan was successful. During the time of Johnstone the land revenue of Burdwan suffered a complete set back.

Verelst was incharge of the district of Chittagong from 1761 to May 1765 (Vide Bengal Select Committee Proceedings dated May 7, 1765); and was vested with the charge of the district of Burdwan (Vide Bengal Select Committee Proceedings dated June 21, 1765), but left for Midnapur (Bengal Select Committee Proceedings - dated December 20, 1765) next year.
Now it was seen that there was an increase of population and land revenue in Burdwan. Dow, the historian, was critical of this condition. He thought '... Burdwan owed part of its prosperity to the misery and distress of the surrounding districts'.

Verelst's achievements in the arena of land revenue at Burdwan was recognised when his plan of administration of Burdwan lands was approved by the Directors of the Company. They, in their letter of November 11, 1768, informed the Council of Bengal that they were 'perfectly satisfied' with the administration of Burdwan.

Richard Becher, the resident at 'Darbar' in Murshidabad in 1769 was in favour of adopting Verelst's plan of administration for the whole of Bengal.

The plan that was followed at Burdwan was to let out lands to farm for at least three years with an assurance to the farmers that one who would keep proper maintenance for the lands and would pay the land revenue in time should always have the preference to remain as farmers. The Company at the same time, was willing to maintain the power and dignity of the Raja of Burdwan and the Directors instructed the Council in Bengal to observe the above policy in their dealings with Raja Tilokchand of Burdwan.
The experience of Verelst in land revenue administration was wider than any of the English officials of Bengal. He had the opportunity to serve in several grades of the Company's service. He had to solve the most difficult problem of the early British rule in Bengal, "... the obligations of the English both to the native rulers and the ruled." And it is needless to mention here that during his short span of service in Burdwan, he tried his best to make both of them (i.e., the zamindars and the ryots) happy. We are fortunate in getting a statistics of the land revenues received at Burdwan since the district was ceded in September 1760.

* In 1761-62 (May to April) cash received was Rs.607,482-0-0. (The cause of this meagre receipts was due to the Rebellion of 1760 and the Maratha invasions).

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<tr>
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<td>Rs.600,000-0-0</td>
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<td>1764-65</td>
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<td>Rs.550,000-0-0</td>
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<td>1766-67</td>
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<td>Rs.480,000-0-0</td>
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<td>1767-68</td>
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<td>Rs.450,000-0-0</td>
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<td>1768-69</td>
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<td>Rs.420,000-0-0</td>
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(Vide 'View of Rise, Progress and Present state of the English Government in Bengal' - by Mary Verelst - pp. 72).
With the departure of Verelst from Burdwan in December 1765, the 'Residency' at Burdwan was closed, but the post of the Resident was continued. It was desired that the Board at the Presidency at Calcutta should supervise over the revenue business of the Company at Burdwan. The main cause behind the closure of the 'Residency' was its extra-ordinary expenses, nearly Sa. Rs. 75000-0-0 per annum.

In subsequent years, the prosperous state of the district of Burdwan was thoroughly changed by the famine of 1770. Burdwan suffered heavily from this disastrous famine. The Council of Bengal informed the Directors of the 'Uncommon Draught' on November 23, 1769, and in the early month of 1770 the ravages of the famine were felt. Raja Tilokchand along with Charles Stewart, the resident of this district at that time, had urged for a remission of the rents in January, 1770. So acute were the miseries of the people that the Council at Fort William granted the remission of about 2½ p.c. or Sa. Rs. 300,000-0-0 taking care that they also granted it to the ryots.

The establishment of the Residency at Burdwan:
The Chief ......... Sa. Rs. 3000-0-0 per month.
Second .......... Sa. Rs. 1500-0-0 per month.
Third .......... Sa. Rs. 1300-0-0 per month.

The military Officer .......... Sa. Rs. 500-0-0 per month.
Altogether an expense of about Sa. Rs. 75,000-0-0(Sic) per annum. (Letter from Court dt. December 24, 1765, para 43).
Tilokchand, the Raja of Burdwan, died in the midst of the famine on May 25, 1770 and was succeeded by his son Tej Chand. So wretched was the condition of the Raj Family due to the famine that the heir had to melt down the family gold plate and when this was exhausted to beg a loan from the Government in order to perform his father's obsequies. If such was the state of affairs with the Raja of Burdwan, the economic condition of the general mass could easily be estimated. Hunter in his 'Annals of Rural Bengal' depicts a real picture of the famine in Bengal especially in the district of Burdwan with special reference to original materials.

The Council had expressed the desire that the amount of Rs. 300,000-0-0 (the sum that was granted as a remission from the revenue of Burdwan during the famine year of 1770) should be paid back along with the revenues of 1771. Charles Stewart, the resident at Burdwan, represented that owing to the death and desolation caused by the famine among the ryots, the farmers had lost Rs. 82,180-0-0 in addition to the sum of Rs. 300,000-0-0 granted as the remission from the land revenue of the year of 1770.

Stewart was afraid that if some reduction of the above sum of Rs. 300,000-0-0 was not made, many of the farmers would be ruined. The Company also conducted some relief measures and twenty to twenty-five maunds of rice per day were distributed at Burdwan.
The severity of the famine was appealing. The Raja wrote to the Council - 'Draught and dearness of grains; crop purched and cut up for fodder for the cattle. Tanks dry. Water insufficient for the inhabitants. Rubbee harvest (winter crop) backward, and without rain will be destroyed. Ryots deserting in large bodies.'

The famine had caused the death of many of the ryots and also a large number of them had left their ancestral lands. These ryots went to settle in the neighbouring areas of Burdwan where the adverse effects of the famine were felt less. For the rehabilitation of the district after the famine, Raja Tej Chand of Burdwan granted lavishly 'bazeze-zeemen' lands to the willing settlers. These lands were allotted almost free of rent and this policy of the Raja helped a lot in the restoration of the revenues of the district in years following.

During the famine year of 1770, the revenue officials of the Raja of Burdwan succeeded in collecting the revenues in full notwithstanding 'the hardships and distress that have befallen the ryots.' A very noteworthy feature was that the Company collected from Burdwan the highest amount of revenue in 1770 since its session in 1760 - a net collection of Rs. 4057,432-0-0 only.

It can safely be assumed that the Company in those days was
concerned mainly with the revenues and there is room for doubt whether it did really pay any interest to the betterment of the conditions of the ryots. If it possessed any such desire, it would have not been possible for them to collect that amount of revenue from Burdwan in the sorrowful year of 1770.

Towards the end of the 1770, the famine came to an end and signs of a good crop were observed. It is to be mentioned here that rice was exported from Burdwan during the famine. This engaged the attention of the authority. The Directors ordered for an enquiry into the names of persons who had exported rice from Burdwan during the famine.

Consequently, an enquiry was conducted and it was reported on March 9, 1772 that none of the Company's servants had taken the advantage of the famine by exporting rice from Burdwan. The Council further reported that, "... what methods were practised to enhance its (i.e. Rice) price and to hoard it up must have been done by the natives themselves..."
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6. "The Fifth Report from the Select Committee on the affairs
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20. Ibid.


26. Ibid.

27. 'Early Records of British India' - by J.T. Wheeler - pp. 359.


31. (i) Ibid - para 52.


32. Letter to Court, dt. February 12, 1771, para 44, pp. 276, Vide 'Fort William - India House Correspondence - Vol. VI, 1770-72' - Ed. by B. Prasad.
33. Consultation of the 3rd April, 1770 - Quoted in Hunter's "Annals of Rural of Bengal".


35. (i) Letter to Court, dt. November 15, 1771, para 7, pp. 329, vide 'Fort William - India House Correspondence' - Vol. VI, 1770-72 - Ed. by B. Prasad.


38. Letter to Court: dt. March 9, 1772, para 46, pp. 368-69, vide 'Fort William - India House Correspondence - Vol. VI, 1770-72' - Ed. by B. Prasad.