

the journalists, the Secretary of State, and a majority of his own Council. The Punjab Act recognized occupancy rights in the case of all tenants who had held their land for a certain time, and the measure became, as a subsequent Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal declared, 'the bulwark and charter of a contented peasantry'. On the annexation of Oudh by Lord Dalhousie, the landed proprietors or Talukdars had been at first, as we have seen, rather harshly treated. Subsequently Lord Canning's proclamation, though it nominally threatened a wholesale confiscation, had promised a favourable consideration to all those who promptly submitted; this clause had been interpreted so generously that it is said about two-thirds of the rebels received back their estates under stronger titles than before the annexation. The aim of the British authorities probably was to raise up, or rather to revive, a great territorial aristocracy who would consider their interests closely bound up with the stability of the new settlement. But undoubtedly indulgence to the Talukdars had gone too far, and the Oudh Tenancy Act of 1868 attempted to rectify this defect. It enacted that about one-fifth of the total number of ryots should be granted occupancy rights in the soil at fair rents, that cultivators whose rents were raised should be compensated for unexhausted improvements, and that the rent itself should only be increased after application to a court of law and equity. There was a loud outcry against this agrarian policy, and the Act dealing with Oudh was only passed in the teeth of strong opposition based on the allegation that faith had not been kept with the landowners, but Lawrence was supported by the weighty authority of Henry Maine, John and Richard Strachey in India and John Stuart Mill at home. John Strachey gave it as his deliberate view that 'whatever was accomplished was entirely due to the resolution of Lord Lawrence', and he considered that more might well have been done.