AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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PREFACE

An average educated person in India looks upon records and archives as matters of interest only to the specialist, with which he is not concerned directly in any way. This popular view overlooks the vital role of records in the organised life of the community. Attempts to create a greater awareness of records and their value have, therefore, always figured prominently in the work programme of the National Archives of India. As a part of this general effort, a series of four talks entitled "The National Archives of India" was broadcast from the Delhi Station of the All India Radio during July-August 1958 and is now presented in the form of a pamphlet.

Our thanks are due to the Director General, All India Radio for permission to publish these talks. The present pamphlet is intended to be the first of a series dealing with records, their care and preservation.

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New Delhi,
19th December 1958.

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National Archives of India, New Delhi

I

REPOSITORY OF THE NATIONAL RECORDS

The red and grey stone building of the National Archives of India on Janpath is one of those familiar landmarks of New Delhi which people take for granted and do not feel particularly curious about. Yet the records of the Government of India and their predecessor, the East India Company, stored in this somewhat stolid-looking building are of much greater importance to the casual passer-by than he would perhaps imagine. For these records are essential to the smooth working of the country's administration in the same way as memory is essential to a man's day to day life. Public records are, in fact, the collective memory of a government carefully preserved for its own information. Indirectly, they constitute the most objective source-material of history, for they reflect very truthfully the working of an entire administration and thus nearly every important aspect of a country's life in any given period.

Here I may as well discuss one popular misconception about the records stored in the National Archives. Our

visitors, at times even some of the most highly educated brown building at the crossing of Janpath and Rajpath, records of late. Now the National Archives of India, or any other record office for that matter, does not *collect* records. Its function is to receive and make available for use the non-current records of the Government of India. The various ministries and departments of the Government having decided which of their records are worthy of permanent preservation, transfer them to the National Archives of India for custody. The records remain the property of the creating agencies; the National Archives is only the custodian. This is how the records covering some sixteen miles of shelf-space have gradually accumulated. True, we also have in our custody a certain quantity of documents and manuscripts acquired from private owners, but these do not constitute a part of the archives. They are merely analogous in nature to the rare books in the Department's library, purchased for the use of researchers. Another popular fallacy, somewhat less common than the one already mentioned, is that the records in the custody of the National Archives relate to different subjects such as economic conditions, foreign policy etc., and are arranged accordingly as in a library. The records do throw light on all such matters, but they are categorised and arranged according to the agencies which created them, as records of the Home Department, Foreign Department, Military Department, etc.

I have just said that the non-current records of the Government of India are transferred to the National Archives of India. As a matter of fact, however, only 22 agencies of the Government out of a total of 232 have so far transferred their records. The stack areas are choke-full at the moment and it is hoped that the custody of the non-current records of the other departments will be taken

over when more storage space is available. The steel shelves of the Department house some 1,03,625 bound volumes and 51,13,000 unbound documents, the whole covering over 130 million folios. Besides, there are the 11,500 manuscript maps received from the Survey of India and 4,150 printed maps belonging to different agencies.

This vast mass of records includes the papers of the East India Company, which Grant Duff described as "probably the best historical material in the world." The main archival series begin from 1748, but copies of interesting collections relating to earlier years have been acquired from the Commonwealth Relations Office, London. Among these are the volumes containing abstracts of correspondence between the Company and their servants in India between 1707 and 1748. The correspondence for later years is available here in original in an unbroken series, and it constitutes a unique source for the history of British India. Equally important are the original consultations which include the minutes, memoranda and proposals drawn up by the East Indian administrators, and their correspondence with their agents all over the country. Nearly every important aspect of the country's life and administration is reflected in these consultations.

Materials of foreign interest abound among the records in the National Archives. The Foreign Miscellaneous Series contains highly interesting reports and journals on our neighbours of Central Asia and the Middle East, which often owed their origin to British fears about Russian intentions in the nineteenth century. We have in the same series Veterinary Surgeon William Moorcroft's report on the Russian trade on the North-Western Frontier of India (1812) and Henry Willcock's account of the State of Persia, 1825. In 1833, explorer Alexander

Burnes submitted a 1,000-page report on the countries between India and Asian Russia covering commercial, political and military matters. Documents relating to Further India, Indonesia and China are available in equal abundance. A separate section known as China Papers, tacked in 12 bundles, relates to the Opium War and its aftermath. The story of Indian emigration to colonial plantations and that of slave trade in the Indian Ocean can be studied in vivid details in the records of the Home and Foreign Series.

The Department also has in its custody a magnificent collection of oriental letters ranging from 1764 to 1873. Most of these letters are in Persian but a great many are also available in Sanskrit, Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Burmese, and even in Chinese, Siamese, and Tibetan. After the transfer of power the records of the British Residencies in the various princely states have been taken over and centralised in the National Archives. These too contain a mass of materials in various Indian languages.

Lord Canning introduced the system of printing the records meant for permanent preservation and so the bulk of the post-Mutiny records stored in the National Archives are printed. The post-Mutiny records constitute a considerable proportion of the total accumulation. Accession of records is a continuous process and a large quantity of records, only a few years old, have already been transferred to the National Archives by some ministries. So here we hold in custody materials not merely for the history of a bygone era, but the very stuff of the history that is in the making.

In recent years, microfilm copies of materials of Indian interest have been secured from England, France, Holland,

Denmark and U.S.A. From Holland alone copies of more than 1,50,000 manuscript pages have already been secured. They are the records of the Dutch East Indian Company, mostly letters received in the 17th and 18th centuries from the Company's servants employed in their trading establishments in India, and they offer a detailed picture of the commercial and economic life of the period. Among the materials secured from France is a highly interesting group of letters addressed by Nana Saheb's agents to Emperor Napoleon III requesting the latter to arbitrate between the English and the mutineers.

The National Archive also owns a very fine library on modern Indian history and ancillary subjects, containing over 1,00,000 volumes. These include rare blueprints, parliamentary papers and a unique collection of works on the eighteenth and nineteenth century India.

Researchers from all over India and often from foreign countries come to the Research Room of the National Archives to study its records. Most of the ministries and departments allow their records, which are not less than forty years old, to be studied by the scholars, while some are even more liberal in this respect. To help the scholars in the task of finding what they want from among the records, the Department prepares an elaborate reference media in the form of a handbook, press-lists, indexes and calendars. As early as 1911 an ambitious project was launched for calendaring all the Persian records in the Department and the work is still in progress. Besides, the Department is publishing *in extenso* certain important groups of records, like the correspondence between the authorities at Fort William and those at India House. Several volumes of records in Indian languages, like Bengali, Telugu and Sanskrit, have also been published.

From the Government's point of view, the Department's most important function is to attend to requisitions for documents. From the vast accumulation of congealed memory which the records are, the administration continually needs to recall particular items and the National Archives supplies 47,000 to 49,000 requisitions per year to the various agencies of the Government.

The management and preservation of records are highly technical matters and Archive-Keeping is today a fully developed science. In order to train up archivists, who will be potential recruits for the records offices throughout the country, the National Archives runs a regular training course which has evoked enthusiastic response in the country.

A principal function of the National Archives is to preserve and rehabilitate the records in its custody, and the most modern equipments have been placed at its disposal for the purpose. But I shall not touch on this complicated subject here as it will be the theme of the next talk in the present series.

In 1891, the National Archives, then known as the Imperial Record Department, was started in Calcutta as a very modest affair with a staff of one Keeper and 8 clerks. Since then it has moved a long way and its activities have expanded beyond all recognition. Today it is recognised as one of the world's leading archival organisations. Yet to be fully worthy of the dignified name it bears, the National Archives has still a long way to go. It must some day be fully equipped to hold in its custody all the records which deserve to be permanently preserved and to pass on to posterity this heritage of the past and the living present. Only the active interest and co-operation of the educated public can turn this ideal into a reality.

II

PRESERVING RECORDS FOR POSTERITY

To the question "What is an archivist?" someone has replied, "A dead-file clerk". Such a conception of the duties of modern archivist is certainly out-dated if not light-hearted. All the same it does highlight the stage at which records come under the purview of the archivist. Files, only when dead, are transferred to archives repositories. This implies a lapse of 10-25 years after they cease to be current. It is not difficult to visualize the fate they meet during this period. With the ever increasing pressure on office space and ever growing accumulation of records attention is naturally devoted to files which are current, and the non-current files tend to be neglected and are relegated to the most unwanted space corners, corridors and basements. Often they are exposed to dust, sun and rain. This is not to belittle the archives consciousness that has been growing during the past few years and the attention which the offices of origin are now devoting to their records but to suggest that archivists are not surprised when the dead files transferred to them are literally alive with book worms, silver fish and psocids, stained

with mildew or laden with dust. All leading archives repositories have arrangements to clean and fumigate their accessions prior to retirement to storage space and treatment that may be necessary. In the National Archives of India dust is removed with the help of air under pressure. The bulk of records to be handled is large and the necessity of rather an elaborate mechanical equipment will be better appreciated if it is remembered that records in our custody at present occupy a running shelf-space of more than 16 miles. The air-cleaning equipment affords the additional advantage that dust does not disperse in the room but collects in an arrester. Once out of idle curiosity I estimated the weight of dust removed from records during one month's operation. It is hard to believe that it came to 10 lbs.

After air-cleaning, fresh arrivals must necessarily be fumigated. Insects are well known to multiply rapidly and a chance infestation once introduced may in a few years prove ruinous to the entire holdings. As an illustration mention may be made of a collection of nearly 8,000 books belonging to Dr. Brigham in Honolulu, which was packed in boxes and a few years later shipped to Boston. Upon arrival there hardly a book was found free from the ravages of book worms. The process of fumigation chosen should ensure annihilation not only of insects but also of their eggs and larva. Vacuum fumigation has yielded most satisfactory results. As the name suggests, the process essentially consists in creating vacuum in a closed vault where records to be fumigated have been kept and then allowing lethal gases to play. After air-cleaning and fumigation records are sent to the stacks where fragile, weak and mutilated papers must await their turn for repair.

In matters of repair and treatment of records archivists are often blamed for their conservative outlook.

To appreciate their reluctance to introducing new materials or techniques we have only to remember that records are unique: only one copy exists for each record, and if the same is damaged it is lost for ever. Archivists cannot afford to take chances with their collections and are naturally anxious to ensure that all materials such as fumigants, insecticides, pastes, adhesives, silk cloth, leather, boards and even thread, which come in contact with archives, should not have deteriorative effect. A hasty decision or one based on insufficient data may with the passage of time result in more harm than good. Tracing paper was chosen to repair Government of India records some fifty years ago. It has now completely turned yellow obscuring all writings. We have also come across cases where coloured file covers were used and their colours have spread to the papers. Repairs of tears with Scotch tape, which seem so admirably perfect when fresh, need only to be examined after a couple of years to see how paper has disfigured and fallen to pieces. In short, all materials for repair and preservation need to be properly tested and judiciously selected. The National Archives of India maintains its own research laboratory for this purpose. In the recent years emphasis has been on testing indigenous materials with a view to finding suitable substitutes for the imported ones.

The traditional methods of strengthening a document are silking and tissuing wherein fine silk or tissue paper is pasted on both sides of the document with the help of suitable thin paste. After extensive experiments with various plastics a new process known as lamination has been developed in the U.S.A. during the last 25 years. It aims at sealing the document between two sheets of cellulose acetate with heat and pressure. The process is not only

comparatively inexpensive and quick but also does not in the least impair legibility. A flat bed lamination press costing over a lakh of rupees has been installed in the National Archives of India and documents are being laminated for the last few years. It has also been successfully experimented that on a limited scale documents can be laminated manually, eliminating the necessity for expensive machinery. Many state archives are exploring the possibility of applying this technique.

Repair and rehabilitation is an important aspect of archival preservation but it is essentially a remedial measure where damage has been done. Prevention is better than cure and in this case undoubtedly more economical. When it is realised that archival holdings run into crores of documents individual treatment can at best be selective and yet the cumulative expenses involved are considerable. The problem of preservation has therefore primarily to be attacked by eliminating the causes of decay. The factors that cause deterioration can, broadly speaking, be divided into three categories. In the first place, if paper or ink used is of poor grade it is futile to hope that the document will last for centuries. Some of the paper used during the last World War is of such a low quality that it is already crumbling into dust. Archivists have no direct control over this aspect of the problem, but their concern about the quality of paper and ink used in the record creation stage is obvious. Secondly, the atmospheric conditions in which documents are stored play an important role. It is a matter of common experience that during the rainy season when humidity is high paper becomes soggy and lifeless. In extremely dry winter it may become brittle and curly. High temperature and humidity will result in insect attack and if, in addition, the air is stagnant it will lead to mildew

growth. The yellowing of edges of books exposed to the sun and rotting of bindings placed near radiators, are familiar sights. Fully air-conditioned stacks maintaining uniform temperature and humidity throughout the year eliminating dust and harmful gases provide the ideal storage conditions. Accordingly part of the stack area in the National Archives of India has been air-conditioned, and it is hoped that the remaining portions will be similarly conditioned in not too distant future.

The life of records also depends largely on how they are handled. This aspect of the problem is often overlooked perhaps because it is so obvious. Since familiarity breeds contempt, those who deal with scores of files daily tend to be casual, even callous, in their handling. Yet without scrupulous care on the part of all those who handle records from the stage they are created to the stage they are used by scholars, no archivist can hope to succeed in his task of preserving them for posterity. The peon who carries files without dropping them, the daftry who ties bundles without cutting through the edges, the assistant who files and turns over the pages without tearing, the officer who resists the temptation of using fancy ball-point pens with their pleasing but ephemeral shades and the scholar who does not lean over the records with his sweating elbow, all contribute to the long life of the nation's archives.

III

UNIMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

In this series you have already listened to two very interesting talks by two eminent archivists. The one which I am to inflict on you, let me warn you beforehand, is on the very uninteresting theme of "unimportant" documents. And one may rightly ask at the start, "What is there indeed in unimportant documents that needs fussing about? Are they not simply to be thrown away?" To be sure they are. But are we equally sure we know an unimportant document whenever we see it? Here lies the rub.

Before me is a faded sheet from an office file 128 years old. It refers to three personal servants of Raja Rammohan Roy, viz., Mukherji, Das and Shaik Baksu, all of whom were permitted to sail with Roy to England. Can this routine entry be of any practical use today? The answer is no. Yet only three decades ago this very document came handy to a historian who was out to prove that Roy had a Muslim concubine and Shaik Baksu was the child he secretly had by her. The proof was simple. We have seen the three men who sailed with Roy were Mukherji, Das

and Baksu. But Mary Carpenter who saw Roy in England says that he had with him Mukherji, Das and his son Raja Ram. She does not mention Baksu at all. The two pieces of evidence could now be combined in the form of an equation: Mukherji plus Das plus Baksu = Mukherji plus Das plus Rammohan's son and deducting the common elements from both sides it could be mathematically shown Baksu was identical with Rammohan's son. And how could the Raja have a Muslim child unless he had a Muslim mistress as well? The much adored colossus was thus shown to have hideous feet of clay.

But let me take another equally innocent-looking document from the same official collection: a certificate signed at Calcutta on 7 February 1833 by the Captain of the *Zenobia*. It says in so many words that the Muslim servant Baksu, who had gone to England with Roy, has returned to Calcutta on board the *Zenobia*. Now we all know Raja Ram was with Rammohan till the latter's death in England in September 1833. If Baksu was in Calcutta in February he could not possibly be in England at the same time and oblige our historian by becoming Rammohan's son. One single document, a routine certificate from a ship-captain, was thus powerful enough to blow up the sensational thesis adroitly built up by our historian against Roy's moral character. But who could have imagined either when the certificate was drawn up, or when it was filed, that this could be of use, a century later, in saving from calumny a universally loved character? No wonder, the document was found in a heap of papers already condemned as useless by a Board of very eminent historians. Perhaps this one instance would serve to bring home to us how risky it is to use a simple rule of thumb in judging the value of documents.

Every one of us has to rid our desks periodically of accumulations of useless papers. This is done as much by private individuals as by institutions, business firms and public offices. What are usually retained by an owner are papers which may be of practical or immediate use to him; for instance, papers safeguarding his proprietary rights. The rest are thrown away. But is this a safe method of selection? Seemingly valueless papers frequently serve purposes of which their creators could never dream. A poster of 594 A.D., found among a private archives in China, happens to be the earliest example of printing yet known. It shows that already in the 6th century A.D., China had made tremendous progress in the printing art. A routine note of expenses, accidentally preserved among Scottish excise records, reveals the precise details of the official life of the great poet Robert Burns. The pension papers of the celebrated explorer Nain Singh are the only biographical materials that we yet have on him. Yet Nain Singh was the man who had discovered the source of the Indus and had amazed the world of geographers by placing Tibet and the Himalayas for the first time on the map.

Since the criterion of immediate use fails us, could we rely on the historical criterion? Every time the expression "historical documents" is uttered, there walk into our mind strange entities like Kautilya's statecraft, Bhrigu's astrology and sometimes a conventional chronicle or a formal document like a treaty or a *farman*. Still rarely do we think in this context of an official despatch or report and never of the informal or inconsequential documents I have been describing. I hesitate to speak either on Kautilya or Bhrigu. And I doubt if a chronicle should command the same respect as contemporary letters, however unexciting at first sight. Roman chronicles, for instance, place an exaggerated emphasis on the benefits which the subject

nations derived from the imperial peace. But was that the view of the subjects also? There is extant a letter of the 4th century A.D. from a young man of Alexandria written to his brother. This more than hints that all was not well in his city. "I learn from a fisherman", says the letter, "that Secundus' house has been searched and my house too. If you will write me an answer I will myself petition the prefect". Does not this simple letter from a private archives reveal a truer picture of Roman domination of Egypt than what we can get from any conventional chronicle.

Even official despatches or reports are not free from the defects which mar the value of chronicles. Their authors have a natural tendency to write up their own roles in the events they may be narrating, and to hide things which go to their discredit. After his disastrous defeat at Beresina Napolean sent to Paris a false account of a glorious victory with imaginary details of prisoners and war materials captured. What value can such a document have as historical evidence? To take another example. In their official writings the British statesmen have tried to represent the 1857 revolt as a purely military rising which did not affect the public. But was this the real British view of the happening? Hardly probable. One of the rebel manifestoes of 1858, which found its way to the Foreign Department, bears a pencil scribbling in the hand of the then Foreign Secretary, Edmonstone. It reads: "What was a military mutiny has taken the shape of a popular insurrection". This one unguarded remark provides a better index to the British official opinion than the thousands of voluminous reports and despatches that have been compiled on the incident.

What a man says to himself or his friends, what he writes on the spur of the moment or in the course of his

normal work, has less chance of being insincere than what he may communicate through a dressed up document meant for official use or public consumption. It is these informal writings, these intimate confidences that make history possible in a fuller measure than, for example, a royal *farman* or an imperial proclamation or even a pompously worded official report. That our histories are generally dry as dust is because we have relied too much on formal documents and too little on the inconsequences confided to posterity by our ancestors. A man need not be extraordinary to be able to make these confidences. The confidences of the common man are as much the stuff of history as those of a ponderous personage. Let me illustrate this by a private letter of a Russian peasant of the 14th century: "Peter to Maria Greeting. I have mowed the meadow, but the townsfolk have taken away the hay. Copy out the deed of purchase and send it here". Evidently Maria was able to write as well as Peter, though they were not high in the social scale and were exploited. But this little note lays bare the life of the village folk in the 14th century Russia. One wishes one could get as vivid a glimpse of our village folk of the same period.

The veil that separates us from character and personality in the past can be pierced only with the help of such informal writing, such little confessions, so to say, confined to the care of time. But for our historians they are mostly non-existent. Many of these may have already perished. Many may be found still to be lingering on, if only one would look for them. They may be found almost everywhere in public offices, business firms, educational institutions and above all, in private houses. I do not say every paper we come across can or should be preserved, but when we throw away any let us remember that there are other things in the universe than Bhrigu Samhita or an

imperial *farman*. Let us bear in mind the archivist's warning, that a document frequently serves purposes beyond the dream of its owners, that a scrap of paper which makes no sense taken singly may reveal a sensational story when read in its proper context, that even a trifle may turn out to be tremendous. We must respect this warning unless we want to throw away the grain with the chaff, or the baby with the bath

IV

RECORDS AND THE PUBLIC

If you are listening to this talk, you are presumably interested in records. Or rather, I should say, you are interested in the academic aspect of records. For every individual *is, has to be,* interested in records as such. This has been true ever since man discovered that he had the faculty of remembering things, and he decided to exercise that faculty because it brought him certain benefits. In fact, the word "record" itself derives out of the Latin word for "memory", or rather heart, which was supposed to be the seat of memory. We are all interested in records. I make a payment, and I take pretty good care to keep the receipt so that my creditor may not make a second demand for the same debt. I pass an examination and treasure the diploma, since that is the evidence of my having attained certain qualifications. A birth certificate is important because it establishes your nationality and age, things necessary to establish your claims to certain social benefits. These are all records. One could go on adding to such examples.

All of us create records, to a greater or less extent, depending on circumstances. An organization creates more

records than an individual does. And the government of a country is one of the largest creators of records. The Government of India, naturally, is no exception.

Records are created by a government in its day to day transactions. But that is not the end of it. Barring such documents which are clearly of ephemeral interest only, the rest of the records are preserved, some for a limited period of time, others indefinitely, for future reference. These are generally kept in a special repository under people specially trained in the art and science of maintaining records. Such repositories are called archives and the specialists are archivists.

The Government of India's repository is the National Archives of India, housed in the impressive pink and brown building at the crossing of Janpath and Rajpath, a landmark familiar to Delhiwallas. It is also an institution in which I have had the pleasure of working for five years.

Naturally, the government's primary interest in preserving records is its own needs, administrative and legal. But for years, other groups of peoples, members of the general public as distinct from the government official, have taken an increasing interest in the government's records. They are the historians. Historians are interested in reconstructing events of the past, and some of the best raw materials for this purpose are the records of transactions kept by the parties to them. Government's activities cover a wide field, and the records pertaining to those activities, naturally, are excellent historical source-materials on the life and conditions of the people of the country.

Now, generally speaking, in older times when governments were more authoritarian, they did not look very kindly on the historians using official records for research

purposes. But gradually this attitude has changed, some times after quite a bit of tussle between the government officials and the scholars. At times the transition has been, let us say, peaceful.

In India, the National Archives had its beginning in 1891, then under the name of the Imperial Record Department, at Calcutta, to take charge of the mass of official records collected from the time of the East India Company. In 1891 it was not quite clear in the minds of officials themselves what exactly were going to be the functions of this new office. Was it only to house the old records and see that they were not destroyed? Or was it also required to weed, if necessary, edit and publish records of public interest, and help prospective researchers?

For 28 years such questions remained undecided. In 1914, the Royal Commission on the Public Records of England and Wales commented on the chaotic condition of the Indian records. This gave a shock and action was taken. In 1919 the Government of India set up the Indian Historical Records Commission for making inquiry and recommendations regarding the following:

(1) the treatment of archives for purposes of historical study in all provinces of India and such Indian States (this was before the merger of the States, you remember) as might seek their advice;

(2) plans for cataloguing, calendaring and reprinting documents;

(3) financial requirements for encouraging research and publishing unpublished historical material;

(4) extent to which access was to be given to researchers to official records; and

(5) training of students in the methods of historical research and selection of editors for publication of documents.

The constitution of the Commission has undergone a great deal of change in the years which followed. What is, however, of interest in this talk tonight, are the achievements of the Commission in the direction of making the rich store-house of historical material in the National Archives available to the interested public—not only access to the records, but also activities directed at facilitating the use of the records by the public.

One cannot go into details in a short talk like this. I will, therefore, content myself with giving you a very summarized account.

First, the right of the *bona fide* student to consult the records in the National Archives. The right had been recognized early, but in effect, it amounted to little as the student originally was permitted only to examine the index. Finally in 1939, the Government agreed to throw open all its records up to 1880 to *bona fide* research students. This was soon followed by drawing up a manual of rational rules regulating access to the archives. This was a great step forward. Even though restrictions remain, those are only normal ones and exist more or less everywhere in the world.

As a result of recommendations made by the Indian are more than 40 years old, are open to research scholars, with certain restrictions.

The next thing was to facilitate the work of the derable proportion of the total accumulation. Accession of of the enormous bulk of the records in which one can easily get lost if not helped by good guides.

As a result of recommendations made by the Indian Historical Records Commission, since 1940 the National

Archives has in hand an ambitious programme of indexing of the manuscript records; publication of certain series *in extenso* with introductions and notes by competent scholars; publication of certain series in calendar form; editing and publication of certain series of records in languages other than English—Bengali, Marathi, Persian, Hindi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Kannada, and so on. To mention at random some of the series of records so intended to be treated—they include the Revenue records, records of the Foreign and Political Department, the Fort William—India House Correspondence (1748-1800); the Bengal and India General Letters (1801-58); selections from the official papers of Minto, Moira, Bentinck, Auckland, Hardinge and Dalhousie, covering the period 1807 to 1856; Bentinck's Madras Papers (1803-07) and the Macaulay Papers; miscellaneous records in oriental languages; and selections from English records on miscellaneous topics: the Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri, the correspondence of Maj. James Browne, the Shore Papers, and so on. The list is long, and a mere recital of them can be boring. Some of this programme has been accomplished; much remains to be done.

In conclusion, I should mention another service the National Archives is rendering to scholarship. It is in the process of acquiring from the archives of various other countries microfilm copies of their records which are of interest to India. Such microfilms have been acquired from the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Norway, the United States and other countries.

Well, as you can see, the programme is ambitious and progress in implementing it has been inevitably slow —inevitably, because the process is expensive and our resources are limited. But with the will to render the service, the goal will, I am sure, some day be achieved.

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