

BRITAIN AND SOUTH-WEST
PERSIA, 1880–1914

Shahbaz Shahnava

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Britain and the opening up of South-West Persia 1880–1914

In the late 1800s, Britain began to put immense pressure on the Shah's government to open up the Karun trade route, which linked the Persian Gulf to the rich provinces in south-west Iran, to its trade and commerce and influence. In October 1888, these pressures resulted in the Iranian government's 'Proclamation', declaring the opening of the River Karun to international navigation, which solely benefited Great Britain in its attempt to penetrate the region.

This book examines the diplomatic activities and behind-the-scene negotiations which eventually led to the Karun opening, including an 'Assurance' given by Britain to the Shah against an anticipated Russian retaliation. It also provides a comprehensive analysis of the region's demography, commerce and industry both before and after the advent of the Karun, and the impact of Britain's political and commercial penetration, which eventually resulted in its total domination of the south.

Apart from its originality and other attributes which make it a genuine contribution to the field, this analytical study of the Anglo-Iranian relationship is also unique in its extensive use of the primary Persian sources and original material found at the Iranian Foreign Ministry archives which have been accessed by the author for the first time.

Shahbaz Shahnavaz holds a BSc in Political Science and an MA in Middle Eastern Studies from Tehran University, an MSc in International Relations from the University of London and a DPhil. in Economic History from Oxford University. He was a member-designate of the academic staff at Tehran University and has worked in senior consultancy and executive positions in some of the Persian Gulf region's major financial institutions and banks.

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Britain and the opening up of South-West Persia 1880–1914

A study in imperialism and economic
dependence

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To the memory of my parents
Mohtaram Pezeshk (Shahnavaz)
and Gholam Reza Shahnavaz

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کانال سرزمین تارخ

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If there is any credit for this work, it should go to those named above. The faults and mistakes are all mine.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|---|
| A&P | Accounts and papers |
| Admin. | Administration, administrative |
| Amin | Amin-us-Soltan, Ali Asghar Khan |
| CHI | <i>Cambridge History of Iran</i> |
| EHI | <i>Economic History of Iran</i> , C. Issawi |
| Etemad | Etemad-us-Saltaneh, Mohammad Hasan Khan |
| FO | Foreign Office |
| Gulf (PG) | Persian Gulf |
| HMG | His (Her) Majesty's Government |
| IO | India Office |
| IOR | India Office Records |
| Malkam | Malkam Khan, Nazem-ud-Dowleh |
| MFAA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, Iran |
| Moshir | Moshir-ud-Dowleh, Yahya Khan |
| Najm | Najm-ul-Molk, Mirza Abd-ul-Ghaffar |
| PRO | Public Record Office |
| Qaragozlu | Abd Ullah Khan |
| Shatt | Shatt-ul-Arab (Arvand Rud) |
| WO | War Office |
| Zel | Zel-us-Soltan, Masud Mirza |

Transliteration

The transliteration system has generally followed that in use by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. To the extent possible, however, the system has been modified to reflect the exact Farsi pronunciation of the names and titles with a few exceptions, where the existing method has been kept owing to its widespread usage (e.g. Muhammareh instead of Mohammareh and Najm-ul-Molk instead of Najm-ol-Molk).

1 Introduction

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South-West Persia, geographical matrix and the peoples

The River Karun (Figure 1.1) rises in the mountain ranges to the west of Esfahan. On the way to the Shatt-ul-Arab (or Arvand Rud) and the Persian Gulf it touches or traverses the provinces of Lorestan, Bakhtiyari, and Khuzestan (Figure 1.2). In the official correspondence of the period under study, this region was referred to by the British as South-West Persia and roughly speaking its limits were Kermanshah on the north, Hamadan on the north-east, Esfahan on the east, Fars on the south, the Persian Gulf on the south-west, and finally the present-day Irano-Iraqi frontier on the west. The term South-West Persia, therefore, was a geographical and not a political concept, devised for the sake of convenience. Throughout this book, then, the term 'region' refers to this area as a whole.

Lorestan, strictly speaking, included the Bakhtiyari territory as well as Lorestan proper. In 1889 the area of Lorestan proper was estimated to be about 42,000 square miles.¹ The limits of the Bakhtiyari generally coincided with the mountains and foothills of the Karun basin and the district between the northern tributaries of the Karun and Dez rivers, except that on the north-east flank of the Zagrus they crossed the watershed to the upper valley of the Zayandeh Rud, and in the south-east excluded the Ab-e-Khersin tributary valleys. The area within these boundaries was about 17,000 square miles.²

Situated on the south-western flanks of the central Zagrus, in the region of low Karun, lies the single largest expanse of true lowland within Iran. This riverine area, roughly triangular in shape, is defined by the NE-SW ridge of the Zagrus, by the eastern coast of the head of the Persian Gulf and by the Irano-Iraqi frontier. In the 1880s its area was estimated at 28,000 square miles.³

At its widest point, Khuzestan is between 120 to 150 miles across. From sea-level in the south for a distance of about 75 miles the surface is extremely low-lying and flat. The only breach is at Ahvaz. But farther north-east the physiography remains relatively flat. The transition from extremely flat plains to hill ridges and mountain is abrupt, but especially so in the Karun area.⁴ The lowland segment, which forms a large part of Khuzestan, has considerable potential

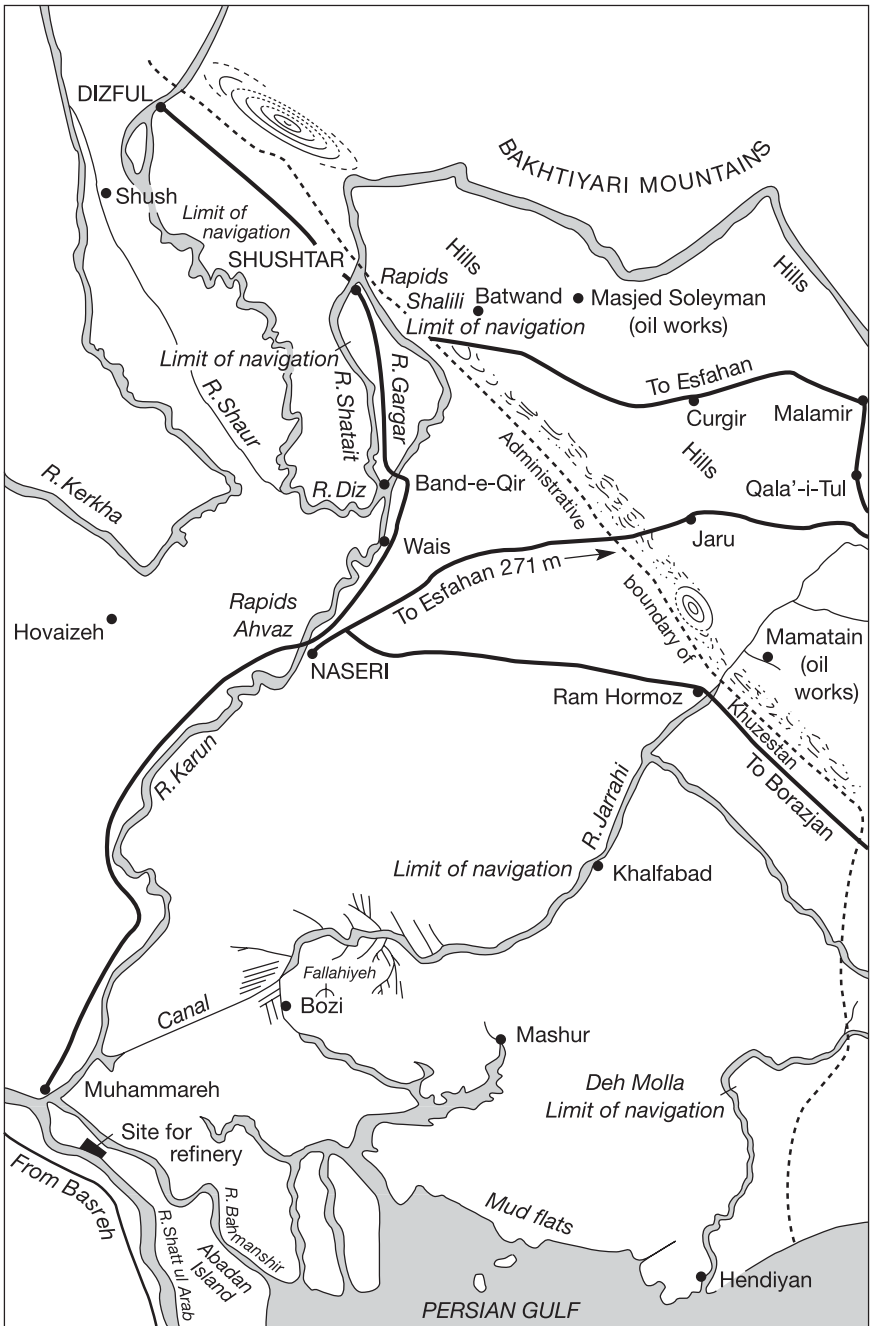


Figure 1.1 The River Karun and Khuzestan

for agricultural development since it is the best-watered region of Iran outside the highlands themselves and the Caspian coastal plains. Five great rivers funnel the runoff from 45,000 square miles of the high Zagrus into this plain of 15,000 square miles.⁵ In earlier times, this area was famed as one of the most bountiful regions of Asia, producing cereals, sugar cane,⁶ rice and dates in abundance. This was due to the establishment of an elaborate system of barrages, tunnels, and canals utilizing to the fullest degree the water resources. The rivers provided one means of natural irrigation, known as *faryab*,⁷ which was much more common in the northern half of the province. The essential prerequisite for an extensive use of *faryab* was the necessity for the constant upkeep of the irrigation networks. This in turn presupposed the existence of security and a strong centralized authority to guarantee it.

Apart from devastations by Mongols and the hazards of floods, it has been suggested that other causes of the decline of the Khuzestan region in the past were the lack of artificial drainage, resulting in the rise in the water table under irrigated land. Waterlogging induced alkalization and salinization. Hence the Abbasids' desperate attempt to irrigate new lands of poorer quality and the conscription of slaves for the removal of salt crusts from the fields in the same period.⁸

During the period under study, the region was inhabited by three different ethnic groups, namely Persians, Lors, and Arabs. The population was predominantly nomadic. On the flat plains of Khuzestan were settled various Arab tribes, who at different times had migrated to this area, and of whom the most important were the Kabs.⁹ The principal tribes which populated northern Khuzestan and Lorestan were 'severally known' as Feyli, Kohgilu, Mamasani, and Bakhtiyari,¹⁰ all of which fell 'strictly under the generic classification of Lors'.¹¹ This region was an area of great ethnic complexity and admixture,¹² and the tribal units were to some extent defined by political, rather than ethnic or geographical criteria.¹³

From early times the population of Iran has derived its living from pastoral agriculture and has been accustomed to take its flocks in summer to nearby pastures. Such groups, although they lived in summer in tents, were not strictly speaking nomadic, though they were sometimes tribal. What distinguished them from the settled population was the absence of settled villages and their seasonal migration for short or long distances.¹⁴ The main concentration of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes in Persia since the early Islamic centuries seems to have been in South-West Persia.¹⁵ Here, however, the focus of our attention is on the historical background to the population of Khuzestan¹⁶ whose Arab population is said to have come to the province with the Islamic conquest of Iran in AD 641,¹⁷ although some authorities believe that the settlements of some of the Arabs pre-date that event.¹⁸ This influx of Arabs into Khuzestan, in any event, continued.

By the nineteenth century, within the province of Khuzestan, there were several Arab tribal confederations, the most important of which were the Kab of Fallahiyeh, the Mohaysin of Muhammareh,¹⁹ and the Bani Torof of the

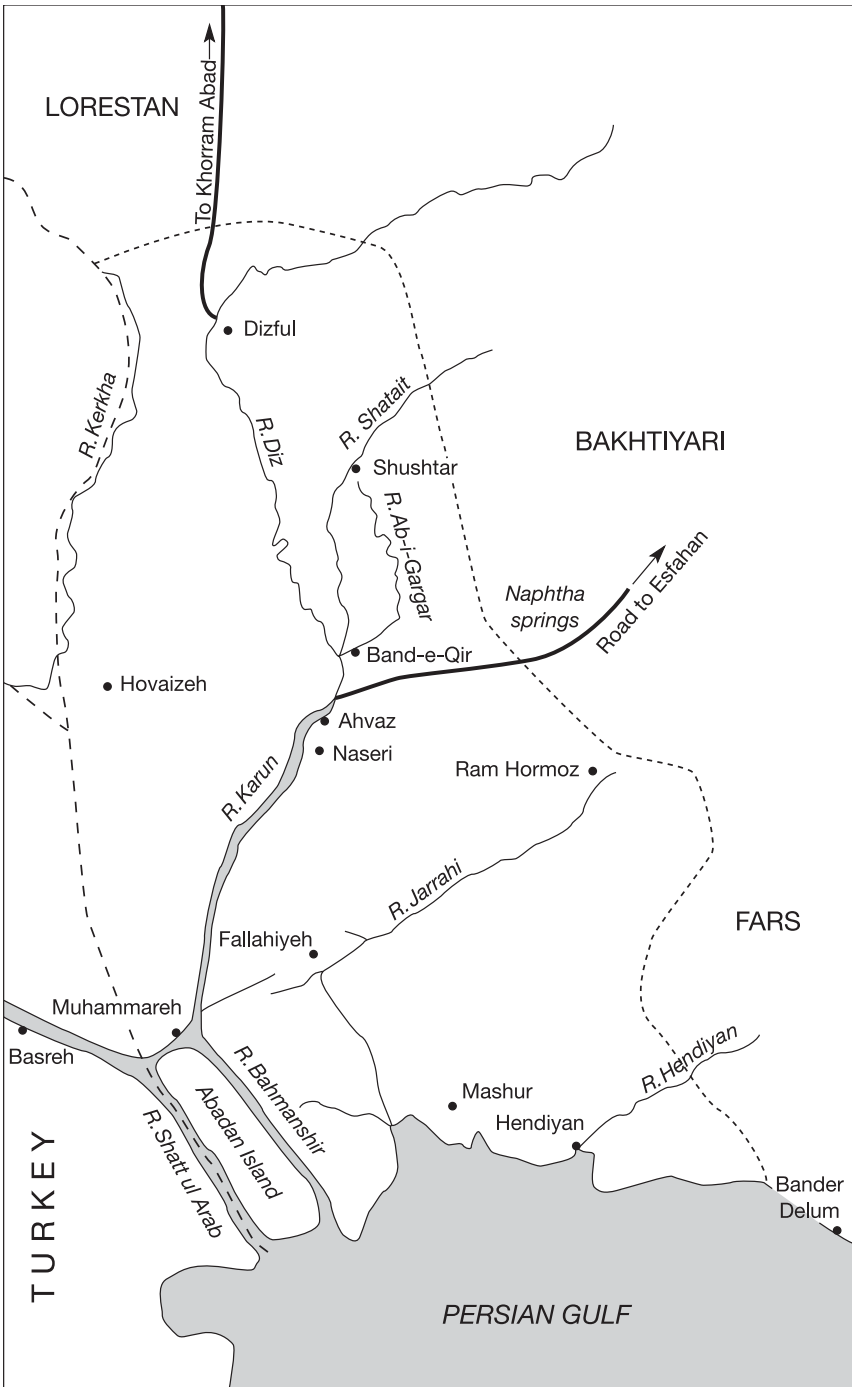


Figure 1.2 Sketch map of Khuzestan

Karkheh/Hoveizeh districts.²⁰ In olden days, all the Arab tribes of the province were united under a *Vali*.²¹ In this period the most numerous and important of the Arab people were the Kabs of whom there were originally 72 tribes. In origin, Kabs are said to be a branch of the Banu Khafajah, which had emigrated some centuries before Islam into the present-day Iraq. At the end of the sixteenth century, they were first settled in Quban, a small village in southern Khuzestan.²² At the zenith of their power, under Sheykh Salman in the 1760s, the Kabs held sway over most of SE Khuzestan and the mouth of the Shatt.²³ As a result of their contacts with sedentary Persians and Arabs such as the Mushashas, they acquired a more urban and civilized polish, and even adopted the Shia faith.²⁴

It is from the campaign waged against them in 1765 by Karim Khan-e-Zand, and the two years of war with the British and Turks (1766–8), that the decline of the Kabs can be dated. Their acceptance of Iranian suzerainty, convenient and safe in the chaos following Nader Shah's death (the 1750s and early 1760s), acquired a more permanent and burdensome character as Karim Khan's interest in the Persian Gulf grew.²⁵ Salman's brother, Thamir, was the last powerful chief of the Al-bu-Nasir or the ruling family of Fallahiyeh, which after him sank into secondary position. Although the title of Sheykh-ul-Mashayekh was reserved for the Kab chief, the star of the Mohaysin tribe of Muhammareh began to rise in its place.²⁶

The real founder of the Muhammareh ruling family was Sheykh Jabir Khan (?–1881) who ruled his tribe for some 70 years. It appears that, until the Anglo-Persian war of 1857, he was still under the control of the Kab chiefs. However, during the war Jabir, unlike the Sheykh-ul-Mashayekh who sided with the British, had assisted the Persian government, and was rewarded by Persia with the official title of Governor of Muhammareh and the *Sarhad Dar* (frontier keeper) and later, in 1861, with the title of Nosrat-ul-Molk. By contrast, the Kab sheykh was captured and sent to Tehran.²⁷

After this episode, the provincial administration also put the Bavi tribe under direct jurisdiction of the Mohaysins.²⁸ The sheykh of Fallahiyeh and valis of Hoveizeh (of the Montafeq tribes) also gradually declined into nominees of the sheykh of Muhammareh. Jabir died in October 1881²⁹ and was replaced by his son Mazal who was murdered through a plot in which nearly all the sheykh were involved. Jabir's youngest son, Khazal replaced his brother in 1897.

In the period under study, the Arab tribes of Khuzestan were divided into five sections or tribal confederations, each of which had its own sheykh. The tribal patterns of social and political organization of these confederations were similar. These tribal groupings were hierarchical in nature, with the tribal confederation being the largest and the tribal section the smallest unit of social organization. Between them there were several other levels, each of which was dependent on the higher level, and in turn exercised jurisdiction over the lower levels.³⁰ In theory, the authority of the paramount chief, or the sheykh, was supreme. But it was the existence of the 'Council of Greybeards' which distinguished the Arab tribal system from, say, that of the Bakhtiyaris. This was a

'very shadowy remnant of the elective principle'³¹ which to some extent restricted the executive powers of the sheykh. For instance Khazal, as the chief of the Arabs of Khuzestan, ruled 'with the consent, implied if not expressed, of the elders of the various tribes'.³² The exact duties, authority and composition of this council were unclear, apart from the fact that, as its members, the 'grey-beards of the tribe'³³ exerted immense influence in the cases of succession. In the important Arab tribes, for instance, the succession rested to a great extent with the greybeards and as a rule the eldest and ablest member of the ruling family succeeded 'independently of any nomination by the late sheykh'. If, on the death of the sheykh, the greybeards were not unanimous, tribes 'frequently divide, each section following the sheykh of their choice'. In the case of petty tribes the paramount sheykh appointed the successor himself.³⁴

It appears that the deposition of a sheykh was a more difficult task for the council. Again in theory, without the sanction of the elders the sheykh could not legitimize his actions. It has even been suggested that in Fallahiyeh, 'if at any time they do not want the sheykh . . . they would put his shoes together and tell him, "in the name of God go"', and 'the sheykh will not dare to stay, or will be killed'.³⁵ But historical evidence suggests that in practice most of the sheykhs did not pay much attention to the desires of the elders in this regard. As a consequence, the second alternative, namely the assassination of the ruling sheykh by the 'combined action of tribal leaders',³⁶ had almost become the standard procedure. Hence the great number of Arab chiefs who were murdered by their close relatives.³⁷

Around 1890, the administrative partition of Khuzestan was into eight districts,³⁸ subordinate to the governor-general who was appointed by the Shah. These districts were administered either by a Persian deputy governor or by a sheykh of one of the ruling Arab families appointed by the government.³⁹ The central government's demands were comparatively simple: recognition by the sheykhs and submission characterized by the payment of taxes and observance of royal suzerainty. In order to achieve these goals, and in the absence of a strong army, the tribal policies of Fath Ali Shah were pursued by his successors as well. In other words, the Qajar government could maintain its position by its military superiority, its great prestige and authority, and its ability to manipulate and divide the tribes through the utilization of inter-tribal rivalries.⁴⁰ The tribal leaders and their close relatives were also detained as hostage for the good conduct of the tribe. In the absence of a powerful central authority, this tribal policy, although practical, could not always be successful. Hence insecurity became a hallmark of the nomadic regions of Iran. Naturally, the government's hold over these areas was shaky. This enabled, indeed induced, foreign powers, especially Britain, to manipulate the chiefs and influence the course of events in their own favour. Up to the late 1880s, thanks to the uncompromising attitude of Naser-ud-Din Shah, the British had been denied a firm foothold in the region. But the opening of the Karun afforded them just such an opportunity and they did not hesitate to exploit it fully and gradually turn it into a stranglehold over that part of the country.

Geography of the Karun river

Of all the rivers of Khuzestan, the Karun is the most important since, being the only navigable river in Iran, it 'is the most feasible entry into Persia for commercial purposes'.⁴¹ The Karun rises in the knotted Bakhtiyari mountains, some 100 miles to the west of Esfahan, at Kuh Rang on the Zagrus. It then pursues a westerly course through wild gorges and upland plains until, emerging from the hills some 15 miles to the north of Shushtar, it turns sharply to the south and follows a sinuous course over the wide alluvial plains that stretch to the Shatt and the Persian Gulf.⁴² An important right-bank tributary of the Karun, the Dez, flows from the mountains through the town of Dezful and joins the Karun at Band-e-Qir. Here, the geography of the Karun will be traced from the mouth into the interior. It communicates in two ways with the sea, by a direct and an indirect channel. About 40 miles from the mouth of the Shatt, above the entrance to the estuary at Fao and about 20 miles below the port of Basra, the Karun flows into the Shatt from the north-east by an artificial channel known as the Haffar Canal. The Karun discharges the greater part of its waters into the Shatt by this channel⁴³ the full length of which is about 3 miles.⁴⁴

At the time of the Karun opening, the town of Muhammareh, which was later renamed Khorram Shahr and became the chief port of Iran, was situated a little more than a mile up the canal on its right bank. As a port even at that time Muhammareh presented unusual advantages. It could be reached by the ocean steamers of moderate tonnage by the Shatt and by the Khor-e-Bahmanshir,⁴⁵ which unlike the Shatt was completely in Persian territory. Thus, as early as the 1840s, some experts held the view that Muhammareh could easily absorb much of the trade carried on with Basra.⁴⁶

From Muhammareh to Ahvaz, i.e. upon the lower Karun, the distance by water is about 120 miles and by land less than 80. Throughout this distance the Karun is a broad and stately river, commonly from 300 yards to quarter of a mile,⁴⁷ and sometimes more,⁴⁸ in width. The general course of the river in this part is NNE and SSW, and there is commonly from 13–16 feet of water⁴⁹ at high water and 6–7 at low.⁵⁰ On average, the draft of water nearly up to Ahvaz is stated to be the same as that on the Tigris to Baghdad (i.e. 3 feet 6 inches).⁵¹

After the opening of the river, the average journey time from Muhammareh to Ahvaz was 16½, and in the opposite direction 10½ hours. The velocity of a full current was from 4–5 miles in the hour, of a low current from 2 to 1½.⁵² A steamer ascending the stream from Muhammareh would meet no impediments up to Ahvaz. There the submerged rocks gave rise to a series of rapids,⁵³ which created the practical barrier to continuous navigation. Above the site of the ancient Ahvaz dam other rocks, which crossed the bed of the river extended about 800 yards to the north.⁵⁴ Between the two reefs navigation could not take place,⁵⁵ but from the upper reef to Shushtar it was continuously navigable. The custom then was to unload goods at the lower rocks and to convey them on mule-back beyond the upper rocks, where they were reshipped.⁵⁶ The ridges

caused a difference of level of about 10 feet in something under a mile. In 1881 a British engineer, Wells, suggested a line for the construction of a canal.⁵⁷ Already steamboats had been taken more than once up the main rapids, partly by steam power and partly by tow-lines.⁵⁸ Najm believed that it was possible, by making locks or by some other means, to enable vessels to cross the rapids and proceed to Shushtar without hindrance. However he argued that the cost of such a project would be too great, and also that the serious communication difficulties, which existed between Shushtar and the interior would make such measures futile.⁵⁹

Obviously having their own interests in mind, the British insisted that what Persia 'urgently' needed was an easy highway from some of its richest but most inaccessible provinces.⁶⁰ As far as the interests and security of Iran were concerned, however, this could be seen as a very good reason not to open up the country to the foreigners. The Persians could still remember that during the war of 1857 some British vessels had been conveyed beyond the rapids to Band-e-Qir and had come very close to destroying Shushtar. Therefore, Najm warned the Shah that 'to link Shushtar to the Shatt would be tantamount to linking it to Bombay and London. Why, then, should Iran incur great expense merely to open a road for her enemies?' Thus, he suggested that the Persian government should put two steamers on the Karun, one below and one above the *band*, and the cargo at Ahvaz could be transshipped by land.⁶¹

Between Ahvaz and Band-e-Qir, a stretch of some 45 miles, the river is narrower. The streams which converge at the latter place and from which the Karun emerges are the Ab-e-Dez, or the Dez which runs from Dezful on the west; Chahar Dangeh⁶² (also known as Shatayt) or Karun proper that runs from Shushtar, in the centre; and the Do Dangeh,⁶³ also known as Gar Gar which flows from Shushtar on the east and constitutes the eastern boundary of the island so formed, namely Miyanab. The Dez descends from a distant source in the Zagrus. Of the trio, at this time the Do Dangeh was used for the river traffic to Shushtar. It could be ascended by steamboats for 45 miles, to a point called Shalili, which was about 6 miles from the town itself. The final section of the Karun from above Shushtar to its source in the Zard Kuh is not navigable.

Great Britain, the River Karun and South-West Persia

Unkind fate placed Persia between Russian hammer and the British anvil. The struggle of the two giant empires, whether for Constantinople, Central Asia, or the Far East, were instantly reflected and echoed at Tehran.⁶⁴

The history of nineteenth-century Iran is a history of rivalries between these two Powers. Each endeavoured to impose its own hegemony upon Iran through a combination of intimidation, naked aggression, commerce, and concessions. To use any of these, each of the two needed to 'provide herself with access to as much of Persian territory as possible, while denying it to others'.⁶⁵ The crucial importance, which the question of transportation attained in the last quarter of

the nineteenth century should be studied in the light of this intensification of competition between Britain and Russia.

Direct British trade with Basra dates from 1635, and the earliest record in the British archives regarding the affairs of Khuzestan is a dispatch dated 9 April 1767 referring to the Kabs.⁶⁶ The increasing commercial and political importance to Britain of the Persian Gulf littoral and the Gulf itself indicated the insufficient amount of information at her disposal. Hence the British attempts to carry out 'geographical surveys' in the area including Khuzestan and Mesopotamia in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ People like Lynch, Campbell, and Felix Jones were among those who between the late 1830s and early 1850s were actively involved in these 'surveys'.⁶⁸ Selby also studied the Karun with its branches and affluents. Among the prominent figures who covered South-West Persia were Rawlinson, Layard and a member of the Russian Legation at Tehran, de Bode. Of all these 'surveyors', Layard's mission seems to have been the most sinister. Between 1838 and 1842 there was an undeclared war between Britain and Persia over the question of Herat.⁶⁹ It was against this background that Layard continued his 'remarkable wanderings' in South-West Persia. Persian officials evidently entertained strong objections to his presence in the region, believing no doubt that he was a British spy. It was also feared that some harm might befall him. Therefore, the governor-general of Khuzestan was said to have issued an order for Layard's arrest.⁷⁰

One of his 'principal objects' was to open the southern provinces of Iran to British influence and trade. For example, on his 1841 journey in Khuzestan he collected 'a quantity of commercial as well as geographical and political information', and obtained promises from the sheykhs that they would do 'all in their power to promote and facilitate British trade, if established'. Layard, according to British sources, had 'explained to them' that external trade relations 'would tend to check local Persian tyranny and misgovernment'.⁷¹ He also worked in 1840 as an intermediary between the rebellious Bakhtiyari chief, Mohammad Taqi Khan, and the British authorities. On behalf of that chief, he proposed that 'if a rupture occurred (between Britain and Iran) the British should avail themselves of his armed assistance against Persia, undertaking in return to protect him' and recognize him as the paramount chief of the region.⁷² Apparently as a result of these relations, during the 1857 war with Iran the British local officials received some assistance from some of the sheykhs.⁷³

The latter part of Naser-ud-Din Shah's reign (reigned 1848–96) showed evidence of increasing Russian influence and pressure in northern Persia, though it was 'rather commercial than military in character'.⁷⁴ Britain too strove to increase its influence in the south. Therefore, in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, Iran was under the thumb of Russia in the north, while Britain held sway in the south. 'We should occupy the ground commercially' and thereby politically, it was said, 'now that Russia is occupied in consolidating her position on the N.E. frontier of Persia' since, it was feared, as soon as it was clear there Russia would turn its attention southward.⁷⁵ Under these circumstances, establishing the Karun trade route, which meant the opening of the

river as well as the construction of carriage roads and/or railway lines to the interior, became the object of special British solicitude in the 1880s. By this time the great value of the route had become fully recognized.⁷⁶

Thus in order to be able to respond to the politico-economic challenge of Russia, Britain urged upon the Shah the opening of this route which was equally advantageous to Britain from a 'political' as well as 'a commercial point of view'.⁷⁷ Politically, it would give England as the country which would most largely employ the new route paramount influence in southern Persia, while the possibility of bringing troops within a few hundred miles of Iran's important centres would naturally contribute to the re-establishment of British influence in Tehran. As a commercial enterprise the opening of the route had two major goals:

- 1 to divert the British traffic from the long, arduous and expensive route of Bushehr–Esfahan to the shorter one of Shushtar–Esfahan;
- 2 to develop and utilize the 'vast resources of the fertile districts of Persia to the north of Dezfūl', as far even as Azarbayjan, and to attract the produce of those areas which at that time either 'lie unused'⁷⁸ or followed the Baghdad route, to the new, cheaper and more direct route.

In order to put this move in its proper context, it is worth mentioning that in the 1870s and 1880s, British merchants complained that they suffered from two different types of competitions in Iran. The major threat, of course came from Russia while the other one stemmed from the Iranian merchants⁷⁹ especially in the south. They argued that some 20 years previously British merchants had 'almost monopolised the trade of Persia' whereas around 1880 English goods were 'rarely seen' beyond Esfahan, and even at that place Russian produce was sold 'in equal quantity with British merchandize'.⁸⁰ The British blamed this on the development of steam navigation on the Caspian and the construction of good roads from there to Tehran and Mashad. Further, the construction of a railway line from the Caspian to Tehran was thought to be imminent at this time. So, it was believed that if nothing was done towards developing communications with the Persian Gulf, British trade would be driven out of all the important and wealthy parts of Iran. The end of the Karun navigation at Shushtar was nearer to central Persia than Bushehr was, not only by the 170 miles of river and estuary, but also by the 180 miles of sea between Bushehr and the mouth of the Shatt. In other words, '320 miles of water carriage may, by means of the Karun route be substituted for as many miles of pack saddle transport by the Bushehr one. To realize what this means, let us imagine for a moment the whole traffic between London and Scotland carried on by means of beasts of burden, and then a line of steamers to be suddenly started between London and Berwick'.⁸¹

On the other hand this route was to some extent used by Iranian merchants, e.g. Sheykh Jaber of Muhammareh had an English-built steamer trading on the Karun between Muhammareh and Ahvaz. The British feared that if this trade

increased and Persians were thus allowed the privilege of using the Karun route, British commerce would be driven from the 'interior of Persia by the native merchants, who would be able to import their goods at a much smaller cost than the foreigners'.⁸² The opening of the Karun was, as an over-optimistic Englishman put it then, a question of opening 'the whole of a vast empire, with many millions of inhabitants, and with rich and rare products to give in exchange to commerce with Great Britain and India'.⁸³

In the 1870s and 1880s, numerous proposals were made to the Iranian government for the opening of the Karun route, but the Shah had successfully resisted the pressures and blocked them. However, it seems that the arrival in Tehran of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff changed everything.

2 **British policy in Persia and Wolff's mission**

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff and his mission

Wolff is a magician, an enchanter. He goes to Egypt, and arranges everything to the advantage of England; He starts for Turkey, and a revolution in England's favour breaks out at Philippoli. He arrives at Tehran, and in the course of a few months Persian affairs assume a perfectly new aspect.¹

The appointment of Wolff to Tehran in 1888 showed renewed interest on the part of Britain in Persia. For almost two and a half years a junior diplomat had been in charge of the British Legation² whereas the Russian Legation for most of this period had been headed by Prince Dolgorouki.³ An ambitious and aggressive diplomat with a sense of his own and his country's superiority, Dolgorouki was convinced that 'the torch of Russia's historic mission in the East had been handed to him personally that he might encompass some great deal by its light'.⁴ Upon arriving in Tehran, therefore, he assumed with the Shah and his ministers the tone of the ruler of a conquered province. Russia intimated in no uncertain terms that Persia should place itself under Russia's exclusive tutelage and protection.⁵ This situation had been accentuated since the arrival of the prince whose high-handed behaviour offended and frightened the Shah, who found it 'nearly intolerable'.⁶ As a result of this, he turned for help to Nicolson. By 1888 the Shah's despair became acute enough to convince Nicolson that some definite statement of goodwill had to be forthcoming in order to avert his wholesale capitulation to Russia.⁷ The Shah told the British envoy that he did not expect Britain to give him money or arms but a firm guarantee. He wished to be perfectly sure that, should Russia seize Persian territory, England 'will demand the evacuation or take measures where she can strike Russia, as would cause the latter to hesitate in her action'.⁸ Salisbury replied that the integrity of Persia was very important to his government but England could not pledge itself to go to war 'in eventualities which could not even vaguely be foreseen'.⁹

This was the state of Anglo-Persian relations before Wolff's appointment. Consultations between the India Office and the Foreign Office had been taking place since 1885 on the subject of Ronald Thomson's successor.¹⁰ There were

different candidates including Rawlinson for the job, but the choice finally devolved upon Wolff, who in December 1887 was appointed to Tehran,¹¹ and whose appointment was approved by the Shah with 'much pleasure'.¹² Son of Joseph Wolff, the well-known missionary whose journey to Bokhara in 1843 had captured the early Victorian imagination, Sir Henry was a remarkable individual. Well educated, clever, and outwardly cynical, Wolff has been described as a 'true representative of a nation that was becoming emotionally conscious of its imperial destiny'.¹³ His diplomatic experience had already been long and his work 'praiseworthy'. He was a many-sided and ambitious man who energetically probed and investigated every line of procedure.¹⁴ He poured forth an unending stream of commercial and diplomatic ideas and schemes.¹⁵ However, perhaps the crucial point was that Wolff had ties to both the City and Westminster. He sat in the House of Commons, was a founder of the Primrose League, and numbered among his friends the Rothschilds, the Sassoons, and Julius de Reuter.¹⁶ It might not be irrelevant to point out that he was of Jewish descent.¹⁷ He also boasted about his intimate relations with Lord Randolph Churchill.¹⁸ Therefore, his varied past of high finance, domestic politics, and diplomatic missions in the Near East fitted him to play an eminent role in Iran.¹⁹

It would be justifiable to conceive of Wolff's general policy on Iran and the particular interest he took in Khuzestan. He arrived in Tehran with elaborate plans, ostensibly for Persia's material 'development'. It was believed that Persia was 'deplorably infirm' and that her regeneration 'must doubtless be worked out by foreign aid, and to some extent by foreign capital' but 'native' enterprise, 'native' industry, and most important of all 'native' resources 'must play some part' in the undertaking.²⁰ Wolff has been described as 'a perfect example of the spirit of imperialism'²¹ of the late nineteenth century. He believed in the primacy of economics. Government and diplomacy were only means for the achievement of economic ends. When he came to Iran, Wolff's single most important goal was the so-called 'development' of Persia's natural resources and not only, as scholars like Greaves suggest,²² the country's preservation as a buffer state. '[E]very encouragement', he advised, 'should be given to European capitalists to establish themselves in Persia and to develop its resources'²³ which at that time enjoyed a considerable reputation in England. Though no thorough survey had been made of Iran's resources, travellers from Sir John Chardin onwards remarked on Persian minerals and oil, and there was a widespread belief that the exploitation of Persian resources would 'dwarf the result either of the shaking of the pagoda-tree in India, the gold-seeking of Australia, or the oil-well enterprise of America'.²⁴ Wolff's own idea of these riches was somewhat similar. 'At present', he informed Salisbury only a few days after his arrival, 'Persia is a virgin soil; mines and forests of considerable richness remain perfectly untouched, and with the exception of the small line to the Shah Abdul Azim . . . railway enterprise is unknown'.²⁵ He was equally fascinated by Khuzestan's resources. He thought with the opening of the Karun, the province would regain its old prosperity,²⁶ and with little care it could be made 'a second Egypt'. 'Tobacco, rice, dates, grain . . . cotton, indigo, and opium could all be

grown there,' he said, 'Sugar had, at one time, been very abundant. Tent-cloth and coarse woollens were extensively manufactured while naphtha and bitumen are also produced'.²⁷

In his aim of 'developing' and thus opening up Persia, Wolff had great faith in the efficacy of British investment. He conceived that the introduction of English capital, and the 'English mode of doing business will be of essential good to the country'.²⁸ But there were difficulties in the way. First, the British investors were sceptical of the Shah's regime. Second, Russia, if nothing was done to offset its influence, would block all British projects. His view was that 'the best hope of salvation for Persia' was to interest all powers in its independence,²⁹ and to combine its interests 'commercially' with them.³⁰ On the other hand, Wolff tried to come to an understanding on Persia with Russia, which was quite natural. What was, however, unique about this proposed entente was Wolff's belief that this could be achieved through the mutual exploitation of Iran rather than by rivalry and friction. Thus, before leaving London, Wolff had a conversation with the Russian Ambassador there, who told him that Dolgorouki had been instructed to maintain with him the best relations.³¹ Therefore, upon arrival in Tehran, Wolff offered the Russian Legation discussions with regard to the future of Persia. Dolgorouki in turn urged Wolff to provide him with a basis for negotiations, which the latter duly prepared and delivered to him as a confidential letter.³² In this document Wolff proposed a 'Convention' regulating the relations between the three Powers (with the third being Iran) and the appointment of a 'Technical Commission' with the object of preparing a 'report on the means of communication necessary to develop the natural resources of the country'.³³ The Shah, for his part, was to publish a 'Law' regulating the conditions of concessions to be granted for these undertakings, to establish a 'Commercial Code', and 'Mixed Tribunals' to administer this code. The Shah would also appoint a 'Mixed Commission' for the preparation of a 'Civil and Criminal Code'. Through the implementation of these projects, Wolff informed Dolgorouki, he hoped that 'we may arrive at a solution which may . . . satisfy the legitimate requirements of the two countries that we represent, and open a new field to the commerce and industry of the world'.³⁴

Indeed, Wolff's proposal to the Russian Legation, and later to the Russian Emperor himself,³⁵ amounted to nothing less than a harmonious partnership in the exploitation of Iran and its resources. Dolgorouki's only remark was that 'the principal difficulty in the way of an arrangement was the fact that where British commerce flourished, Russian trade failed'.³⁶ So in order to alleviate Russia's fears Wolff was prepared to go even further. He spoke of the recognition of Russia's 'legitimate and praiseworthy' object, which was 'that of access to the Persian Gulf'. If carried out in a peaceable manner, he could not see 'why England should not give her assistance to such a project'.³⁷ This policy, if adopted, would have constituted a major departure from the old British policy of excluding Russia from the southern parts of Iran and the Persian Gulf, and seems wholly incompatible with the so-called 'buffer-state policy', which was allegedly being pursued by the British government and Wolff at this time.

Enough has been written and said about the political aspects of the Wolff mission whose object has been described as the 'revitalization of the buffer policy'.³⁸ But it is worth noting that, other than odd references to the desirability of the maintenance of Iran's integrity and independence, nowhere in the instructions given to Wolff by Salisbury was there any explicit reference to this policy. Nor was there anything about endeavouring to reach an understanding with Russia. Instead, it was stated emphatically that the British envoy should try to bring about 'progress' in the internal conditions of the country which, of course, meant 'opening the south of Persia to British and other foreign commerce by improved means of communication'.³⁹ As a matter of fact, during the last two decades of the nineteenth century it was invariably the Persian government which would raise the question of its integrity and independence and press Britain for an assurance of some kind against what was perceived as the Russian threat.⁴⁰ And, again invariably, it was the British government that would link this question with the internal 'development' of the country. It was argued that the establishment of British influence in southern Persia, 'where Russia has at present made little way',⁴¹ and the opening of commercial communications in that portion of the empire by British traders was the best, 'if not, indeed, the only counter move that can be made by this country to the rapid extension of Russian influence over northern Persia'.⁴² And in the instructions, Wolff was informed of the fact that the efforts of the British government had been principally directed 'of late years'⁴³ towards this goal, and the questions of opening the Karun, and constructing roads and railways were specifically mentioned.

On the other hand 'the hopeless state of misgovernment'⁴⁴ existing in Persia was even referred to by the Persian minister in London, Malkam Khan who spoke, as the British officials put it, 'earnestly and despondently of the rapid decadence' of his country, and of the 'general feebleness of the Shah's rule'.⁴⁵ These criticisms were, however, met by other British officials who, by virtue of long association with the country and its people, had a good understanding of the situation. For instance, Colonel Smith argued that 'the condition of the country is . . . far from being the hopeless and wretched one which such a state of affairs would lead one to suppose'. He pointed out that the people were a strong, healthy race, 'remarkably active both in mind and body, intelligent and imaginative in the very highest degree, and with a spirit still uncrushed by either want or oppression'.⁴⁶ Therefore, it was thought that the rescue of Persia would not be impossible, but the way to do it was the introduction of new social and economic, particularly fiscal, reforms. And Wolff realized this too.

In Iran, he embarked on numerous projects and carried through more schemes than had any British Minister for many years. The reasons for Wolff's success where others had failed lay in his experience, energy, tenacity, and perhaps his prestige. It should be added that the moment was opportune too. As a successful negotiator, he finally managed to alleviate the main stumbling block in the way of his plans, i.e. the Shah's dread of Russia's reaction, notwithstanding the fact that the 'assurance' which he eventually gave the Shah was neither as strong nor as clear as the Shah had always demanded.

Proclamation for the Security of Life and Property

An Oriental government never had more than three departments: finance (plunder at home), war (plunder at home and abroad), and public works (provision for reproduction).⁴⁷

In his (the Shah's) person are fused the three-fold functions of government; legislative, executive, and judicial.⁴⁸

In Iran, Wolff's first efforts were directed towards inducing the Shah to issue a Proclamation securing the rights of property of his subjects.⁴⁹ Only a few days after his arrival Wolff observed that he was much struck by the 'general demeanour of the Persians', and what appeared to him as their 'aptitude for civilisation'.⁵⁰ This observation was verified by other foreigners, officials and travellers alike, who had come into contact with Persians. For instance Rawlinson,⁵¹ with his long experience of the so-called 'Orientals', rated the capabilities of the Persians far above their neighbours, and Colonel R.M. Smith, the man who was in charge of the Persian Telegraph Department for a long time, described them as 'one of the finest races in the world physically and intellectually'.⁵² The soil, too, was 'extremely rich wherever water touches it'.⁵³ However, despite these potential sources of wealth, the country was generally in a state of decay. A British official observed that the poverty of Persia meant the poverty of the inhabitants, and this appearance of poverty was enhanced by the fact that 'no man dares appear abroad decently dressed, or with a large suit', unless a powerful personage. Such a sign of being well-to-do, he observed, 'would immediately subject him to extortionate pressure'.⁵⁴ As regards the general state of the country, Wolff too believed that this situation was a result of 'maladministration which itself is a fruit of mixed rapacity and timidity'⁵⁵ on the part of rulers. There were no courts of law, and justice was administered in a purely arbitrary fashion.⁵⁶ The authority, too, was arbitrarily exercised by a series of units in a descending scale from the sovereign to the headman of a petty village.⁵⁷ The Shah himself was very well aware of this fact.⁵⁸ He was in his own person the sole arbiter of Persia's fortunes, his word was law, and all policy emanated from him.⁵⁹

This was the situation in theory. In practice, however, there were checks on the power of the sovereign and lower officials. The check that operated upon the latter group was the fear of their superior, and upon the Shah himself, Curzon observed, the fear 'not of native, but of foreign opinion, as represented by the hostile European Press',⁶⁰ and observance of the forms of the national religion.⁶¹ However, subsequent developments and particularly the Tobacco Movement showed that the 'native' opinion was far stronger than Curzon could have imagined. Within the framework indicated, therefore, the Shah's absolutism was bound to come up against certain limits. He claimed absolute command over the life and property of every one of his subjects and even his own sons had no independent power – Zel-us-Soltan's downfall illustrates this fact very well. This absolute authority was exerted by the ruler in various ways.

He could order, for instance, any one of his subjects, from the Grand Vazir downwards, to be executed. Indeed, the position of the Persian ministers was most difficult and dangerous, so much so that, according to Wolff, no one could be found to accept the place of Sadr Azam. When Amin had undertaken the chief superintendence of the Shah's affairs, he had obtained 'in writing' from the Shah the promise that 'he would never ask him to take the post'.⁶² Nearly all the relatives of prime ministers were in indigence, and when holders of that office fell into disgrace their families and fortunes were involved in the calamity. Haji Ebrahim Kalantar, the Grand Vazir of Agha Mohammad Khan, so much extolled by Sir John Malcolm, ended his days by being boiled in oil by Fath Ali Shah. Qaem Maqam was strangled in 1835 in the garden of Negarestan Palace by Mohammad Shah,⁶³ and perhaps the greatest man Iran produced in the nineteenth century, Mirza Taqi Khan, Amir Kabir, was killed at Fin near Kashan on the order of Naser-ud-Din Shah. His successor, i.e. the notoriously pro-British Mirza Aqa Khan-e-Nuri whose characteristics were diametrically opposed to those of Amir Kabir, had his life spared thanks to the intervention, of course, of the British envoy. Still, after his dismissal all properties and fortunes of the Nuri clan were confiscated.⁶⁴

This confiscation of the fortunes of his subjects proved to be a good source of revenue for the Shah. Etemad refers to scores of cases in which properties of deceased persons, known or rumoured to be rich, were confiscated by the Shah. The procedure in these cases was to seal off all the dead man's properties and make a detailed inventory of his assets. For example, in the case of the Shah's ablest Vazir after Amir Kabir, namely Mirza Hoseyn Khan, Sepah Salar, the Shah was reportedly happy that he had died because of Hoseyn Khan's 'corruptness and wealth'.⁶⁵ Nayeib-us-Saltaneh put guards around his house,⁶⁶ and his *toyuls* (land assignments) were confiscated and given to Maliyak.⁶⁷ His famous diamond, weighing some 70 carats, found its way to the pocket of the Shah himself.⁶⁸ When another government functionary, Asef-ud-Dowleh, passed away, Amin, on the Shah's order, immediately sealed off his safe, and the unfortunate man could not be buried for some time since his shroud was in there.⁶⁹ In the cases of Emad-ud-Dowleh,⁷⁰ Allah Verdi Khan-e-Tupchi Bashi,⁷¹ Mehdi Mush,⁷² and Haji Ab-ul-Hasan-e-Memar Bashi,⁷³ to name but a few, the Shah tried to confiscate all or part of their wealth.

These were, of course, mostly the so-called officials. But the wealth of other classes too, particularly the merchants, was liable to confiscation. For instance, when Haji Abd-ul-Latif Dehdashti died, the commerce minister sent an urgent petition to the Shah informing him that the late Haji had one *kurur* (500,000 tumans) in cash. The same night the Shah ordered Amin to send someone after the money.⁷⁴ On another occasion, when Haji Ab-ul-Fath Barforush, whose wealth was put at 200,000 tumans, died, Etemad cynically commented, 'Good news for the Shah and his minister (i.e. Amin)'.⁷⁵ No wonder that even powerful people feared to appear rich, since this exposed them and their families, both during their lifetime and after their death, to extortion by the government, amounting often to absolute confiscation.⁷⁶ Wolff rightly believed this to be one

great check on the development of the country. This fear was so great that when one day the Shah decided to pay a visit to the Mint Master,⁷⁷ whom Colonel Kasakowsky accused of having amassed millions as a result of his close links with Amin, for 15 days and nights the host was engaged in removing valuable objects from his house lest their glitter might provoke the greed of the sovereign.⁷⁸

It is possible to assume that this policy, along with other practices such as *pishkesh* (see below), contributed to the non-emergence of an independent bourgeoisie along Western lines in Iran, since conditions were not conducive to it. The ruler's thinking was fairly simple. He believed that all the nation's wealth should belong to him alone and people 'must have a small saving just enough for their living and not more'.⁷⁹ It is not difficult to imagine the adverse effects of these practices on the people. Two days after the death of a certain Allah Verdi Khan, his wife was thrown into jail because she refused to give money to Nayeb-us-Saltaneh who was ostensibly working on the Shah's behalf. The sons of the dead man were also dismissed from their positions. Fearing that the same fate might befall his own family, Saham-ud-Dowleh Nuri, whom Etemad has described as 'one of the wealthy generals of the army', decided to put 'all his wealth in endowment'.⁸⁰ Thus a British official observed that there was plenty of commercial instinct in the people but 'it is stifled by the general feeling of insecurity'.⁸¹

Pishkesh was another drain on the wealth of the notables. During the reign of the Qajars, *pishkesh* was made to the Shah on various occasions and for different reasons. It is possible to divide this 'mysterious and elastic'⁸² term into two headings:

- 1 the irregular or extraordinary payments made or extracted as the opportunity occurred;
- 2 the fixed, regular, and open kind prescribed by usage and never relaxed.

In general all money payments – bribe or gift – made to secure a post or concession, to influence a judicial decision or to escape punishment, fell under the head of *pishkesh*. Irregular payments were made on many occasions, for example when the Shah paid a visit to one of the notables. The custom in such cases was that at the end of the meeting a handsome *pishkesh*, according to the wealth and social status of the host, was made by him to the Shah and sometimes even to members of his entourage.⁸³ Even the Shah's own sons had to comply with this rule.⁸⁴ Sometimes the Shah would visit several people on the same day and one day, when after visiting four people the Shah decided to pay a visit to Saheb Divan, who at this time was away in Fars, Etemad commented that His Majesty's only purpose was to make more money.⁸⁵ In addition, when the Shah granted a title, the recipient was supposed to make a *pishkesh* in return.⁸⁶ Upon the birth of a child to the Shah all the prominent members of society were to make *pishkeshes*.⁸⁷ Recovery of His Majesty from an illness, however mild, called for the making of a *pishkesh*, which in this particular case was called *sadageh* or *tasaddoq*.⁸⁸ The most peculiar habit of all, however, was to send the carcass of

the animal that His Majesty had shot to notables who, of course, were expected to give the Shah some money which in this case was called *naẓ-e-shast*.⁸⁹ Referring to these customs, Curzon remarks: 'Government, nay, life itself, in that country may be said to consist for the most part of an interchange of presents'.⁹⁰

The fixed and regular kind of *pishkesh* was usually made at the No Ruz festival. Observing that the sole object of officials was to fill their pockets at the expense of the people, a British officer remarked: 'The Shah himself is the chief culprit. He exacts enormous sums from the governors of provinces as "*pushkishi*" (*sic*) for their appointment, and they in turn exact proportionate sums from their subordinates'.⁹¹ Once a year, every governor, minister, chief of a tribe, or official of any rank made his offering, the minimum amount of which was determined by custom and maximum left to the means or ambition of the donor.⁹² As a rule, the offices on sale would usually go to the highest bidder,⁹³ even if the bidder had no previous experience or good record for the job.⁹⁴ Obviously, the existence and continuation of such a system was a solid barrier to any kind of reform. On the other hand the Shah, towards the end of his reign, feared the approach of 'civilization' as being likely to curb his already diminished power and to check his autocratic tendencies. He still claimed for himself an absolute right to the land, the people, and their property.

Thus, the atmosphere of free commercial activities which existed in medieval European towns and which had contributed to the pre-capitalist formation of a bourgeoisie was lacking in Iran.⁹⁵ The question was therefore of paramount importance. Although at this time there were some wealthy people in Iran, in the first place they were few in number; second, it was believed that the bulk of their wealth was in the shape of estates and immovable property;⁹⁶ third, even if they did possess the capital, except for a few who either enjoyed the backing of influential personalities or foreign protection, they were reluctant to invest in undertakings like railways, factories, etc. The following story will illustrate this point. At the very moment the Shah and his ministers were concocting the 'Life and Property Proclamation', a man who was described as 'wealthy and very timid' was undergoing torture to force him to pay an illegal imposition of 8,000 tumans to the Prince-Governor and Amin. The chief reason for this was that he was not 'able to claim the protection of any foreign government, so that they could squeeze him with impunity'.⁹⁷ Therefore, it is hardly surprising that reportedly, security was only to be 'obtained by foreign protection, and those who enjoy such protection trade and prosper'.⁹⁸

The circumstances under which the golden rule of capitalism, namely the sanctity of property rights, was not recognized did not exactly provide the Iranian nascent bourgeoisie with the 'classical condition' it needed to strengthen its position *vis-à-vis* the state and other social forces. Under these conditions, first, the primary accumulation of capital was severely hampered though not completely blocked, since the accumulation of commercial capital is perfectly compatible with the most varied mode of production,⁹⁹ and the historical evidence tends to bear this out. Second, for whatever capital already accumulated, the transformation from 'mercantile' into 'industrial' was made difficult, if not

impossible. In other words, the emergence of capitalism as a mode of production usually presupposes the existence of certain conditions, which during this period were absent in Iran. It is a typical feature of economic backwardness that most of the population is dependent upon agriculture, whereas the economic surplus created by them is appropriated by the land-owners, money lenders, and merchants. In Iran, this surplus was in turn squeezed out by the state whose nature was different from its European counterpart. As a consequence, instead of creating social conditions in which the production and accumulation of surplus would be encouraged as in Europe, the intervention of state in the form of outright confiscation of properties, etc., actually hampered this process.

It was due to this that, already in 1880, *Akhtar* with its close links with Iranian merchant communities was preaching that 'a guarantee for the rights of the people' was the 'primary, and the most important' step that any nation desirous of progress and civilization had to take.¹⁰⁰ And later, while discussing the 'Means of Transport' it commented that 'justice and equality' were the basic prerequisites for any happiness and progress.¹⁰¹ These were the same principles that Wolff, albeit for reasons other than the people's happiness, believed should be introduced into the Iranian social system. Apparently, his idea was to create a system within which, through legal and other types of guarantees, the free commercial activities of entrepreneurs would be secure. By this, it was intended on the one hand to broaden the scope of commodity circulation in the country and on the other hand to accelerate the maturing of some of the basic prerequisites for the development of a capitalist system, a process which would in turn block the ripening of others. This would have enabled the British to remove a large part of the previously accumulated and currently generated surplus from the country, a process which would cause a serious setback to the country's primary accumulation of capital and prevent the autonomous development of a national bourgeoisie. Second, it would encourage the British capitalists who, perhaps mainly due to this situation of total power, were reluctant to risk their lives and fortunes in Iran.

Apparently the basic assumption of the British officials was that the nascent Persian bourgeoisie was not strong enough to create, through a revolution or other social changes, more favourable conditions for itself by setting up a regime more sympathetic to its aspirations than that of the Shah. Therefore, in their view, the task fell on Britain to persuade the sovereign that these changes were both necessary and useful. He was accordingly pressed for a life and property decree which was a leading idea of the western bourgeoisie and which eventually proved to be beneficial not to the Persian merchants but to 'the British adventurers'.¹⁰² After coming to Tehran, Wolff was quick to inform Salisbury that one thing necessary for the 'development of Persia' was a 'decree securing to everyone his life, liberty, and property' so long as he 'conforms to the law and leads the life of a peaceable citizen'.¹⁰³ In one of his first interviews with Amin which took place amid tight security,¹⁰⁴ by order of the Shah as always, Amin raised the question of cooperation between Persia and Britain against the Russian aggression. The Shah invited Wolff constantly to see Amin

and through him 'to give H.M. advice not only on foreign politics, but on the internal affairs of Persia'. Wolff, who must have been waiting for such an opportunity, first went through the routine argument of the necessity of opening up southern Persia to Britain in order to have a counter-balance to the Russian commercial domination of the north. But, unlike his predecessors whose arguments did not sound sufficiently convincing to the Shah, it appears that Wolff struck a new chord. He started by saying that Russia, being very sensitive to 'civilized' opinion boasted 'not without some' justification that it improved the conditions of countries it annexed.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, as a result of the misgovernment of the officials, there were reports from some border areas of Iran that 'the population generally would welcome Russian rule'.¹⁰⁶ The 'Shah', he went on, 'should therefore justify us in any assistance we could give him' by reforming the laws, so as to deprive Russia of any moral pretext for invasion and to 'interest all commercial and maritime nations in the integrity of Persia'.¹⁰⁷ He therefore proposed the publication of a decree securing the rights of property and formation of a commission to report upon the development of national resources and communication of these measures to the different legations. The Shah, in reply, informed him that he 'fully concurred' in the necessity of such a decree and requested him to draw one up with Amin.¹⁰⁸

It is interesting that Wolff, being a real believer in capitalism, initially raised the question of 'security of property' and only later did the people's 'life' come into it. The Shah was also willing to grant railway concessions, but he wanted assurances. He felt himself utterly helpless before Russia, unless secure of support from Britain.¹⁰⁹ In general though, the Shah desired to get a renewal of the former joint assurances of Persia's integrity.¹¹⁰ A few days later Amin presented Wolff with a draft of the Proclamation, approved by the Shah. According to Amin-ud-Dowleh, this document was written by Mirza Nasr Ullah Khan, Dabir-ul-Molk,¹¹¹ but Wolff maintains that it was based 'very much on the lines of the Hatti-Sherif of Gulhane of 1837 (*sic*)'¹¹² which, in Wolff's opinion, had been of such inestimable value¹¹³ to the Turkish people.¹¹⁴ If true, it indicates that the mission to Constantinople had influenced his thinking in this regard.¹¹⁵ In any event, Wolff proposed some amendments such as placing certain restrictions on the Shah himself. These proposals led to a lengthy discussion between Amin, Wolff, and Churchill.¹¹⁶ Amin expressed himself much pleased with the proposed issue of the decree which he said 'no Persian minister would have dared to suggest',¹¹⁷ although Amin-ud-Dowleh blamed Amin for the eventual failure of the Proclamation.¹¹⁸ Wolff, pointing out the calamities which had befallen the former prime ministers and their families, believed 'the class who would profit by it more than any other would be the Persian Ministers'.¹¹⁹ But the following episode illustrates the thinking of the Persian officials at this time. When at the *salam* (or levée) the Shah publicly announced that 'it must be set forth clearly that no one in Persia had a right to interfere with the life or property of anyone else' one of the courtiers said, 'No one . . . but the Shah himself' to which the Shah replied, 'No, not even the Shah'.¹²⁰ After this the Minister of Foreign Affairs told Churchill that he had never slept so calmly in his life as

after the announcement, and added that 'Persians would now be able to make their own railways'.¹²¹ This optimism, however, was short-lived.

On 25 May 1888 the Proclamation was promulgated and officially communicated to foreign missions,¹²² and together with a *farman* (edict) it was also sent to the Vali Ahd (heir apparent) and other provincial officials. For instance, in Rasht copies of the document were posted up in several places¹²³ and in Azarbayjan it was even transmitted to the governors of all the outlying districts.¹²⁴ The smaller authorities were, according to the *farman*, to give bonds for the execution of the Proclamation. Wolff believed that every solemnity was given to this public act.¹²⁵ He had both the Proclamation and the accompanying *farman* translated by Churchill and forwarded them to Salisbury.¹²⁶

The Russians were not happy and saw the British hand behind all these developments. Russia tended to oppose these moves because her approach to the whole question of 'development' and 'progress' was different from that of Britain. The two envoys in Tehran represented two very different social and political systems. It is worth mentioning that, when talking about an economic system, whenever dualism, namely capitalist and subsistence sectors, is introduced into an analysis it implies that feudalism comprises a conservative sector at one end of the social structure and capitalism a dynamic sector at the other end of it.¹²⁷ This rule may also be applied to national systems. Thus, it is possible to say that Britain at that time was an industrialized society, and within the nineteenth-century context represented a progressive social system. It also had a representative government which reflected the aspirations of its own bourgeoisie. Capitalism was the dominant mode of production and 'laissez-faire' its motto. Hence the encouragement the British gave, no doubt for their own benefit and not for the 'natives', to the advancement of capitalism in areas under their influence. The dynamism characteristic of the early stages of this system was not only capable of coping with, but also in need of this kind of 'development'. Hence the expedient advocacy of 'reform' which for the 'natives' only meant greater exploitation.

By contrast Russia, with an underdeveloped economy in which industrialization was still at an early stage and whose dominant mode of production was pre-capitalistic, could not inherently be as receptive to 'change' as was its British rival. Russia therefore opposed all steps ostensibly taken in the direction of 'modernization' and 'development' because they endangered its archaic social system. For the unfortunate Iranians, however, the result of both these methods was the same: more exploitation and backwardness. Observing Russia's continual resistance to reform in Iran, Ross, a man of limited vision, remarked that the Proclamation had set people thinking 'more than is apparent', and thought it might be made a profound instrument for good. 'It is a strange contest between Russia and England in Persia. Our interests lead us to seek her good, Russia the reverse. They see this well enough, whatever their conduct may be.'¹²⁸ It is not true that the interests of Britain always led it to seek Persia's good; Britain was only anxious to look after its own interests which quite often clashed with those of Persia. But, perhaps unconsciously, Ross had put his finger on an important

point. The Anglo-Russian rivalry in Iran was a battle for political and economic supremacy between two different social systems. 'Change' and 'development' suited one since they would help it to further its influence and interests. Stagnation and preservation of the status quo were the hallmarks of its rival system. So the sincerity of Britain with regard to its advocacy of 'reform' and 'development' for Iran's good is doubtful and should be questioned. However, the truth is that the Russians did not even pretend to use this ploy.

The foreign community in Iran had a mixed reaction to the Proclamation while the British were very pleased with it. Salisbury informed the Shah that these pledges formed 'an important epoch' in his reign, adding that it could not fail to have a favourable effect on public opinion in England and in other European countries.¹²⁹ Of course, by public opinion was meant the opinion of British and other European entrepreneurs and adventurers without whose active assistance the opening up of Persia was believed to be impossible. Salisbury also promised his best support in the Shah's endeavours to 'promote the progress of civilisation and administrative reform in the countries under his rule'.¹³⁰ Wolff's reports on the developments in Iran tended to confirm this over-optimism. Pointing out that there had not been much time for the Proclamation as yet to bear fruit, he reported that 'evidence is not wanting that some benefit is likely to be derived from it'.¹³¹ To show the British that he took the matter seriously, the Shah requested Wolff to furnish him with periodical reports of any acts of misgovernment that might come to his ears. 'In fact', Wolff remarked, 'the reports I receive . . . are rather too good, and my constant anxiety is to discover the reverse of the medal'.¹³²

How did those who were supposed to benefit from this Act, namely the Iranians, react? The *Akhtar* article,¹³³ which can be interpreted as an indictment of the regime, summed it all up:

all the partisans of the world of Islam (the author says) and humanity and especially the Iranians should be all the more gratified by this glad tidings, because everybody knows that since ancient times Iranians have always been afflicted by the oppressions and transgressions of unjust rulers and the previous sovereigns have been alien to the traditions of promoting the welfare of their subjects and propagation of justice, believing that the subjects are their slaves or their creatures. The laws and religious rules of the kingdom were subordinate to the whims of the sovereigns, governors, and commanders.

The subjects had no choice but patience and endurance in the face of all their excesses; especially the domains under the rule of the relatives of the royal family were more exposed than other areas to their inroads, because that category of rulers were completely free from any questioning and reprimands, and their commands and proscriptions, whether just or unjust, were to be obeyed in every instance; and indeed, all the moves and deeds of the governors and rulers were sheer injustice and absolute tyranny; all the subjects were completely submissive in the face of their capricious

edicts, and were totally deprived of all civil, nay natural and human rights . . .

. . . the survival of the country, the development of the kingdom and the progress of the nation depends on justice; no government can subsist and no nation can conceivably continue to exist without justice. The goal of all religions and nations and the axis of the . . . religious laws and states, particularly the sacred law of Islam, leads only to the illuminous point of justice.

All human societies presuppose mutual covenants and reciprocal rights consisting in the duties of the governor and subject, the ruler and the ruled, because the . . . survival of human societies depends upon the protection of lives, properties, and honour of individuals from all internal and external transgressions and violations.¹³⁴

Perhaps the crucial part of the article is its conclusion: 'If the governor and the ruler did not neglect their duties, their subjects should not accordingly fail to obey their orders'.¹³⁵ Its opposite meaning is that if the ruler is not just, the subjects should have no obligations to obey him. In other words, the people are entitled to rebel against such a ruler. *Akhtar* was widely read by merchant communities both inside and outside Iran.¹³⁶ Therefore, its approval of the Proclamation coupled with harsh criticism of the past conduct of the officials implies that, it was a welcome move, which had long been overdue.

Other reports too tended to confirm that the Persians were willing to take this move seriously. According to Wolff in the north Amin-ud-Dowleh was endeavouring to persuade 'Persians of fortune' to combine in 'Companies for the construction of public works', while in the south he was 'actively engaged in promoting a scheme for the navigation of the Karun'.¹³⁷ There were other signs which initially tended to support these optimistic views. Shortly after the Proclamation, a branch of the New Oriental Bank was opened in Tehran. Barely two months after the advent of the Proclamation, Wolff was reporting that some Persians who had invested their money in India were now inclined to deposit it with the new bank,¹³⁸ and this was done despite the fact that *Akhtar* had criticized the bank's low interest rates.¹³⁹ The Persians, although 'partially encouraged' by the Proclamation, were not yet 'completely reassured', and only dealt with the bank with 'great precautions'.¹⁴⁰ The head of the bank for instance confided to Wolff that one 'customer of consequence' had stipulated that no bank messenger 'shall ever be sent to his house in the bank livery', and another, who wished to deposit 'a large hoard' of Russian gold coins, did so gradually by inviting members of the bank to his house and letting them take away as many pieces as they could carry in their pockets.¹⁴¹ The bank was doing very well and Wolff attributed it to the Proclamation. 'Not only', he pointed out, 'do Persians of wealth find that the nationality of the bank will preserve their property from any act of violence, but the Proclamation shields them from any danger in dealing with the bank. Such is the interpretation placed by Persians themselves on the circumstance of the Proclamation'.¹⁴²

This optimism however was destined to be short-lived. There is a Persian saying that 'repentance of the wolf is its death'. Officials working within a system whose basis was tyranny, lawlessness, and arbitrary 'justice' could not be changed by a Proclamation, however liberal and democratic its principles. Barely a month after its promulgation an incident took place which showed the futility of such hopes. A relation of the Shah was murdered by a municipal officer and the latter was given up to the Qajars who killed him with some savagery.¹⁴³ There were demonstrations of 'some thousands' at Tehran¹⁴⁴ against the police chief, Count Monteforte,¹⁴⁵ by whom the murderer of the prince had been appointed.¹⁴⁶ Nayebe-us-Saltaneh, who was in charge of the overall security of the capital and Monteforte's superior, fled the town and went to the camp of the Shah at Aqdasiyeh. The British who understandably were willing to attach great importance to the Proclamation, became very concerned. Salisbury instructed Wolff to inform the Shah that the execution of the criminal without a trial 'seems inconsistent with the tenour of the Shah's recent Proclamation',¹⁴⁷ and that Britain would deeply regret if it became a 'dead letter'.¹⁴⁸ Wolff, apparently trying to play down the negative impact of this episode in England, reported back that he scarcely thought the incident could be connected with the Proclamation. 'By the religious law', he said, 'a murderer is given up to family of the victim, who can demand either his life or blood-money'.¹⁴⁹ He later telegraphed that the supposed murderer had been seized out of the prison and put to death 'before he had been tried as ordered by the Shah'.¹⁵⁰ This, according to Etemad, was not true. He has recorded that the Shah, after realizing that the murderer was a *seyyed* said, 'I will not kill him. Give him up to the father of the murdered boy. He is the one who should decide (what to do)'.¹⁵¹ Wolff, again endeavoured to make the incident look rather unimportant and believing, or rather pretending to think, that the Shah was sincerely desirous of bringing about these changes, reported that 'the evidence of murder is, I am now told, clear and the Shah has severely punished those who carried out with brutality what is said to have been their strict right'.¹⁵² But this claim, too, is not borne out by the Persian account. Etemad actually defended the culprits, telling the Shah that such things were daily occurrences in the United States,¹⁵³ and tried to calm down the Shah who later ordered two of the culprits to be bastinadoed, two to be exiled to Qom and the fifth, an army officer with the rank of *Amir Tuman* (General) to be stripped of his rank and privileges. Observing that those exiled to Qom would actually go to their parents who lived there, Etemad commented: 'No problem for them; in one or two months they can return (to Tehran) if they desire so. As for Haji Baha-ud-Dowleh (the General), all his privileges and his rank will be restored soon'.¹⁵⁴ For the time being the gentlemen have shown some zeal and strength'.¹⁵⁵ After this incident, the Shah decreed that prisoners should only be kept in state prisons, a measure which, as Etemad said, had been taken a bit too late since 'in the past 8-9 years . . . more than 500-600 people have lost their lives in jails of the police (chief) and his agents'.¹⁵⁶

Another event, which further demonstrated the real nature of the regime,

occurred when a man called Rahim Kan Kan died. He had begun his career as a cesspool-cleaner (Kan Kan) and had, as a result of good fortune and theft, ended up as a money-lender. His wealth was put at 100,000 to 150,000 tumans. The Shah was immediately informed and Hajeb-ud-Dowleh was ordered to go to Kan Kan's house, collect his money and deliver it to the Treasury, which of course meant the royal purse. 'Now they say', Etemad remarked, and he himself was not entirely impartial as regards the Proclamation, 'that when the stable¹⁵⁷ of Mohammad Shah was broken into, the thieves got away with 30,000 tumans worth of jewels and one of the robbers was Rahim Kan Kan. But this is merely an excuse to confiscate his wealth'.¹⁵⁸ It is interesting that the author points out that this was done despite the fact that 'some months ago, at the temptation of the British envoy', the Proclamation had been issued.¹⁵⁹ These incidents tend to show that neither the people nor the officials took this document and the likes of it too seriously. To be implemented, an undertaking of this nature required first a change of heart by the Shah and his officials; second, the creation of a machinery to administer justice and monitor its infringements. As yet, these elements were lacking in Iran.

Given his astuteness and knowledge of Iran's social conditions, Wolff too must have been aware of the impracticality of the Proclamation. This shows that he was less than sincere in his motives. His insistence on getting this document promulgated by the Shah was primarily concerned with the creation of a social framework, which would facilitate the exploitation of Iran rather than securing the rights and lives of its people. Nevertheless, the fact that in the case of the murdered prince, for instance, Wolff had to defend himself, and that the Proclamation brought some remarks from court officials, among others, indicates that at least some tended to take it more seriously. It is also conceivable that the demonstrations in the episode linked to the murder of the prince had something to do with the Proclamation. In any event and regardless of its practical impact, this document constitutes a landmark in the legal history of Iran and the eternal struggle of its people against lawlessness, despotism and tyranny.

Wolff and the New Oriental Bank Corporation Ltd

Another important project that Wolff had in mind was the establishment of a banking system in Iran. As a result of the expansion of foreign and internal trade the business of the *sarrafs* (money changers) expanded in the nineteenth century and, due to the inadequacy of the traditional methods of transaction, the need for modern banking began to make itself increasingly felt.¹⁶⁰ By the end of the century the introduction of banks, as Curzon put it, had become 'a sine qua non of any material improvement' of the country.¹⁶¹ Some of the drawbacks, which necessitated the presence of banks were the fluctuation in exchange, scarcity of money and the unequal distribution of precious metals, and the high cost of transporting specie by animals. Merchants experienced difficulty and risk in making remittances to Europe.¹⁶² The exorbitant rate of interest paid to the usurers made the existence of a bank necessary and the busi-

ness a lucrative one. Around 1850 the rate for transaction between the merchants themselves was 12 per cent per annum, but for other people it was about 25 per cent.¹⁶³ By 1888, the ordinary rate of interest for loans at Tehran was between 2 and 4 per cent per month.¹⁶⁴ In 1844 Mohammad Shah had issued a *farman* prohibiting rates of interest in excess of 12 per cent, but this prohibition was not observed even by the officials.¹⁶⁵ Wolff refers to a case when a man of 'great respectability' had secured a large loan at 18 per cent per annum.¹⁶⁶

Wolff supported the establishment of a bank in Iran in general, and a branch of the New Oriental Bank in particular. Being a devout capitalist, in his plans for the so-called 'development' of Iran the banking system played a crucial part. In his view, apart from its financial role the bank would exercise 'some influence in the general development of the resources', while the shareholders would reap 'considerable profits'.¹⁶⁷ He was 'in great hopes' that the presence of the bank might also attract to Tehran further British enterprise.

Almost immediately after Wolff's arrival, a Mr G.W. Thomson, secretary of the Oriental Bank Corporation, arrived in Tehran¹⁶⁸ and proposed to open a branch there, with agencies at Tabriz, Mashad, Esfahan, Shiraz, and Bushehr.¹⁶⁹ Wolff confessed that he was much pleased with the proposal and promised him all the Legation's support. While still in London, Thomson had brought Wolff a letter of recommendation from an old friend. Wolff accordingly arranged an interview between Thomson and Salisbury. Both he and Salisbury encouraged Thomson to 'obtain the cooperation of other firms'¹⁷⁰ and 'houses of financial strength', one of which was Messrs Sassoon, who had 'considerable dealings in Persia'¹⁷¹ and who were close to Wolff and the Imperial Ottoman Bank. This the bank manager duly did. In Tehran he soon rented a building¹⁷² in the Artillery Square (Maydan-e-Tupkhaneh) and took an office in the Bazar.¹⁷³ Only a month after its establishment Thomson reported that from the applications already made 'we have every reason to anticipate success',¹⁷⁴ and that he had appointed agents at Tabriz, Rasht, Soltanabad, Esfahan, and Bushehr¹⁷⁵ which he thought, 'will enable us to begin banking business with these cities without delay'.¹⁷⁶ Kermanshah and Mashad were the next targets. The Tehran branch was the principal office, and by early July 1888 its manager, C.E. Duffield,¹⁷⁷ and most of the staff for other branches were already in Iran.¹⁷⁸

The bank was doing well and began to introduce a kind of banknote into the Persian economy. When the Imperial Bank, which had the monopoly of issuing banknotes, was subsequently established, Wolff asked for legal advice in this respect.¹⁷⁹ But in 1890 the Imperial Bank acquired, for a substantial sum,¹⁸⁰ the interests of the New Oriental Banking Corporation in Iran. Wolff was pleased because the arrangement avoided 'many difficulties and possible collisions'.¹⁸¹

With the Proclamation and the bank, one chapter of Wolff's diplomatic activities came to an end. Thus, the foundation stones were laid, as he saw it, for the 'revitalization' of the country, which could be described as the opening up of Iran to British commerce and influence. However, Wolff's major diplomatic success, namely the Karun opening, followed by a British bank concession, was yet

to come. In retrospect, it was mainly due to his sheer political opportunism and power of persuasion that Wollf managed to get these done in time and before the return to Tehran¹⁸² of Dolgorouki who was to suffer even more defeats at his hands. For the Shah and his country, meanwhile, this intensification of the Anglo-Russian politico-economic rivalry, which had been triggered off by Wollf's persistent application of an aggressive policy, heralded more serious troubles ahead.

3 Assurances, the Karun Proclamation and the Imperial Bank of Persia

The Karun Proclamation

The next, and by far the most important point, which Wolff urged upon the Shah was the opening of the Karun about which, as he put it, 'all the British mercantile interests in Persia' were anxious.¹ Prior to the arrival of the new British envoy, the Shah, being aware of his country's need for Britain's support *vis-a-vis* Russia, and to some extent due to Nicolson's representations, had almost agreed to the opening of the river provided the concession was granted to a Persian entity.² But Wolff's diplomacy, after much clever manoeuvring, secured for Britain 'the virtual monopoly of the Karun trade'.³

The Karun question was brought up by Wolff at one of his first audiences. The Shah said that he was considering the matter with a view to speaking to Wolff later on the subject 'in the fullest and frankest manner', and of explaining to him 'the difficulties with which he is encountered'.⁴ Throughout the summer of 1888 Wolff was discussing, *inter alia*, the Karun question. In one of these interviews he made a proposal which became the basis of the subsequent talks, i.e. Persia would throw open the navigation to the whole world.⁵ He was aware of the fact that with the commanding influence that Britain enjoyed in the Gulf and southern Persia, it would be the only power to benefit from such a move. Furthermore, by doing so, he argued, there would be no concession and no monopoly and therefore no pretext for foreign intervention.⁶ But each time this question was raised, the Shah would again repeat his inquiry as to the assurances of support against Russian threats. Wolff asked the Shah what assurances he required and 'against what dangers?' The Shah replied that if the Karun were opened for Britain the Russians would then ask for the navigation of the Anzali *Mordab* (lagoon), which would give them the command of the province of Gilan.⁷ Therefore he wanted to know if Britain was prepared to give him an assurance that it would assist him by making strong representations at St Petersburg. But 'this assurance', Wolff advised the Foreign Office, 'should only be given in exchange for an actual concession'.⁸

Wolff suggested that the Shah, without even mentioning the Karun, might publish 'a general Proclamation' regarding the navigation of his inland waters.

This, he presumed, would be sufficient for Britain and would guard Persian rights. The navigation of the *Mordab* should also be carried out under the same restrictions, a breach of which, Wolff believed, would be contrary to the understanding that existed between the two powers as to the integrity of Persia.⁹ The Shah said that he had great difficulty in maintaining the balance between England and Russia. 'He preferred the friendship of England to that of Russia, and if England gave him the assurances he desired, he would throw himself in with us and disregard Russia'. Wolff replied that Russia was too strong to be disregarded. 'Instead of setting off one against the other, it appeared to me that His Majesty was in a position reasonably to satisfy both'.¹⁰ 'If I could only come to terms with both', the Shah rejoined,

that would be my great wish. Why does England not come to an understanding with Russia which both might bring to me? Then, when I saw the independence and integrity of my kingdom guaranteed, and its customs respected, I would give concessions for railways, rivers, mines, or anything that might be asked for.¹¹

Wolff advised the Shah to submit to the two powers 'a proposal of the kind', and promised his assistance in this regard. The Shah spoke to Dolgorouki on the possibility of arriving at such an arrangement. The latter, however, told Wolff, confidentially, that he had been 'desired by his government to postpone discussion (of the subject) until further instructions'. At the same time, he said, this delay was not a refusal.¹²

Although at this time there were many requests for concessions before the Iranian government, including schemes for railway lines from Bushehr to Tehran,¹³ the Shah appeared to be as unyielding as ever. The stumbling block was still the question of the assurances.

We do not know how you will write that document (i.e. the assurances) nor how it will be composed; whether the Queen will sign it; whether it will be signed by your Minister for Foreign Affairs; or whether you will yourself write it at Tehran and give it to us. We do not know how far your powers extend as regards the giving of documents. It would be as well to let us know what you will write in order that we may correct it, and agree on the composition of the document.¹⁴

The above quotation illustrates the hopeless situation the Shah was in by the time of Wolff's arrival. He had already told Nicolson that he was seriously alarmed at the prospect before him. The Shah was evidently desirous of obtaining a firm undertaking from Britain but Nicolson believed that he would be satisfied with less than this. However, he warned London that if the Shah was not assured of the support of Her Majesty's Government, he would, in despair of being able to continue a hopeless struggle, be obliged to make the best terms he could with Russia.¹⁵

In an important meeting with Wolff, Amin produced a memo in the Shah's handwriting. The Shah, complaining that the British envoy had been too vague in his conversations with him, expressed the wish to come to 'a clear understanding' with Wolff. Thus, with 'strict injunction to secrecy', in the name of the Shah, Amin made Wolff the following proposals: a formal secret agreement should be given to the Shah by which England should undertake to protect Persia from Russian attacks if unprovoked, or where England thought Persia was not in the wrong. 'In return, Persia would be guided absolutely by the advice of England in granting concessions . . . and if desired by England, Persia would accept an English financial adviser'.¹⁶ If England refused this offer, Amin said, the Shah's only alternative was to temporize as previously between the two powers, 'a course which plainly meant a moral surrender to Russia'.

Wolff, like his predecessor advised his government that this overture 'should not be summarily rejected'. So long as the Shah was deterred by the fear of Russia from granting concessions, 'our position in Persia must be secondary, and the development of the country will remain at a standstill'.¹⁷ But, he continued, if an assurance could be given which would encourage the Shah to grant a concession to British subjects, Russia could not openly use it as a pretext for aggression. The concession being a *fait accompli*, 'we should have established our hold on the country, and Russia would be compelled either to acquiesce in it or to come to some understanding with us, as I have proposed to Prince Dolgorouki'. Amin said that if it was possible to come to an 'Agreement' as suggested, despite warnings from Russia, the Shah would be prepared to proclaim the freedom of navigation of the Karun, and the construction of a road from Dezful to Qom.¹⁹

Wolff asked whether the Russian warnings were in the form of notes or verbal communications. The Shah, as if trying to give some lesson in diplomacy, replied:

no government had any right to write to an absolute power 'not to do such and such a thing'. They say these things verbally. When Prince Dolgorouki was appointed he was sent with extra honour after the manner of a Special Envoy. He said the Emperor had instructed him to say: 'As we have guaranteed the integrity and independence of Persia, and as we are associated with the English Government in this matter, therefore you should not . . . take any steps regarding Agreements or Concessions for railways and waterways with any foreign companies without the knowledge and advice of the Emperor . . . and we tell you distinctly that if you sign any railway or waterway Concession . . . we shall cease to be the protector of your independence, and will have nothing to do with your integrity.'¹⁹

The Shah believed that the meaning of these words was to say that the integrity question would cease to exist and the Russians would do whatever was best for themselves.

As we (the Shah) saw that . . . if we rejected it it would be as though we had signed the end of our integrity, and had said to them, 'Very well, do whatever you please'; therefore we accepted it and said: 'Very well, in order to preserve our integrity and independence we will not give any Concession without prior consultation with the Emperor'.²⁰

The Shah said he would not be pleased at having brought on Britain the danger of a war; but 'the only thing which will satisfy us, is a written pledge'. It was not a personal matter, but a state question, 'which must be placed in the State archives'.²¹ Wolff's next move was to send to the Shah a note in which he said that Her Majesty's Government, as the friends and allies of Persia, whose integrity and independence they had guaranteed, 'have instructed me to enquire when they may expect that the assurances and promises given (by the Shah on the Karun, etc.) may be carried into effect'.²² This note, whose tone was rather harsh was actually given to the Shah to be shown to Dolgorouki and thus give him the impression that the Shah was under immense pressure to open the Karun.

Amin reminded Wolff that the necessity of consulting Russia was a recent development and that England alone was responsible for it. For some years Nicolson had been pressing for a railway concession which had been resisted by Persia, but the British government had insisted on it with great urgency and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yahya Khan,²³ Moshir-ud-Dowleh, a Russophile, had kept the Russians well informed.²⁴ He had even gone to the length of promising Dolgorouki, in the name of the Shah, that the English railway scheme would never be accepted.²⁵ In any event, until then the Russian Legation had only acted unofficially in opposing the British scheme. Amin reported, however, that Ayub Khan²⁶ who was exiled by the British from Afghanistan to Iran had escaped the previous year and the British Legation insisted on imputing his flight to the actions of Russia, and also to the carelessness of Moshir.²⁷ In consequence of Nicolson's threat not to hold further communication with the Foreign Minister, the Shah had dismissed Moshir and replaced him with Mirza Abbas Khan,²⁸ Qavam-ud-Dowleh.²⁹ On this Moshir had complained to Prince Dolgorouki that the real reason for his dismissal had been his refusal to concur in the grant of the concession.

Hereon Prince Dolgorouki had complained to the Shah that a minister had been dismissed on the demand of one single Legation, and said that he, in his turn, should demand the dismissal of the governor-general of Khorasan and other functionaries who were distasteful to Russia.³⁰ Apparently Dolgorouki intended to impose Moshir upon the Shah as the new governor of that province, but the Shah had forestalled it by appointing Rokn-ud-Dowleh.³¹ Dolgorouki had also asked for Amin's dismissal. He had then read a personal telegram from the Emperor to the Shah and given him a draft undertaking to the effect that Persia would not grant any concession without the Emperor's permission. Dolgorouki insisted on the Shah affixing his signature to the undertaking and threatened to haul down his flag if this were refused. In order to

avert the anger of the Russian Minister and his court, the Shah drew up a memo. which, Amin claimed, was unsigned,³² as follows:

we have decided not to give orders or permission to construct railways or waterways to companies of foreign nations before consulting with . . . the Emperor; and this advice and consultation will meet with our consideration, inasmuch as, should those Concessions contain an article or clause detrimental to Persian interests, we can utilize the Emperor's . . . advice in order to avoid it, and protect ourselves against that detriment. Month of Zi Hejjeh (14th), 1304³³ (3 September 1887)³⁴

Now the Shah wanted to put the following questions to Wolff: What was the value of this paper as a diplomatic document? Had it the force of a treaty? Would it automatically cease to exist with the present Emperor's death? Did it cover the issue of the Karun Proclamation, which was not a concession?³⁵

Wolff replied that in such cases the interpretation of the strongest generally prevailed and decided to send it off to Lord Salisbury by a special messenger, 'as the matter was urgent and could not be adequately submitted' to him by telegraph.³⁶ The Shah was anxious to ascertain Salisbury's opinion on whether he was bound to consult the Emperor for the Karun opening. Wolff, transmitting his message, commented 'Much will depend on Your Lordship's opinion'.³⁷ Amin believed that only the strongest assurances by Britain could alleviate the Shah's fears. Confirming this, Wolff reported: 'once reassured by us he (the Shah) would absolutely follow our lead'.³⁸

At this time the dreaded Prince was not in Iran. Early in September he left Tehran, ostensibly to welcome his Emperor³⁹ who arrived in Tiflis on 11 October 1888.⁴⁰ Wolff believed that he had gone there to discuss the 'Secret Undertaking' which, he feared, if dealt with 'may produce conditions detrimental to us'.⁴¹ He thought that these might be forestalled by the opening of the Karun in Dolgorouki's absence, as a first instalment of the larger scheme, thus obtaining access 'to the warlike tribes and strengthening our hold on the south, and our position as regards both Turkey and Russia'.⁴² This resulted in Salisbury's instruction that Wolff should press for speedy and 'early execution' of the Shah's decision,⁴³ hoping that Russia might accept a *fait accompli*. But the Shah then informed Wolff that he was rather anxious to open the river without a Proclamation. 'This, he says, will exasperate Russia less than Proclamation'.⁴⁴ Wolff, however, pressed for the latter, although Salisbury believed that a Proclamation was 'not essential if river is opened'.⁴⁵ The Shah also wished to place a toll on the traffic; this Wolff discouraged⁴⁶ with the approval of Salisbury.⁴⁷ Wolff wanted the Persian government to mention in the Proclamation 'a fixed period of 25 years as the term for the opening',⁴⁸ in order not to give an occasion to Persia to withdraw the grant no sooner than given.

As Amin asked for simultaneous assurances, Wolff proposed the following: 'In the event of the execution of this (i.e. the Karun) enterprise being the cause of unfriendly acts towards you . . . H.M.G. will make strong representations in

order to counteract such unfriendly acts'.⁴⁹ Amin replied that it would be impossible to connect unfriendly acts with the Karun. Therefore, he suggested the following: 'In the event of the Russian government taking pretexts to interfere with Persian . . . rights or to take possession of Persian territory, H.M.G. will take strong measures to make the Russians desist from such acts'.⁵⁰

On 17 October Amin told Wolff that his government had decided to write and give him a reply to his letter of 18 September, which deliberately had a harsh tone intended to be shown to Dolgorouki. But, he told Wolff, 'no one must know that you proposed this to us, and that we accepted it'. 'Your wishes carried out', he said, 'why force on ourselves possible difficulties? Therefore let Lord Salisbury . . . give us assurances that this matter will never be disclosed'.⁵¹ The secrecy on the part of the Persians was very well observed, so much so that an inquisitive court politician like Etemad who has recorded all his daily observations regarding the affairs of the state, the Imperial Court, and foreign legations, does not mention anything about this episode until ten days later,⁵² by which time he was given a copy of the Proclamation to be published in the official gazette.⁵³ The following story shows the general laxity of secrecy at the Court. One day Churchill and Amin were given a private audience by the Shah. One of the dignitaries, Majd-ud-Dowleh, who apparently had some interest in the subject of the Royal meeting, hid his twelve-year-old son behind the curtain in order to eavesdrop on the conversation. Amin who had noticed his presence, got up and before the very eyes of the Shah grabbed the boy's ear and threw him out.⁵⁴ It, therefore, seems that the observance of secrecy was one of the reasons for Amin's nocturnal meetings with Wolff. For instance, on the eve of 25 October 1888, Amin appeared at the British Legation shortly before dinner-time with necessary documents and without interruption terminated the negotiations.⁵⁵

On 24 and 25 October the two men had further lengthy meetings and the arrangements were finally concluded. As expected, Salisbury's reply regarding the Shah's 'Secret Undertaking' was that 'this Memo. applies evidently only to concessions given to companies, and had nothing to do with a restriction removed from foreign nations generally by the Shah's Decree'.⁵⁶ The previous day Wolff had already given the Shah the following 'Assurance':

In the event of any power making an attack without just cause or provocation on Persia, or attempting to take possession of Persian territory against the will of the Persian government, Her Majesty's Government engages to make earnest representations against such proceedings and to take such steps as may in their judgement be best calculated to prevent any infringement of the integrity of Persia.

It is understood that, in order to enable Her Majesty's Government to carry out this engagement, the Persian Government will give Her Majesty's Government immediate notice of any demand threatening to the integrity of Persia which may be made upon them by any foreign power.⁵⁷ (signed H. Drummond Wolff, Her Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and

Minister Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the Shah, Tehran, 24 October 1888)

Thus, the road was paved for the Persian government to give the 19 Safar 1306 (25 October 1888) 'Note' to Britain in which, apart from the clauses concerning the Karun, Persia also undertook to construct a carriage road from Dezful to Esfahan or Qom, and to complete it within a period of three to four years.⁵⁸ A further paragraph regarding the 'tolls' on the Karun was later added to this 'Note' and the Persian government agreed not to arrange it in such a way that the excess would prevent the execution of the work, and to inform and consult Wolff before bringing its regulation into practice.⁵⁹

Immediately after receiving this news, the Foreign Office telegraphed Wolff that Mackenzie who had been contacted by the Foreign Office previously,⁶⁰ 'will order steam-launch to proceed to Ahvaz at once', and that 'Lynch's steamer will follow'.⁶¹ On 30 October a steam launch, owned by Mackenzie and Co. was despatched from Basra to the Karun as a pioneer and to establish the right of way, and she was immediately followed by the *Blosse Lynch* which belonged to the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Co.⁶² and had been prepared and despatched in three days.⁶³

On 30 October (24 Safar) the following Proclamation, in the form of an official 'Circular', was sent to all foreign representatives in the capital:⁶⁴

The Persian Government, with a view to the extension of commerce and wealth in her provinces and the progress of agriculture in Khuzestan and Ahvaz, has ordered that commercial steamers of all nations, without exception, besides sailing-vessels which formerly navigated the Karun River, undertake the transport of merchandize in the Karun River from Muhammareh to the dyke at Ahvaz; but it is on the condition that they do not pass the dyke at Ahvaz upwards, as from the dyke upwards the river navigation is reserved to the Persian Government itself and its subjects, and the tolls which the Persian Government will organize shall be paid at Muhammareh. Such vessels are not to carry goods prohibited by the Persian Government, and vessels are not to stay longer than necessary for the unloading and loading of commercial loads.⁶⁵

Salisbury instructed Wolff to express to the Persian government 'cordial appreciation' by H.M.G. of this 'spontaneous and enlightened policy' on the part of the Shah.⁶⁶ Wolff further suggested that 'in order to confirm Persian government in good intentions' Salisbury should instruct the British envoys in Berlin, Vienna, and Rome to ask these governments to 'at once express, through their legations at Tehran, approbation or thanks to the Shah'. The latter duly complied with this and asked his envoys to 'endeavour to get this done'.⁶⁷ Some powers agreed to do this⁶⁸ but, as Wolff claimed, although Britain had 'on more than one occasion been of service' to Italy in Persia,⁶⁹ its government refused to cooperate with Britain in this regard.⁷⁰

Salisbury himself made an important speech at the Guildhall, London, describing the Shah's measure as 'wise and statesmanlike', and promised that it was the beginning of a policy by which 'new life can be breathed into Persia, and new prosperity brought to its commerce and industry'.⁷¹ This optimism was repeated in reply to the Shah's appreciative message, respecting his speech.⁷² In the long run, however, this optimism proved to be not very well-founded. Britain had somewhat underestimated the influence that Russia had gradually acquired in Persia. A Russian official in Tehran, Vlassov, told Wolff that the opening of the Karun had created a strong impression in Russia, particularly owing to the comments of the English press on Salisbury's Guildhall speech, and although Lord Salisbury 'had not claimed the opening of the river as a triumph it was so represented by British journalists'.⁷³ It is interesting that this very point was referred to by Amin as the main source of irritation to the Russian government.⁷⁴

The Russian reaction and related events

Even before the Circular had reached the Russian Legation, its Charge d'Affaires had protested against the Proclamation.⁷⁵ On 28 October M. de Poggio,⁷⁶ accompanied by the First Dragoman, M. Gregorowich (Arab Saheb)⁷⁷ had a long interview with Amin. Strong remonstrances were made against the Karun opening, which they said was 'exclusively in English interests'.⁷⁸ The Russians were so angry with the Shah and his Vazir that, at first, they even boycotted Amin.⁷⁹ The Shah, apparently alarmed, held repeated meetings with his ministers. When the Shah asked Etemad, a Russophil⁸⁰ and a sworn enemy of Amin who had been kept in the dark, whether it had been a wise policy to open the river or not, he supported the Russian view.⁸¹ Even Turkey was accused by Russia of having seconded the efforts of Britain and the Russian Ambassador at the Porte employed some very strong language.⁸²

But this time the Shah, perhaps encouraged by the British 'Assurances', made a firm stand. Shortly after receiving the Circular, the Russian Charge d'Affaires and Arab Saheb saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Qavam-ul-Molk and insinuated that the Circular was a 'breach of an understanding' with Amin, declaring that it would greatly anger the Emperor. The result of the present measure, Poggio said, would be to deliver the river as well as the country adjoining it to the English.⁸³ He asked the Shah to remember India and Egypt, as he was exposing his country to the same dangers.⁸⁴ Qavam told Poggio that the measure had been taken in the interests of Persia in order to render easier her commerce, not with England alone, but with all foreign nations.⁸⁵

The Shah, perhaps encouraged by the fact that no mention of his 'Secret Undertaking' was made, dictated a very bold reply. By this time, 'as a result of his fear of Russia', his reliance on Britain⁸⁶ had become so thorough that he asked Wolff to call on Qavam and advise him whether he should or should not give the answer, which Wolff found 'very sensible and well argued',⁸⁷ to Poggio in writing. As this document was dictated by the Shah himself, its study could

afford us a good opportunity to gain further insight into his way of thinking, the problems he faced, and his policies *vis-à-vis* the two powers. It began by stressing that the Karun question was not the result of the request and wish of the English.⁸⁸ This was a very dubious claim which could not be defended easily considering Russia's access to detailed information about the ceaseless efforts of successive British representatives in Tehran in the matter, and also that the draft Proclamation was in fact prepared by Wolff himself.⁸⁹ Then the note continued that this was a 'general permission' to the mercantile steam and sailing marine of the world. 'All have mercantile marines; why do you bring in the English?' the Shah asked. 'Possibly the English will rejoice at this "Circular"'. Whether they rejoiced or were angry, he said, it was not a reason why Iranians should shut their eyes to the interests and prosperity or ruin of Persia. Day by day all the world's nations progressed. 'Why must we not gather together the means of advancement and prosperity? Why must we not construct roads and workshops wherewith to make ourselves independent of foreign wares?' 'The world's nations are governed' the Shah pointed out, 'either by absolute sovereigns, constitutional governments, or republics.' He reminded the Russians that the Persian government was 'the oldest of all, and has always been and is absolute'. Why must it not do what it deemed necessary for its advancement and prosperity? The situation of the Persian government had become unique; 'she is engulfed in the rivalry between England and Russia'. Whatever he wanted to do for the development of the south, the Russians would immediately say this was done for the benefit of the English, 'just as you say the Karun is opened for the English'. While, if he did 'anything in the north, east, or west, the English immediately cried out and said that it was done in order to benefit the Russians. 'Our situation has become difficult, and this difficulty is daily on the increase.' The Persians wanted to develop their country, to construct workshops, roads, etc., and make arrangements for the improvement of their people. What right did the governments of England and Russia have to make 'such statements and pose such questions to us?' As all sovereigns were responsible for the welfare of the country over which they ruled, those who failed to act up to their vocation were guilty of a crime. He then went on:

I repeat, the antagonism existing between Russia and England, has become such, that should I wish to go out on an excursion or a shooting expedition in the north, east, and west of my country, I must consult the English, and should I intend to go south I must consult the Russians . . . Are we not an independent State with full powers in our own borders, and cannot we go about as we like, and do what to us seems best? Of course Persia is independent, and whatever it conceives to be right and proper for it to do it can, without consulting or having to submit to demands or complaints from without. Were it to fail in this, it would be acting the traitor to its government and its people.⁹⁰

At first the Russian government tried to play down the importance of the event in public. But later the British envoy at St Petersburg, Morier, reported that they were 'very much irritated' by this concession and warned Salisbury that 'strong pressure will probably be brought to bear at Tehran' to have it withdrawn. 'Prince Dolgorouki is talking very big' but Morier commented that the Russians 'can do nothing, and Sir H.D. Wolff is master of the situation if he keeps the Shah up to the mark'.⁹¹ Initially, the Russian press too remained silent, although shortly afterwards they started their blistering attacks on the Shah and his Grand Vazir. The seriousness of the case became apparent when Giers, the Russian Foreign Minister, told Morier that the grant of concession was a disturbance of the 'existing equilibrium' which threw Persia entirely into the hands of England, and that it would necessitate 'corresponding measures' on the part of Russia to redress the balance. When asked whether he meant commercial equilibrium and, if not, what, Giers said he especially referred to the equilibrium of influence⁹² and by this, Morier thought, he seemed to imply that they meant to settle the matter with Persia and the Shah, whom Giers seemed to regard as a kind of traitor 'to the interests of the White Czar'.⁹³ Salisbury, certainly having in mind the 'Assurances' Britain had given to the Shah, insisted that Britain could not see that the question could be regarded as one of political influence. 'Her Majesty's Government', he warned 'sincerely trust that the opening of the Karun . . . will not be made by Russia the ground of any undue pressure on the Shah'.⁹⁴

In the meantime, the Shah was earnestly going ahead with his plans. In order to discuss the questions of navigation on the Karun and the construction of a dam at Ahvaz he held regular meetings with the Vali Ahd, who was at this time in Tehran, and with some of his ministers.⁹⁵ Najm was appointed by the Shah to execute the work, which was reckoned to take about three to four years, during which period Najm and his assistants were to remain there in order to supervise both these projects.⁹⁶ The Shah had also given orders for the construction of warehouses, wharves, and telegraphs on the Karun, sending troops to secure the road northwards against attack in dangerous places. He had also sent Wolff 'satisfactory messages' about Reuter⁹⁷ who, apparently encouraged by the successes of Wolff, and most probably at his instigation, had sent his son, George, to Tehran in order to renegotiate the terms of his 1872 concession.⁹⁸ Under these circumstances, Wolff asked to what extent he should inform the Shah of the contents of the communications with Russia and her threatening language.⁹⁹ He was accordingly instructed to use his own judgement: 'if you think they would increase his alarm of Russia, better say nothing about them'.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the hostile articles of the Russian papers were regularly read to the Shah by his translators¹⁰¹ and, as a consequence, the Shah was indeed 'alarmed' at what he had done, and 'nervous of the possible demands of Russia'.¹⁰²

In fact, no one in Tehran doubted that the Russians would seek compensation and it was obvious that one of her demands would be the establishment of a consulate at Mashad. After her advances in Central Asia it had become necessary to subordinate Khorasan through which lay a convenient road in the

direction of Herat, and in the event of military operations against India, Khorasan would form the victualling base for Russian forces.¹⁰³ As 'the granary of Persia'¹⁰⁴ it also presented an admirable base for the supply of provisions. As soon as they received the news of the Karun concession, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed their Consul at Rasht, M. Vlasoff, to Mashad.¹⁰⁵ It appears that at first the Shah was well-disposed towards this plan, but when an article appeared in a French paper suggesting that under Prince Dolgorouki's guidance Persia had become 'a Russian province and the Shah a simple lieutenant of the White Czar', he began to resist it.¹⁰⁶ This infuriated the Russians even more. 'This refusal', wrote *Novoe Vremya*

is more insulting that it comes from . . . a country with a barefoot army, a population half composed of beggars, and tottering political institutions. And this country has dared to refuse Russia, its protector for years past . . . a Russian consul at a place where there is already established a complete English military mission.¹⁰⁷

The violent reaction of the Russian press elicited no reply from Tehran but in Constantinople, a city with a fairly large Iranian merchant community, in a series of articles and letters, *Akhtar* accused Russia of trying to prevent Persia from achieving progress.¹⁰⁸ For instance, in an article written at the instigation of the Persian envoy at the Porte, Mohsen Khan, Moin-ul-Molk,¹⁰⁹ the author accused Russia of trying to prevent Persia having intercourse with the nations of Europe so that she might not be awakened from her slumber to improve her condition. Alluding to the article which had appeared in a French paper, *Akhtar* maintained that 'very probably' it was written 'at the instigation' of the notorious Prince himself, who was described by *Akhtar* as a 'rough, conceited and ambitious' military man, ignorant of diplomacy.¹¹⁰ This article is significant not only for its themes and patriotic sentiments but also for the author's insight and the largely correct information it contained. This indicates that Amin was right in attributing it to Mohsen Khan. So, Wolff was right when he remarked: 'as far as there is a public opinion in Persia, it is in favour of the policy pursued by the Shah'.¹¹¹

Despite Dolgorouki's energetic activities to induce the Czar to take strong action,¹¹² Persia did not anticipate overt acts of enmity in the near future. A few days after the Proclamation the Russian Charge d'Affaires asked for a secret audience in order to present the 'autograph answer' of the Emperor. But by then the Persian Minister at St Petersburg had already received instructions that there was no objection to a Russian Consulate at Mashad. He was also told to consult Morier on matters of difficulty and to keep him well informed on everything.¹¹³ Maybe as a result of the representations of the Russian Charge d'Affaires, and ostensibly in order to defuse the explosive situation, the Shah, who was less than friendly towards Yahya Khan, a notorious Russophil, invited him and his son Motamed-ul-Molk, to the palace. Moshir had apparently asked for the Foreign Affairs portfolio or else, he had threatened, he would go to

Mashad (presumably in order to seek refuge or *bast* at the *haram* of Emam Reza).¹¹⁴ Later, however, he settled for the much less important Ministries of Justice and Commerce, whose combined revenues were put at between 30,000 and 40,000 tumans per annum, for himself. The governorship of (Persian) Iraq was given to his son. 'Had it not been for his links with the Russians', Etemad, himself a Russophil observed, 'he would never have got these posts'.¹¹⁵

The Shah was now desirous of offering Russia some compensation for the Karun concession¹¹⁶ and, anxious to find out the real reaction of the Emperor, he invited Dolgorouki to the palace the day after his return to Tehran. When he met the Shah,¹¹⁷ Dolgorouki discussed the Karun opening in a tone 'more of sorrow than of anger' and did not allude to the 'Secret Undertaking'. As compensation he asked for a simple commercial road for Russia.¹¹⁸ The Shah, who was considerably relieved by the tone of Dolgorouki's language, treated him very kindly¹¹⁹ and said he would willingly study the demand but could not say the request was granted until he knew the details.¹²⁰ Dolgorouki duly complied with the Shah's wish and, a few days later, put to him the real Russian demands which predictably were as follows:

- 1 The opening to Russian vessels of the Anzali *Mordab* and all those rivers which flow into the Caspian.
- 2 The construction of a carriage road from Tehran to Gilan.¹²¹
- 3 The construction of a railway line from Tehran to Khorasan.¹²²

Russia had already proposed to appoint consuls at Esfahan, Bushehr, and Khuzestan.¹²³ It should be pointed out that at this time the Shah and Amin dearly wanted to go to Europe via Russia¹²⁴ and the Russian government was holding out the formal invitation, which it was to extend to the Shah and his entourage as a bargaining card.

Before Dolgorouki's return to Tehran it was widely reported that the Prince was to ask for railways. Russia believed Wolff's 'special object' was to counteract its efforts to get railway concessions in Persia¹²⁵ and to obtain a major railway concession for Britain. Therefore, before leaving for Tehran the Prince had formulated a general policy, which was to obtain 'an absolute assurance in principle' that the construction of a railway in Persia would be entrusted to Russia exclusively, though he had 'no definite scheme' prepared.¹²⁶ The purpose of this was, of course, to block the development of railways by capitalists other than Russian subjects. He finally managed to get the Shah's signature on a secret document which, however, did not remain secret for any length of time. The news of the Shah's capitulation was given to Etemad by none other than Churchill on the very day it was signed,¹²⁷ and shortly afterwards a somewhat distorted version of the 'Agreement' appeared in the *Novoe Vremya*.¹²⁸ According to this secret Agreement, the Shah accepted the first two demands¹²⁹ of the Prince, and in addition to these he undertook to construct carriage roads from Tabriz to Jolfa, and from Astara, a landing place for Russian goods, to Ardebil. The most important part of it, however, was the stipulation that:

for five years . . . the Persian Government will, before finally confirming any concession . . . submit such (i.e. railways) concession for the information of the Russian Government. If a Russian Company will undertake the construction of such railway, to it shall be given the Concession in preference to others. If in this five-year period the Russian companies fail to construct any railways, the Iranian government will be completely free from any obligations.¹³⁰

In the text of the Agreement no mention was made of the Askabad–Mashad road, presumably because both parties had taken it for granted that agreement on that road had already been reached. In 1888, Russia had built a good road from the former place to Quchan, and from Quchan to Mashad (93 miles) the road was to have been constructed by Persia. The concession for it had been granted to Haji Ab-ul-Qasem, Malek-ut-Tojjar, a French subject and the brother of Amin-uz-Zarb.¹³¹ Until this time, the road had not been built,¹³² but it was pronounced fit for wheeled traffic in August 1890.¹³³ The carriage road from Jolfa to Tabriz was intended to assist Russian commerce, and to ward off competition on the part of those European countries which used the Trabizond–Erzerum–Tabriz route successfully.¹³⁴ The object of constructing a carriage road from Astara to Ardebil was to tap the rich resources and to monopolize the trade of eastern Azarbayjan. A concession for this road was given to Prince Nosrat-ud-Dowleh, the son-in-law of the Vali Ahd.¹³⁵ After the signing of this Agreement the Shah became certain that his European tour through Russia was definitely on,¹³⁶ and the formal invitations, so eagerly awaited, came just a few days later.¹³⁷

The Imperial Bank of Persia

Before these setbacks, Wolff had scored another diplomatic victory against Russia, namely his success in obtaining for Reuter, in lieu of his cancelled concession of 1872, a concession to set up the Imperial Bank of Persia. The concession proved to be of paramount importance and became one of the most successful foreign enterprises ever in Iran. The bank's role in the subsequent expansion and consolidation of Britain's economic and political influence in the south and Khuzestan was also very significant. Hearing of Wolff's successive triumphs in Iran,¹³⁸ and perhaps encouraged by Wolff himself, Reuter sent his son, George, to Tehran in order to salvage whatever he could of his old concession.¹³⁹ Confronted with the uncompromising negative position that Russia had adopted *vis-à-vis* the construction of railways, and probably encouraged by the initial success of the Oriental Bank, Reuter eventually agreed to settle for a State Bank concession. This had been stipulated in Article 20 of his 1872 concession and Wolff believed that the form of concession most likely to be given to Reuter was this.¹⁴⁰ Amin had already told Wolff that the Shah might be induced to give Reuter the privilege of a national bank, but Wolff had also been told that the moment was still premature for broaching the question.¹⁴¹ As

Wolff did not wish to risk failure after supporting the project, he asked Reuter's son to telegraph his father to deposit half a million pounds in the Bank of England and to inform Salisbury when he had done so.¹⁴² But Reuter said his father would not accept the bank concession without the Karun Railway. 'This', Wolff complained, 'will make the concession impossible owing to the engagement towards Russia which I cannot explain to him. There would probably be no difficulty as to the bank, when once formed as a national institution, getting the railway'.¹⁴³

Finally, on 30 January 1889,¹⁴⁴ just a few days before Dolgorouki's return to Tehran, the Imperial Bank of Persia concession was signed by the Shah¹⁴⁵ and Salisbury was immediately informed of this.¹⁴⁶ Apparently Reuter treated fairly generously all those whose views were likely to have some bearing on the question, and it was rumoured that the Shah's share was about 100,000 tumans (£30,000).¹⁴⁷

The principal points of Reuter's new concession were as follows:

- 1 The grant of an Imperial Bank Concession for 60 years which would:
- 2 Have the exclusive right to issue banknotes to be received as legal tender by the Persian government (Article 3).
- 3 Provide the service of the Treasury.
- 4 Have monopoly of all mines (except gold and silver) not already conceded and worked (Article 11).¹⁴⁸

Reuter in return relinquished a stipulation he had put forward for priority in concession for public works where his conditions were the same as those of other applicants.¹⁴⁹ But even after this he was reported as still trying to get the Karun line.¹⁵⁰ During the Shah's visit to England,¹⁵¹ the Imperial Bank of Persia concession was made public. Appendices and additional articles were added to the new concession up till the end of July 1889.¹⁵² In order to facilitate the issue it was also incorporated, under a Royal Charter, for 30 years.¹⁵³ In October, the prospectus appeared in London, and subscriptions were invited. So great was the confidence in the undertaking that within a few hours the capital amounting to £1,000,000 was subscribed 15 times over.¹⁵⁴ The founders included important financial figures like Baron Reuter, Messrs David Sassoon and Co. whose family house in Brighton, at Wolff's instigation, was given to the Shah for his residence for three nights;¹⁵⁵ Messrs J.H. Schröder and Co.; and Sir Walpole Greenwell and Co.¹⁵⁶ The bank was opened for the transaction of business on 23 October 1889. The provisional director was M. Schindler¹⁵⁷ till Rabino arrived in Tehran and took charge of the bank.¹⁵⁸ In 1890, the new banknotes representing values from one to one thousand tumans were issued. At the end of the first year of its existence (September 1890) the net profits realized were nearly £68,000, i.e. a dividend equal to 8 per cent on the capital paid up from the date of payment. The dividend, however, for the second year was 5 per cent.¹⁵⁹ The bank was employed by the Persian government,¹⁶⁰ as well as most foreign, including the British, legations.¹⁶¹ By 1912, the bank had opened

branches in Tehran (head office), Tabriz, Rasht, Mashad, Qazvin, Esfahan, Hamadan, Kermanshah, Yazd, Nosratabad (Sistan), Kerman, Shiraz, Bushehr, Muhammareh, and Ahvaz.¹⁶²

The mild opposition of Russia to the establishment in Iran of a state bank controlled by British capitalists is rather surprising. It was said that Dolgorouki himself was much irritated, but the Russian Legation declared itself 'quite satisfied with the concession'.¹⁶³ It seems that one of the reasons for this attitude was the omission from the concession of the priority clause regarding the railway construction. At the same time the Russians knew that the bank concession had settled the Reuter question once and for all. They were alive to the dangers of the original concession which, if made use of by Britain, could have been very injurious to Russia. On the other hand, they had their own plans. First, apparently Dolgorouki hoped that by means of the Bank 'a marriage might be effected between Russia and England'. Hence, he strongly urged Reuter to go to St Petersburg. Second, the Russian government could endeavour, as in fact they did, to obtain as a *quid pro quo* some grant which would enable them to deal on equal terms with Reuter.¹⁶⁴ In 1891, a Russian, Poliakov, received in compensation for his railway scheme which had also been frustrated,¹⁶⁵ the right to found a bank, and established the Banque Prêt, later to be called Banque d'Escompte de Perse, with a capital of 1,875,000 gold roubles.¹⁶⁶

With hindsight, as far as Iran's position was concerned, it is possible to argue that the policies pursued by the British government at this time were not very far-sighted. They entailed great risks for a defenceless Iran, and intensified the big-power rivalry. Furthermore, with the exception of the Karun and bank concessions, Wolff's other successes were short-lived. These initial gains by Britain could be attributed to the fact that at that particular historical juncture the Russian advances in Central Asia had given rise to the Shah's concern over Iran's independence and integrity. He had come to the conclusion that probably the best way out was to get Britain more involved in the affairs of his country. He was prepared to pay the price too. Hence the Karun and the bank concessions. At the same time, Wolff's own astuteness and subtlety and, by contrast, Dolgorouki's dullness, vanity, and lack of vision were instrumental in the British envoy's successes. At one time, for instance, Dolgorouki became so aggressive that the Shah complained to St Petersburg,¹⁶⁷ and endeavoured to get rid of him as soon as possible.¹⁶⁸ This was in sharp contrast with Wolff's seemingly calm and polished approach, which tended to reassure the Shah.

Later, however, either due to miscalculations, or because Wolff did not stay in Iran long enough to complete his plans – or perhaps owing to a combination of both – Russia managed to turn the tables and regain its preponderance in Tehran. With the Shah's capitulation to its demands,¹⁶⁹ Russia at one stroke managed to: thwart all railway schemes, halt the commercial inroads of Britain in the north, and, by the creation of a communication network, secure for itself a commanding position in the north of the country. The following quotation from the Russophil Etemad would sum it all up. Commenting on the Shah's acceptance of Dolgorouki's demands, he remarked that, though these demands

did not seem to be terribly important, in fact, this means that Iran will have to relinquish sovereignty over her northern and north-eastern regions; all thanks to the wrong policies of the present Grand Vazir (i.e. Amin) who has been seduced by English liras and has given away all the southern parts (of Iran) to them. This was how the greed of Russia was aroused.¹⁷⁰

4 Socio-economic conditions in Khuzestan prior to, and on the eve of, the Karun opening

General conditions of the people

Nowadays, in . . . (Khuzestan) . . . not even an inch of *faryab* (irrigated land) is to be found; the dominant method is *deym* (dry farming) of wheat and barley . . . there is no other region in Iran comparable in fertility and abundance of water to this area . . . But it lies in ruins and has no *rayat* (peasant) . . . (here) once the crop is harvested . . . gold currency from abroad is offered to immediately purchase, and take it to Bombay, and other countries . . . No part of Iran is as fertile as Khuzestan. In the neighbourhood of Tehran . . . enormous sums must be expended on *qanats* in order to extract one *sang*¹ of water . . . to irrigate infertile soils where the yield is no more than 4 grains for each sown (whereas in Khuzestan between) ten thousand and forty thousand *sangs* of water go straight into the sea, without being used for the irrigation of many miles of fertile lands which lay uncultivated.²

The development of . . . (Khuzestan) through irrigation works undoubtedly deserves attention. There is an immense tract of fertile plain, capable of yielding two crops in the year . . . in average years there is a sufficient rainfall to produce an abundant spring crop of wheat, obtained with a minimum of labour, and without manure. There is an important water supply, at present running to waste, to be obtained from the Karun river . . . The region is inhabited by lawless Arab tribes, who claim, and to some extent use, the land, and they are neither accustomed to labour nor ambitious of change in their conditions.³

The land of Khuzestan, 'the bread basket',⁴ the 'indigenous home of wheat and wine', the 'garden of the world' and 'the paradise of the earth',⁵ was and still is potentially one of the richest provinces of Iran. Najm believed that, if *ajam* (non-Arab, i.e. Persian) population was induced to immigrate to Khuzestan, the revenue from that province alone could equal that of the rest of the kingdom.⁶ Nevertheless, even 25 years after the opening of the Karun, the British were less than satisfied with the 'development' of the area. This, of course, meant that, contrary to their earlier expectations, the trade of Khuzestan had not grown as much as they had anticipated.⁷ Around this time, in the eyes of the British, 'development' and similar terms were almost synonymous with an increase in

commercial transactions in areas under their domination or influence. It was also customary at that time to make over-optimistic predictions before any such event as the Karun opening. Whether or not this initial optimism was well-founded, or whether it should be used as a criterion for the evaluation of subsequent developments, are matters which will be discussed in the succeeding chapters. However, it is beyond any doubt that the opening of the Karun did affect the socio-economic structure of the province and changed the conditions there. Furthermore, by national standards, this transformation was neither meagre nor slow. In order to have a better appreciation of these changes, it is both necessary and useful to know the conditions which existed there prior to the advent of the Karun opening.

Before and during the period under study, South-West Persia was inhabited mostly by tribes among whom the common denominators seem to have been nomadism and poverty. In the Bakhtiyari mountains, for example, some agricultural activities were observable; cereals were grown throughout the area but hardly enough for the needs of the population who 'in many places' subsisted 'largely on acorn bread'.⁸ It appears that even the Karun opening and the subsequent developments did not greatly affect them.⁹ In any event, in the absence of reliable statistics it is safe to assume that at this time, the chief goal of the Bakhtiyaris was self-sufficiency. In this seemingly primitive and unsophisticated economic system, pastoral nomadism was of course the main method of surplus generation, although this surplus and its distribution does not seem to have been substantial enough to contribute to the development of the region. In addition, their natural markets, Chahar Mahal and Esfahan were outside this region. They were very poor,¹⁰ and led a simple life.

Compared with the Bakhtiyaris and Arabs, the tribes of Lorestan proper were even poorer. Their economic activities and agriculture were more limited and rudimentary than either of their two neighbours. Almost all travellers who toured their area were invariably struck by only one feature of the people's life: poverty. Najm had observed that the villagers at Viliyan lived like 'beasts',¹¹ and the staple food of the Lors was acorn bread.¹² A decade later, Qaragozlu confirmed this view and expressed astonishment that, with this kind of diet, the people could still survive.¹³ Around the same period, Gordon reported that they were 'miserably poor',¹⁴ a view which was shared by Durand ten years later.¹⁵ In the early 1880s, in the entire province of Lorestan there were only 36 villages, most of whose inhabitants were nomads.¹⁶ These quotations and examples indicate the primitive stage of the economy of Lorestan at this time.

In Khuzestan too, the conditions were somewhat similar. The predominantly Arab population of the province was small and demonstrated special habits which distinguished them from their non-Arab brethren. They, like the Lors and Bakhtiyaris, were tribal and led a simple life. Khuzestan was inhabited by different confederations of Arab tribes. The social patterns of organization of these tribes were very similar, while their economic organization differed considerably. The distinguishing difference was to be found in their pattern of resource utilization which ranged from sedentary agriculture to pastoral

nomadism, the most common style, however, being a combination of the two. It is a fact that, its vast resources notwithstanding, Khuzestan was one of the least developed provinces of Iran and the great majority of its population lived in absolute indigence. This view is borne out by historical evidence. In 1880, for example, in the chief centres of Khuzestan, i.e. Dezful and Shushtar, 'no more than two or three people' could be found whose fortunes exceeded 20,000 tumans.¹⁷ The staple diet of the populace was a very coarse and bad bread.¹⁸ Yet they were surprisingly content,¹⁹ and apparently did not mind living in poverty,²⁰ for the simple reason that they did not strive to better their conditions. Thus, this poverty has been attributed to the populace's general inertia and lack of enterprise. It has also led some observers to call them, no doubt unjustly, 'lazy',²¹ and 'deplorably lacking in energy',²² who met 'their own needs by extracting an undeserved harvest from the prolific soil',²³ since they were presumably ignorant of the basic agricultural techniques.

Whether these generalizations are justifiable or not does not concern us here. It is, nevertheless, possible to argue that, compared with their fellow *rayats* in other parts of the kingdom, the Arabs of Khuzestan showed some kind of reluctance towards agricultural activities. This, however, is not to say that they did not exploit the land. On the contrary, wherever permanent irrigation was possible, as at Fallahiyeh and Hoveizeh, a large permanently settled population was to be found. For example, the Mohaysins whose area, 'with a bit of care' could become 'one vast grain field',²⁴ combined pastoral nomadism with sedentary agriculture. But their wealth was chiefly expressed in flocks of sheep and goats, particularly the former which supplied them with their woollen blankets, tent, and dairy products. They utilized their resources to the fullest extent possible, while the Bani Torofs were pastoral nomads.

After the Anglo-Persian war of 1857, the Persian government realized that an important and exposed province like Khuzestan should never again be left without its own troops. So, an infantry regiment along with some 16 guns and artillerymen were stationed at Shushtar, and more at other centres of the province. The continued presence of these forces brought about a certain degree of peace and security to an area whose hallmark had been insecurity. This, no doubt, induced more people to take to agriculture. Among these were even members of some Arab tribes who were either anxious to earn a living from agriculture, or could no longer engage in the looting and ransacking of their neighbours. Consequently a limited degree of prosperity occurred in Khuzestan.²⁵ But the Bakhtiyari penetration of the province, which ironically could be dated from the time of this new-found security, did much to arrest this development. The Bakhtiyaris gradually decided to use the plains of Khuzestan as their *qeshlaq* (winter quarters). Thanks to the excessive greed of Zel who in 1880 had added Khuzestan to the rest of the provinces under his government,²⁶ this *de facto* position of the Bakhtiyaris became official. He farmed out the revenue of the entire province, with the exception of Muhammareh which was under the Mohaysins, to Hoseyn Qoli Khan, the Bakhtiyari Ilkhani. Kasravi, quoting an old Persian saying, observes: 'this was like entrusting the flock's

protection to the wolf.²⁷ The damage the Bakhtiariis caused to the agricultural settlements of the province must have been extensive.²⁸ In any event, insecurity remained one of the major factors which prevented the agricultural development of the province.

Commerce and industry

Prior to the Karun opening, a limited trade, which by national standards does not seem to have been substantial in volume, was carried out locally. Being an outlying province of the kingdom, some transactions also existed between this region and the commercial centres in the Ottoman territory, notably Amareh, Basra and Kuwait, as well as Bombay. Despite the paucity of reliable data, it is possible to indicate some major economic trends in this period.

In South-West Persia, like in the rest of the kingdom, traditionally a local industry existed. In Dezful, for instance, there were numerous indigo factories, and in Shushtar there were small workshops which mainly produced local textiles, such as *aba* (cloak), rugs and carpets, all of which mostly satisfied the basic requirements of the local populace. In this regard, the population was nearly self-sufficient.

In Lorestan and Bakhtiari the conditions were somewhat similar. The interesting point is that, in all of Khuzestan there were no hatmakers. Shoes too, had to be imported from Hamadan and Borujerd. Qaragozlu has contrasted this lack of skill and enterprise in Shushtar with the fact that, in olden days, exquisite and expensive textiles, generally known as the *diba-ye-Shushtari* (Shushtari silver cloth) were renowned all over the world.²⁹ Around this time, with the exception of Dezful and Shushtar which were the major concentrations of population in Khuzestan, there were no other economic centres. The chief industry of the province was the cultivation and production of *vasmeh* (indigo) in Dezful. Numerous factories on the Dez produced large quantities of *nil* (baked indigo) which was exported for dyeing of wool, etc., to Persian Iraq³⁰ where there was an extensive carpet industry. The total monthly output of some 100 indigo factories and workshops of Dezful was about 90 tons, with a revenue of some 50,000 tumans.³¹ There was also a substantial number of water-mills located in and around Dez, which is a further indication of the importance of Dezful as a major agricultural and commercial centre. In Shushtar, as in Muhammareh,³² the local industry was the traditional handicraft production. There were, for instance, about 30 *aba* factories and *ahrami* (local carpets),³³ *gelims* (flat-weave rugs) and coarse cloth, for which twist was imported from India,³⁴ were also manufactured. Goldsmiths were to be found all over Khuzestan. Here, the interesting point is that this branch of industry, along with silver works had been monopolized by the Sabians of Khuzestan who had lived there since the pre-Islamic era.³⁵ Hoveizeh manufactured all metal fittings for horse furniture,³⁶ and in Fallahiye rugs and *abas* were made.³⁷ In Muhammareh, both river and sea sailing vessels were built, costing, depending on the size of the craft, between 100 and 2,000 tumans.³⁸ From what has been said above, it is clear

that the local industry of Khuzestan, and South-West Persia generally, was very rudimentary and rather primitive.

The regional trade, by comparison, appears to have been more important. It should be remembered that Lorestan and Bakhtiari did not contribute much to this trade. The chief export of the former, apart from natural products such as firewood, from the point of view of value was probably mules which were the best transport animals in most parts of Iran.³⁹ Before the Karun opening the chief market of the Lurs was Khorram Abad, but later Borujerd, and naturally Dezful, took over that position. The trade of Lorestan with Dezful, in any event, was inconsiderable.⁴⁰ The Bakhtiyaris, compared with the Lurs, were in a slightly better economic position. However, they too did not contribute much to the regional trade since their traditional markets, where they usually sold their flocks, etc., were Chahar Mahal and Esfahan itself. The only exception in this regard seems to have been the period when Hoseyn Qoli Khan was their *Ilkhani* (c.1871–82).⁴¹

In Khuzestan, the principal commercial centres were Dezful, Shushtar, Muhammareh, Fallahiyeh and, to some extent, Hoveizeh. Most of the Dezful merchants were from the town itself and Shushtar. Some of them by 1890 had trade partners in Bombay and other commercial centres in India. They imported enough merchandise to satisfy the limited demands of Khuzestan and some of the Lurs. Sheepskins were sent to Persian Iraq and Azarbayjan; wool and Borujerd opium were also exported from Dezful to India and China.⁴² The export of indigo has already been discussed. In the early 1880s, nearly all foreign imports were said to come from Bombay. Samovars and other brass wares, however, came from Russia, and some piecegoods came via Tabriz either from Russia or England by way of Erzurum.⁴³ In Shushtar, conditions were very similar to those in Dezful. Here, too, wool and opium were sent abroad. Its merchandise, all locally produced, were *aba*, carpets, and coarse cotton cloth used for making sails for sailing boats and garments.⁴⁴ Shushtar had one salt mine and several springs or wells of *naft* (kerosene oil). There was also another *naft* well, on the way to Ram Hormoz, which belonged to the Shushtaris, who exported the white stuff to neighbouring districts,⁴⁵ and even as far as Esfahan.⁴⁶ It appears that in 1882 Najm was alluding to this oil well when he observed: 'Alas . . . instead of sending large sums of money abroad for the filthy *naft* of Russia, (I) wish we could consume this white *naft* of our own country inside Iran'.⁴⁷ Baring heard it positively asserted that all foreign imports came from Bombay, but the sugar he saw was 'all French' and the candles, though bearing English marks, 'looked like Russian produce'. Iron and cotton goods came by way of the Persian Gulf.⁴⁸

In Hoveizeh, by 1890, there were about 80 small shops and one caravan-sarai. Its shopkeepers imported cotton and piecegoods from Basra and Dezful and exported sheepskins, which were similar to those from Bokhara, cow and buffalo skins, and finally grain. Building materials such as bricks and quicklime were imported from Dezful and Shushtar. Although the town was the centre of an important agricultural district, even until a few years after the Karun

opening it had no bath houses.⁴⁹ In Fallahiyyeh the agricultural produce consisted of wheat, barley, rice, and dates. The people also possessed great numbers of sheep. In 1890, the town had about 500 families and 100 shops which had been built the previous year, i.e. immediately after the Karun opening. This to some extent indicates the economic vitality that this event had generated in the region. Most of the resident merchants of Fallahiyyeh were at this time from the town itself, Muhammareh, and Shushtar. Grain, dates, rice, wool, etc., were all exported abroad, and a fairly important trade was done in feathers of wild white ducks. Its *aba* was also famous. Bricks were made in Fallahiyyeh but other building materials such as chalk and lime had to be brought over from Bushehr.⁵⁰

An important feature of the Khuzestan trade at this time was that at least some part of it was carried out for barter. A good example of this was the arrangement which existed in the 1870s between Hoseyn Qoli Khan and the Mohaysin chief, Nosrat-ul-Molk. The latter had three small steam vessels for which he needed coal. Therefore, it was arranged that for each load of coal entering Muhammareh, the Bakhtiyaris would take a load of dates in exchange.⁵¹ It has also been recorded that in the early 1880s, merchants from Kuwait came regularly every year to Hendiyan and Mashur to exchange their merchandise for grain, rice, and dates.⁵² This method which was based on an exchange of goods, seems to have been common practice in the whole region. At the same time, it signifies the lack of sophistication of the economy of the area and the primitive way in which commercial transactions were conducted. As a result, the cash economy did not become the prevalent system until many years after the Karun opening. Then, after a relative expansion in the economy of the region, this traditional method gradually lost its importance and was replaced by the easier system of cash-for-goods or the more popular method of long credits.

With regard to the foreign trade of the province, it seems that up to the late 1880s fairly strong commercial links existed between the trade centres of Khuzestan such as Muhammareh, on the one hand, and economic centres across the border in Turkey, on the other. Most of the foreign trade of the province at this time was via Amareh,⁵³ with Basra and Kuwait, and some with Bombay.⁵⁴ Muhammareh, before the Karun opening, appears to have been entirely dependent on Basra⁵⁵ for its imports as well as exports. Amareh was the channel through which most of the Khuzestan's foreign trade passed, but as a direct result of the Karun opening its trade was diverted to Muhammareh. Basra, too, lost its importance in this trade.

However, it appears that this was a fairly slow and gradual process. For instance, in 1891 it was reported that the caravan trade of Dezful with Amareh, by four long stages, was still carried on 'notwithstanding Turkish Customs troubles, but it is gradually falling away to Muhammareh'.⁵⁶ This was a development which had been anticipated almost a decade earlier by Najm who had also dwelt on the adverse effects of the Karun route opening on the commerce of Bushehr and Shiraz.⁵⁷ In this connection, immediately after the Karun

Proclamation it was reported that Persian merchants of Shiraz had 'taken alarm' at the inauguration of a 'new trade route which, they represent, will injuriously affect the town'.⁵⁸ Apart from its favourable position, the initial success of Amareh in attracting the foreign trade of Khuzestan seems to have been the economic policy of the Ottoman government. In order to encourage its development and to raise revenue, the Turks had devised easy customs regulations as well as other facilities. Amareh had previously been a marshland. But, through the free grant of land and other economic inducements, the Turks had encouraged agriculturists to immigrate to the area and develop its resources. Consequently, most Iranian peasants who had fled their hometowns found easy conditions and ready land and water for farming in and around Amareh. At the time of Najm's journey there were about one thousand families from Dezful alone who lived and worked there.⁵⁹ Its trade too had been very carefully fostered by the Turks.

This, however, seems to have been their policy in the early 1880s, when the possibility of Muhammareh becoming a rival commercial centre was remote. Later on, after the Karun opening this policy was changed. Now, by a variety of inducements, the Turks tried to lure the transit trade of Khuzestan with the interior to the Kermanshah-Baghdad route and thus deny Muhammareh the opportunity of rapid growth. As a consequence, in 1891 the British merchants in South-West Persia were inclined to use the Kermanshah route on which the fullest facilities had been given for through transit. On this route, for instance, 1 per cent through transit duty was levied at the Turkish customs house without much delay, while on the Dezful-Amareh route the full import duty was charged, to be returned minus 1 per cent on the goods leaving Turkish territory. The general experience was that considerably more than 1 per cent was kept and refund of the remainder was obtained with difficulty.⁶⁰ These measures indicated Turkey's attempts at thwarting the growth of Muhammareh itself, and the trade on the Muhammareh-Borujerd and/or Muhammareh-Esfahan routes. It should also be pointed out that the Kermanshah-Baghdad route had a natural advantage over the other routes in the sense that it had always been the popular pilgrimage route to Karbala from the north, and this kept the transport cost relatively low.

To sum up then, before the Karun opening a limited internal trade existed in South-West Persia. The impression is that the tribes of Lorestan proper were not much affected by the outside world and its developments since their way of life was largely based on subsistence farming and self-sufficiency. So their contribution to this regional trade had to be minimal. Neither did the Bakhtiyaris, before the construction of the Lynch road, have a great role in regional trade. Instead, it was the external trade which was of vital importance to Khuzestan. The southern parts of the province were economically dependent on places like Basra and Amareh. But gradually, with the Karun navigation, the opening of the Lynch/Bakhtiyari road and finally the introduction of new customs regulations, once again economically southern Khuzestan became a part of Iran and began to play an important role in the transit trade of the interior.

Agriculture and animal husbandry

General

It has already been mentioned that the major economic activities in Khuzestan, a sparsely populated area mostly inhabited by nomads, were farming and animal husbandry. Trade and crafts were only important inasmuch as the basic requirements of an essentially pastoral economy were satisfied. Town dwellers played a key role in these two sectors. With regard to the agriculture of the province, in the absence of verifiable data, through the critical use of the available material and with hindsight, it is possible to say that at this time the predominant economic system in Khuzestan was a subsistence one. Cash economy, although in co-existence with it, does not seem to have played as vital a role as the other system. In this economy of pastoral nomadism, small-scale agricultural activities complemented the pastoral sector and, to no mean extent, made it independent. We have already referred to the fact that Britain's high expectations with regard to regional trade contrasted with what happened after the Karun opening. Assuming that these expectations were well-founded, here the question must be 'Why did such expected growth not materialize?' In other words, we are not only interested in the study of the prevailing conditions in Khuzestan but also in ascertaining to what extent these conditions determined the pace and course of subsequent developments.

In this section we are concerned with the agriculture of the province which, broadly speaking includes animal husbandry too. Great numbers of sheep, goats and buffaloes were kept by the Arab tribesmen. For instance, the small village of Ahvaz – with about 60 families – had about 3,000 sheep,⁶¹ and the headman of another small village near Hoveizeh had about 2,000.⁶² Being a subsistence system based on pastoralism and farming, the economy of the area was obviously prone to failures. For instance, in 1894 it was reported that the animal produce of Khuzestan was decreased as a result of cattle plague.⁶³ Climatic changes and untimely weather fluctuations also took their tolls. In 1897, for instance, there was great mortality among sheep and cattle on the Karun owing to scarcity of fodder and an unusually cold winter.⁶⁴ There are numerous examples in this regard, but the above two sufficiently underline the weaknesses of such an economic system and its heavy dependence on factors beyond the control of the people. In addition to these circumstances, there were other factors which affected the livelihood of the populace and sometimes shaped the whole process of development. Land tenure, taxation system, irrigation problems, and finally insecurity, were some of the chief factors which impeded the development of Khuzestan.

Agriculture

The population of Khuzestan by no means constituted a homogeneous community. Different ethnic groups, such as Lors, Persians, and Arabs inhabited various parts of the province. Not surprisingly, the production and consumption habits

of these peoples reflected this multiplicity of race, culture and character. The interesting point is that, even among the Arabs themselves, who constituted by far the largest group, various tribes were to be found whose members were more intensively engaged in agriculture than others. The nature of farming concerning the method of land and water utilization, too, varied from district to district. For example, in Dezful both methods of farming, i.e. *faryab* and *delym* prevailed. Indigo was 'the principal produce' and very widely cultivated.⁶⁵ Other produce of Dezful were cereals, sesame seeds, cotton⁶⁶ and corn.⁶⁷ No opium was grown in the neighbourhood,⁶⁸ although conditions were favourable.⁶⁹ Low-quality rice, too, was produced. Nezam-ul-Saltaneh⁷⁰ tried to introduce a new type of rice-seed from Najaf but, despite the satisfactory results, it proved to be too expensive for general consumption and therefore its cultivation was gradually abandoned.⁷¹ In the entire province fruit and citrus orchards were only to be found in Dezful. It also had a monopoly in the export of reeds, which were prepared for export in a special way.⁷² Furthermore, in Khuzestan the *faryab* farming, which could produce both *sayfi* (summer crops) and *shatvi* (winter crops), was confined to Dezful and Ram Hormoz.⁷³ These facts seem to justify Najm and Qaragozlu's observation that, compared with the inhabitants of the rest of Khuzestan, the people of Dezful were the most dynamic and active,⁷⁴ although in their opinion, in terms of energy as well as expertise they still had a long way to go to get anywhere near their fellow *rayats* from Persian Iraq.⁷⁵

In relation to this apparent energy of the Dezfulis, Qaragozlu has made an illuminating observation which could provide us with a clue as to the 'listlessness'⁷⁶ of the population of the province. This circumstance has also been referred to as one of the chief factors which had impeded the economic development of the area. He has recorded that there were some 40 villages along both banks of the Dez whose peasants, ostensibly due to lack of security, lived in Dezful itself. He then pointed out that 'unlike the rest of Khuzestan (which is *khaleseh* or crown land) these villages, each of which must pay a specific tax, are owned by the people',⁷⁷ that is they were *arababi* (private land) and not *khaleseh*. From ancient times all of these lands had been *faryab* and the old irrigation system, which in addition to the river also included some *qanats*, was still functioning fairly efficiently. In the spring of 1907, however, the bridge/dam over the Dez on which the prosperity of the town depended was seriously damaged by floods.⁷⁸ It appears that it was this system of land tenure (i.e. *arababi*) which, before the destruction of the dam, caused the town to be described as 'a far more flourishing town than Shushtar',⁷⁹ despite the fact that the soil of Dezful was not as fertile as that of the rest of the province.⁸⁰ It is rather obvious that those who owned the land on which they worked tended to be more enthusiastic about their activities than those who worked on the land which was either the property of the state or the local sheykh. In order to underline this fact the following comparison might be of some assistance.

In Shushtar the natural conditions were much more suitable for agriculture than in Dezful. Its pastures, for instance, were the best in Khuzestan.⁸¹ The town itself was a part of the island of Miyanab, situated between the Chahar

Dangeh and the Do Dangeh. Therefore, the *boluk* (district) of Miyanab was a very fertile and well-watered plain of about 140 square miles⁸² which contained some villages and agricultural settlements. Despite these very favourable natural conditions, in comparison with Dezful the agriculture of Shushtar was much less developed. In 1881, for example, when the irrigation system of Miyanab was still standing, it was reported that the dominant method of farming was *deym*. Shushtar was also the only place in the entire province where some opium was grown⁸³ with good results.⁸⁴ But in Shushtar, as in Kakavand territory of Lorestan,⁸⁵ even the poppy cultivation was based on *deym*.⁸⁶ Its opium was of much better quality than that produced at Esfahan.⁸⁷ Considering that towards the end of the nineteenth century the cultivation and trade of opium played an important role in the economy of south Persia and brought about major improvements in the conditions of its people, its absence from the economy of Khuzestan is puzzling. This significant phenomenon might go some way to justify the view that, apart from being content, the population of Khuzestan also lacked the basic agricultural techniques. It is a confirmation of this view that at first, owing to the ignorance of the local cultivators, the poppy cultivation in Shushtar had not been very successful; till 'some men from Yazd' whose people were renowned for their industry and hard work, 'happening to pass that way' gave them necessary instructions with satisfactory results.⁸⁸

In this regard, it should also be pointed out that an important feature of the Muhammareh trade in the 1890–1909 period was that, until the opening in earnest of the Lynch road (1902), the export of opium from that port was negligible.⁸⁹ In the early 1880s, observers had predicted 'a large increase' in the production of opium in Khuzestan since the climate and soil were peculiarly favourable to its cultivation.⁹⁰ This expected expansion, however, never materialized. Baring likened the Shushtar of the early 1880s to 'a city of the dead', and spoke of the 'general listlessness and want of energy of the inhabitants' which, he believed, was responsible for the ruination and decay of this once-flourishing and prosperous city.⁹¹ For example, previously, silk was produced in the town, but like so many other things its production had completely stopped.⁹² Up to the opening of the Karun, the lands of Shushtar belonged to the state, i.e. they were *khaleseh*. However, the disaster which befell Shushtar occurred in the mid-1880s, namely, after Najm and Baring's visits and before Qaragozlu's. As a result of the breaking of the Valerian Bridge/Dam, the ruination of the town and its district became almost complete. This point will be discussed later in the chapter.

The neighbourhood of Shushtar was inhabited mostly by the Al-e-Kathir Arabs, some 1,500 families of whom lived on the bank of the Dez. They practised both *abi* (irrigated) and *deymi* (unirrigated) farming, with the latter being the dominant method. Another 600 families (the Ghanafejeh clan) occupied the region west of the Karun and south of the Dez, and Band-e-Qir. Their agriculture, too, was *deymi*. Their territory was very extensive, but, due to manpower shortage, most of these lands were uncultivated.⁹³ The same applied to the villages of the *boluk* (district) of Miyanab where, after the Karun opening, all the

khaleseh lands were given to the cultivators.⁹⁴ It seems that, as far as the agricultural production was concerned, the break in the irrigation system had such a disastrous effect on the district that, from the middle of this decade on, the area became dependent on other districts even for its basic requirements. The *boluk* of Aqili, about 18 miles to the north-east of the town consisting of a dozen villages, was *faryab*.⁹⁵ To the north of Shushtar lay the lands of Deymcheh and Ney Siyah which had no settled population. Due to the inroads of the Lors and the Bakhtiylaris, the farmers who worked on these lands usually resided in Shushtar itself.⁹⁶ These two regions had formerly contained very prosperous villages.⁹⁷ Their decay was the result of insecurity.

The area on the west bank of the Karun and below Band-e-Qir, i.e. from the village of Veys⁹⁸ to Muhammareh, which included the small village of Ahvaz,⁹⁹ was under the jurisdiction of the Sheykh of Muhammareh. In Ahvaz and Veys the agriculture was *deymi*. No orchards or even trees were to be found there. Najm could count only a dozen date palms in Ahvaz¹⁰⁰ and Qaragozlu, after visiting this place, remarked that, with the exception of Aqili 'indeed not even one drop of the Karun (water) is being used for irrigation'.¹⁰¹ The eastern bank of the Karun was almost entirely occupied by the Bavi tribe, and some of the less important clans, all of which were under the sheykh of Muhammareh. Here, too, the dominant method was *deymi* and the immense water resources were not used in any way.¹⁰² The Mohaysins and their dependencies seem to have possessed the most diverse economy in the province. In and around the town of Muhammareh itself the land was not very suitable for farming. It was *deymi* cultivation of wheat and barley by the Bavis which not only met the needs of the Muhammareh district but also produced the grain surplus which was exported from Khuzestan to Basra and Bombay. Apart from some cereals, the chief produce of the Muhammareh district was dates, of which there were some 160 different varieties. In the early 1890s the total number of date palms in this area was estimated at 1,000,000, occupying an area of about 600 square miles.¹⁰³ Usually an acre of ground held 100 trees which bore fruit at 5–7 years. In a fairly good season a tree in full bearing gave an average profit of 3 rupees, at which rate the acre would return £20 a year.¹⁰⁴ These gardens were irrigated twice daily by the sea tides which pushed the river water into the lowlands around it. Therefore, thanks to this entirely natural irrigation method, there seemed to be no major obstacles to the expansion of the date cultivation in this region. Considering that the high tides went half way from Muhammareh to Ahvaz, Qaragozlu believed that the area under date cultivation could be increased ten times.¹⁰⁵ This view was confirmed by McDouall, who argued that 'the present crop could be at least doubled, and perhaps quadrupled'.¹⁰⁶ It seems, however, that due to the existence of a strange system of date gardens' tenure, this easy expansion was impeded.

The reclamation of waste, or new, land was usually as follows: the growers received the land from the sheykh or whomsoever was responsible for the revenue of the district, rent-free for a period of 10–15 years. The condition was that they made the necessary irrigation canals, etc., and planted date trees to be

in bearing at the expiration of the period. They also made a fair profit by planting apples, melons, etc. At the end of the period they could continue to occupy on the condition of handing half of the crop to the landlord. This type of reclamation was principally going on at 'Gusba of the Nessar tribe' near the mouth of the Shatt.¹⁰⁷ This was very similar to the land reclamation policy in and around Basra¹⁰⁸ which had enabled the Turks to derive a revenue of half a million tumans from that place alone.¹⁰⁹ For instance at Fao, on the Turkish side of the Shatt, all the land had been reclaimed on the terms mentioned above by cultivators who had originally been poor peasants. By contrast, despite the very favourable conditions, most of the lower Karun and areas around the Shatt on the Iranian side were uncultivated.

Compared with their neighbours, the Bani Torof appear to have utilized the natural resources of the Hoveizeh district in a relatively efficient way. Very well-watered by the Karkheh, this district was one of the most fertile areas of Khuzestan. The Bani Torof occupied both sides of the river for a distance of some 80 miles.¹¹⁰ Their farming was both *deymi* and *faryab*, but, thanks to the Karkheh, the latter seems to have been the predominant method. Their chief product was rice which provided them with a good deal of surplus and profit. Buffalo husbandry, too, brought them a handsome revenue.¹¹¹ The tribe itself contained some 3,000 families but owing to the very favourable natural conditions of their territory another 5,000 families from various tribes had been attracted to, and depended on, them. However, by 1890, even in this area there were no fruit orchards, or even trees,¹¹² whereas previously there had been many.¹¹³ Paradoxically, one consequence of this relative strength and prosperity of the Bani Torofs was the decay of the town of Hoveizeh itself and its once-watered and flourishing neighbourhood. This had come about as a result of the change in the course of the Karkheh. After this diversion, which was effected through the construction of the Nahr-e-Hashem, Hoveizeh lost its importance since its agriculture was reduced to *deymi*.¹¹⁴ Another consequence of the Bani Torof's power was their continual encroachments on territories occupied by other less powerful tribes, such as Savari, Bani Asad and Sudan,¹¹⁵ and also their reluctance to recognize the authority of the government and, much later, the sheykh of Muhammareh. This created a great deal of disturbance and insecurity in the province.

On the eastern side of Khuzestan lay the very fertile plain of Ram Hormoz – of about 1,600 square miles¹¹⁶ – in which five rivers flowed and all of them converged near the town of Ram Hormoz to form the Jarrahi River which ran to Fallahiyeh.¹¹⁷ Thus, this district was probably the most fertile and potentially the richest part of the whole province, and the general conditions for agriculture were excellent. But in Ram Hormoz, as elsewhere in Khuzestan, these resources were not fully utilized. The land and water resources of the place were *khaleseh*.¹¹⁸ All kinds of *seyfi* and *shatvi* crops were grown but, due to the shortage of manpower which itself was a result of over-taxation, its development had been hampered.¹¹⁹ This vast plain which contained extensive areas of *faryab* lands, also had another major advantage. It was very close to the ports of Mashur and Bozi

and, as Najm observed, as soon as the surplus crop was conveyed to these ports cash was offered on the spot to buy and take it to Bombay,¹²⁰ etc. The above ports, together with Deh Molla and the port of Hendiyan (also known as Hendi-jan), constituted the *boluk* of Jarrahi which was located between Ram Hormoz and Fallahiyeh. This *boluk* had previously been under the sheykhs of the latter place, but in 1890 it was independent of Fallahiyeh. Its produce was cereals, mostly *deymi* which was grown in some 27 villages and hamlets, some of whose cultivators were from Jarrahi and some Arabs of Fallahiyeh.¹²¹ In Deh Molla, the water from the river Zeydan was used for *faryab* cultivation of both *seyfi* and *shatvi*. *Deymi* wheat and barley were also produced.¹²² At Hendiyan, which also possessed large flocks of sheep, and at Mashur, farming was almost entirely *deymi*.¹²³ Rice paddies as well as date groves were to be found around Bozi.¹²⁴

Compared with the rest of the province, and perhaps with the exception of Muhammareh, the district of Fallahiyeh was better developed and more efficiently cultivated. The Jarrahi water was fairly well used for irrigation purposes. There were some 40 villages, almost equally divided on both sides of the river, in the neighbourhood of the town. Most of these were cultivated by seasonal farmers who, after the harvest, went back to Fallahiyeh to pick the date crop. Other produce of this district was rice, which gave them a good profit, and cereals. Most of the *deymi* cultivation was in the neighbouring district of Jarrahi. Lucerne was also produced around the town to provide fodder for the large number of sheep,¹²⁵ cows, and buffaloes they possessed, and which provided a good deal of their revenue. They also bred the best horses and mares in Khuzestan. Their chief source of revenue, however, was the great number of date trees in the area. The crop obtained from each individual tree in Fallahiyeh was larger and of better quality than that from either Basra or Muhammareh.¹²⁶ Small wonder, then, that with such a favourable position, the people of this district were described as 'the most prosperous of all the province'.¹²⁷ They had successfully combined *faryab* and *deymi* cultivation of grain, rice, etc., with date cultivation. But in order to utilize their environment to the fullest degree possible, animal husbandry, too, was rife. This diversified economy provided their social system and political organization with a very strong economic base, which, again with the exception of the Mohaysins, the rest of the Arab confederations in the region were lacking. Hence their superior position in Khuzestan up to the rise of the Mohaysins. Fallahiyeh also had another unique advantage which was that for most of the year their extensive irrigation network of canals, etc., turned their territory, like that of the Bani Torof, into an almost 'impregnable fortress'.¹²⁸ This had given them a very strong sense of security and independence from the government, so much so that, for instance in the late 1880s, Nezam had to personally lead an expedition, which had to be in the dry season, in order to crush their sheykh who fled to Muhammareh.¹²⁹ The inhabitants of Fallahiyeh also told Najm that in order to keep away the government officials, every time one visited them they would see to it that the hapless functionary suffered such an ordeal that he would never again return to Fallahiyeh.¹³⁰ Ironically, the same fate befell Najm himself.¹³¹

From the above, it becomes clear that, despite unusually favourable conditions in most parts of Khuzestan, its resources were not properly utilized and its agriculture not developed. The huge water resources in the area were scarcely used, and the dominant mode of farming was *deymi*. As to the cause of this agricultural backwardness of Khuzestan several reasons have been given, the most plausible of which will be discussed in the rest of the present chapter. Since the other tribal confederations of Khuzestan were unwilling or unable to change the economic base of their political system, and also bearing in mind that the only people who were capable of doing so, i.e. the Kabs of Fallahiyeh, were at this time losing their power, it was natural for the Mohaysins to absorb the rest. Their geo-political position too was extremely favourable. At the same time, the diversified economy of the Mohaysins, which gave them relative strength also rendered them, more than others, dependent on the good will of the government or whoever could provide security. It also made them vulnerable to the encroachments of other predatory tribes and denied them the sort of freedom of movement which the wandering tribes enjoyed. Hence their emphasis on peace and security.

Major obstacles to the development of Khuzestan

Land tenure

One of the factors which contributed to the decay of Khuzestan was its land tenure and the peculiar practices associated with it. With reference to this question a few variations appear to have existed in the province. The mode of tenure could range, depending on the area, from the ownership of a single date tree by cultivators¹³² (each valued at 20–40 tumans)¹³³ as in Muhammareh, to the outright proprietorship of the land by the peasants, known as *arbab*, in the villages along the Dez. These were, 'unlike the rest of Khuzestan', owned by the cultivators who usually resided in Dezful itself.¹³⁴ With these few exceptions, until the early 1890s the land of Khuzestan was all *khaleseh*. Indeed, even up to the twentieth century, the most important concentration of *khaleseh* land in Iran, after Sistan, was to be found in Khuzestan.¹³⁵ It appears that *vaqf* (land immobilized for some purpose) was rather scarce, and apart from the village of Khalaf Abad, half of which was constituted, most probably after 1890, by Nezam into *ouqaf* (plural of *vaqf*) for the *seyyeds* (descendants of the prophet Mohammad through his daughter Fatemeh) and *olama* (Muslim clergymen), other sources have not mentioned this type of tenure in Khuzestan. The dominant kind of landholding was *khaleseh*, the origin of which goes back to pre-Islamic times. At the time of the Islamic conquest the early Muslims were forced to evolve a theory to include this type of land within the general framework. Subsequently, when the rights of *emam* (i.e. emam Mahdi) were transferred to or vested in the temporal ruler, the latter took over the rights exercised by the *emam* over *khaleseh*, the extent of which land varied considerably with the rise and fall of dynasties.¹³⁶

At the time of the Constitutional Revolution the *khaleseh* then in existence

could be divided into three main groups according to its origin; lands were entered in:

- 1 the Naderi Land Register which comprised lands confiscated by the state, mainly from 'the priests and the principal families of the country',¹³⁷ in the time of Nader Shah (reigned 1736–47);
- 2 the Mohammad Shah (reigned 1834–48) land register; and
- 3 the Naser-ud-Din Shah (reigned 1848–96), or the Naseri, land register.

In the last two groups were lands which had been confiscated for arrears of taxation and other reasons, and some lands which had been acquired by the state through purchase. These various lands were not for the most part directly administered by the state. Some of them had been handed over to individuals for life or shorter periods, with the right of transfer. Such lands were known as *khalesejat-e-entegali* or *vagozari*. A second type, the *khalesejat-e-toyuli*, were *khaleseh*, the possession of which carried with it the obligation to furnish military contingents. This type of *khaleseh* was found chiefly, if not entirely, in the tribal areas. Lastly there were *khaleseh-ye-divani*, which remained in the full possession of the government in contradistinction to the first type of *khaleseh*.¹³⁸

Prior to the Karun opening, with a few exceptions, almost the entire 'lands and water (resources)' of the province were *khalesejat-e-divan-e-ala*.¹³⁹ It was, for instance, reported that in Shushtar and elsewhere the *khaleseh* officials interfered in all affairs of the people.¹⁴⁰ To judge by the reports of the officials, the tendency was for this type of *khaleseh* to be in a state of decay and to contribute little to public finance. The reason for this was not difficult to understand. 'Experience shows', Najm said, 'that in Iran and Turkey, people dare not develop the (*khaleseh*) land' since it did not belong to them.¹⁴¹ Hence their lack of enthusiasm and energy which had prevented the development of these lands. Consequently the revenue derived from them was meagre. For this reason, together with the central government's need for money, it became official policy to decrease the amount of *khaleseh* by sale.¹⁴² Some of these lands were accordingly sold to private owners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With regard to Khuzestan, this policy had long been advocated as the best and only method of its development. Therefore, almost immediately after the Karun Proclamation, this process started in the province. Discussing the problems which hindered the development of the district of Miyanab, Qaragozlu mentioned the manpower shortage as the chief reason. He then remarked that, by a decree, 'from these lands whatever was *khaleseh* was transferred, with (title) deeds, to the peasants last year'.¹⁴³ This was a development of great importance in the land tenure of Khuzestan which could directly be attributed to the Karun project. It is also clear that this policy was not confined to Miyanab alone. Elsewhere, for instance in Ram Hormoz, land 'which used to be *khaleseh*, was bought from the state by the Bakhtiyari Khans'.¹⁴⁴ The developments pursuant to this new policy and their consequences are discussed below.¹⁴⁵

In southern parts of Khuzestan, however, a very strange kind of land tenure

existed. Despite the central government's tacit acceptance of it at this time, later on it became an issue of vital importance especially in the early 1920s where it developed into a bone of contention between Iran and Britain. Being predominantly a tribal area, in southern Khuzestan the tribe rather than the village was the main social and economic unit. Accordingly, the chief mode of land tenure was tribal holding. This meant that various tribes claimed the *khaleseh* land as their tribal property. Each tribe, by the sanction of tradition, occupied a distinct area and that area in turn was split up among the various sections of the tribe that cultivated the land. In Muhammareh, for example, the sheykh claimed and was in possession of the whole of the land in his district; but legally, the case was much more complicated than that. The Iranian government rightly maintained that the lands of Muhammareh, like those in the rest of the province, were all *khaleseh* and thus the property of the state.¹⁴⁶ The Arab claim appears to have been that the district of Muhammareh was under Persian protection for which they received tribute, and was not an integral part of Iran. In this connection, it might be worth remembering that, even according to their own histories,¹⁴⁷ the Kab Arabs had only been in these parts since 1690, while the Persian Empire which of course contained these areas, had been in existence for over two millennia. The Arabs had regularly paid tax to the Iranian government since 1763. The sheykh of Mohaysin tribe had been appointed governor of the Muhammareh district by the Persian government from the 1850s onward. Prior to that, this district had been under the hereditary sheykhs of Fallahiyeh,¹⁴⁸ who were again appointed by Persian governors. So, although the claims of the government to the lands and water resources of the province were based on solid historical evidence, at this period it had neither the will nor the means to exert its authority, except in the most feeble and nominal way. Thus, these areas, particularly Muhammareh remained under the *de facto* control of the Arab sheykhs.

In addition to the sheykh who claimed all the lands under his jurisdiction, it seems that there were other people who privately owned land in Muhammareh. For instance, in 1890, Nezam tried to buy a plot of land (some 3,000 square metres) which was very well-situated on the Karun River to construct the port of Saheb Qaraniyeh. But the owner, to whose father Sheykh Jaber had transferred the land at least a decade earlier, refused to sell it. Thus, instead of buying it, the governor-general had to acquiesce in leasing the property.¹⁴⁹ This case is illuminating in two ways. First, it indicates that even before the advent of the Karun opening, private ownership of property, at least in the peripheries of towns, was a fairly recognized right. Second, it is interesting that a man of Nezam's power could not buy a certain property if the owner did not so wish. It also says a lot about Nezam's personal characteristics which, unfortunately, were not very typical of other functionaries or sheykhs. It is true that the rule of the government officials usually tended to be oppressive, but it appears that the sheykhs were even worse. In most parts of the province the individual's rights to private ownership of property were not recognized by these local chiefs who, within their sphere of jurisdiction, almost acted as *petit shahs*. The mechanism was simple and with far-reaching consequences for the development of Khuz-

estan. For example, in Hoveizeh the whole district would become the right of whoever became the *vali* of the day, and even the landed property and homes of the previous *vali* and his family would pass to the new one. The former sheykh along with his entire family who had become destitute were then forced to emigrate. This, according to Najm, was also the custom in Fallahiyeh, Muhammareh, and Ram Hormoz. He rightly considered this 'barbaric custom' to be one of the main factors which prevented the inhabitants from developing Khuzestan.¹⁵⁰ The sheykh of the day had unlimited authority and power over the lives and properties of those who were under his jurisdiction. Hence the obvious lack of enterprise on the part of the people, who did not enjoy any guaranteed rights.

Taxation and crop-sharing systems

Another chief impediment in the development of the province seems to have been the archaic and unjust taxation system, along with crop-sharing which sometimes was incorporated into the former system. Obviously, the main source of wealth of the country at this period, as earlier, was the land and its produce. In so far as the assessment and collection of revenue was concerned, considerable variations appear to have existed. Assessments were in the main wholly obsolete in date and character. Some districts, for instance, were heavily over-taxed, others undertaxed, 'the anomalies of an obsolete assessment being perpetuated by the venality of the modern assessors'.¹⁵¹ During the second half of Naser-ud-Din Shah's reign, however, various unsuccessful attempts were made to reform this system.¹⁵² According to the prevailing system, taxation was usually levied in a lump sum on each camp, village, district, and tribe; and in addition to taxes in cash and kind, each village or tribe had to give a certain number of soldiers. Where the central government's authority did not exist, similar services were no doubt exacted by the landowners.

This problem was particularly acute in the relationship between the central government and the tribes. To establish control over the tribal areas was, indeed, one of the hardest problems which faced the Qajars. Najm, for example, many times pointed out that until and unless the Bakhtiyari and Khorram Abad roads were constructed, it would not be possible to consider Khuzestan as part of Iran.¹⁵³ The same view has been expressed by Qaragozlu. In general, during this period the government endeavoured to rule the tribal lands through tribal chiefs. But the control they established was seldom more than precarious. These tribal chiefs, whose office showed a tendency to be hereditary, were usually in charge of the tax collection of their tribes, too. In the Bakhtiyari, for example, the revenue (12,000 tumans) was 'entirely collected, and the taxes assumed by the Ilkhani, the Persian government not interfering'.¹⁵⁴ In the early 1880s, the province of Khuzestan, according to Baring, who does not seem to have included the district of Fallahiyeh, paid a revenue amounting to 'tumans 200,000 or rather more than £74,000'.¹⁵⁵ This figure, tested against the evidence available from Persian sources,¹⁵⁶ appears to be more or less accurate.

For example, if the figures given by Najm on the individual districts and towns of Khuzestan are added up, the total revenue would be about 180,000 tumans. Considering that some minor tribes and areas, such as Deh Molla (12,000 tumans), Jarrahi, Mashur, etc., do not seem to have been specifically mentioned by Najm, and also bearing in mind that Baring's figures apparently include the revenue in kind as well, the latter's figure seems to be reliable.

Special levies were paid by the chiefs of the tribes to the governor at the new year (*No Ruz*), which were in due course collected by them from their followers, and constituted a heavy imposition. Qaragozlu, remarking that Nezam always treated people leniently, pointed out that as far as the tax-collection was concerned the governor-general had no dealings whatever with ordinary subjects, or for that matter even with the lesser sheykhs. All Arab chiefs were appointed from amongst their own people by the governor-general. With the exceptions of the sheykhs of Muhammareh¹⁵⁷ and Bani Torof who sent their representatives, at *No Ruz* all other sheykhs would go to the seat of government personally. Their accounts for the previous year would be checked, and after putting on the 'robe' of appointment, they went off to take charge of their subjects. 'The governor-general has no knowledge of, and interference with, the arrangements the sheykhs make with their subjects with regard to the taxation or crop sharing systems'.¹⁵⁸ In other words, the local chiefs were given a free hand to do as they pleased to those who were under their jurisdiction. Each sheykh was, therefore, omnipotent. Naturally, in the absence of proper checks or limitations, the rule of these chiefs often tended to be highly oppressive. Dues were exacted under various pretexts from the members of the tribe and peasants. Some of these sheykhs had such a powerful hold over their subjects, or the Arabs mistrusted the Persian government so much, that even if their sheykhs ransacked and plundered all their belongings nobody would complain to the officials. 'Up to this day', said Qaragozlu, 'not even one single person has gone to the governor-general . . . to complain and demand redress . . . and in Iran, this must be a phenomenon unique only to Khuzestan'.¹⁵⁹ In the Bakhtiyari, too, somewhat similar conditions existed. Najm, for example, saw some 300 villages which, as the Bakhtiyaris themselves told him, had been ruined because of the oppression of the khans.¹⁶⁰

It appears that, as far as Khuzestan was concerned, with the gradual socio-economic transformation of the province, the peculiar phenomenon Qaragozlu had referred to partially disappeared. The case of Raghayva, situated in the north-east of Veys, is a good example in this regard. The place was under Bakhtiyari jurisdiction. 'Refugees from the shaikh's (i.e. Khazal) jurisdiction found it a convenient place of sanctuary', and demands for their surrender were consistently refused by the khans. In July 1905 the matter came into prominence by the flight of Sheykh Masikh and his adherents to Raghayva. The cause of their flight was oppression on the part of Khazal's representative at Veys. After reference to Tehran, permission was obtained for their repatriation by force. Later a combination of Khazal and the governor-general's troops ransacked the place and 'wives and womankind' of the refugees were abused.¹⁶¹

Instances of decay due to oppression by government officials and sheykhs were referred to by many visitors to Khuzestan. Describing the decay of various regions in the province, Najm attributed this partly to the oppressive policies of local sheykhs, governors, and land-holders. In Behbahan for instance, which was part of Fars, the revenue of the town and its neighbourhood and tribes was officially 20,400 tumans. The governor-general of Fars, Saheb Divan, had farmed it out to his brother, Nasir-ul-Molk, for 30,000 tumans and the latter had exacted 70,000 tumans.¹⁶² The nominal revenue of Hoveizeh was 20,800 tumans,¹⁶³ but tax-farmers usually collected double that amount.¹⁶⁴ Later, however, the revenue was officially raised to 24,000 tumans by the simple device of dividing the district into two.¹⁶⁵

Sometimes, but not always, this increase in the revenue reflected a genuine development which had taken place. The district of Muhammareh is a good example. Almost until the end of Mohammad Shah's reign (1834–48) it was a part of Fars and paid a total revenue of 5,000 tumans. Later on, due to the efforts of Manuchehr Khan-e-Motamed-ud-Dowleh (1839–42) who was a Georgian, and Soleyman Khan-e-Armani, Saham-ul-Molk (1842–51) who was a close relative of the former, his military commander and finally his successor, Muhammareh gradually developed and became independent of Fars. Thus it was possible to raise its revenue first to 22,000 tumans, and then, by 1881, to 70,000¹⁶⁶ which apparently included the customs revenue as well.¹⁶⁷ More often than not, however, these tax increases stemmed from the greed of the officials and local sheykhs. It has been said that at this time, with regard to tax, the inhabitants of Khuzestan were the luckiest of all Iranians since only the farmers paid tax to the *divan* and 'other classes of the people, no matter how rich, do not pay even one single dinar in tax'.¹⁶⁸ But because the government had no control over the sheykhs, this official benevolence was taken advantage of by them, and did not benefit the Arab population. In addition, the Arab was very suspicious about the motives of the non-Arab element and traditionally was reluctant to recognize the rule of anyone but his tribal chief. A combination of these factors enabled the sheykhs to exploit their subjects as much as possible. In the absence of any other practical alternative, it appears that only the flight of the people, as in the case of Raghayva, could stop this process. Aqili was another example. There the rate of taxation was raised ten times, as a consequence of which the people left their lands. One natural result was that there was plenty of water and arable land, but no cultivators. Thus, the price of the well-watered *arbabi* land had diminished by 10–20 times,¹⁶⁹ since without manpower neither land nor water had any value. At Ram Hormoz, which was one of the richest districts of the province, the story was the same,¹⁷⁰ and Najm reiterated his view that the decay of Ram Hormoz was due to the oppression of the tax-collector and the frequent changes of government.¹⁷¹ Considering that the general decay of Khuzestan, too, was due to the same cause, and this in turn had led to the disappearance of the populace, he urged upon the government a reassessment of the taxation system.¹⁷²

Crop-sharing

The relationship between the peasant and the landholder, or leaser, was either based on a crop-sharing agreement or a fixed rent.¹⁷³ In either case the payment to the landowner was usually made partly in kind and partly in cash. The basis of crop-sharing was primarily local custom which differed in detail from district to district. Traditionally five elements were taken into account in dividing the crop: land, water, draught animals, seeds, and labour. Theoretically, one share was allotted to each element and went to whoever provided that element. However, a great variety of practice concerning the division of the crop prevailed. The major difference concerned *faryab* and *deym* methods and *shatvi* and *seyfi*. It is unnecessary to go into details on these points here.¹⁷⁴ However, since the staple in southern Khuzestan was the date crop, of which great quantities were exported, emphasis will be given to this specific item. Thus, by gaining some insight into the nature of the relationship between peasants and landholders, we can understand why it prevented a material improvement in the conditions of the people, which in turn hampered the natural development of the province. First the crop-sharing system at Hoveizeh will be discussed.

In Hoveizeh, before the *deym* crop was harvested, an estimate of its quantity would be made by two *mosaddeqs* (assessors), both of whom were sent by the district governor, who was also the tax-farmer and very often the local sheykh. As the revenue of this region, he usually paid a lump sum in taxes and dues to his superior sheykh or official. After the estimate was made, a signed document based on that estimation, was given by the farmer to the landholder. In Hoveizeh and Muhammareh this method was known as *kharrasi*. The custom was to give one-third, and sometimes a quarter of the estimated harvest to the sheykh. Considering that the *mosaddeqs* were usually the agents of the latter, it is not surprising that almost always they were inclined to over-assess the harvest. As a result, the peasants usually ended up as the real losers.¹⁷⁵ One obvious effect of this was that they were discouraged from further engagement in agriculture. The other harmful aspect of this method to agriculture was that, through a primitive kind of tax inducement, it encouraged the adoption of nomadic, rather than sedentary, life. That is, the taxation, which in cases such as this was incorporated into this system of crop-sharing, was more advantageous to the *khosh neshins*, or agricultural labourers who had no rights on, or ties with the land.¹⁷⁶ As such, their movements were free, in contradistinction to the settled villagers who apparently did not enjoy the same right of free movement. In Veys and Ahvaz, for example, for each *shokhm* (plough land) of *deym* farming the latter group paid twice as much as the *khosh neshins*¹⁷⁷ to the sheykh of Muhammareh. This method, which superficially should have encouraged more nomads to take to farming, also discouraged them from settling down as permanent cultivators. It must also, theoretically speaking, have induced the bona fide subsistence farmers to abandon their fairly secure way of life for a more haphazard one. This suited the predominantly nomadic population of Khuzestan, too. In order to demonstrate the excesses which took place under this system, it

might be worth mentioning that, based on the system of *kharrasi* the sheykhs of the Bani Torof annually pocketed a net revenue of 60,000 tumans from Bosaytayn alone. This was part of the very fertile district of Hoveizeh for all of which the sheykhs paid the government a lump sum of 18,000 tumans.¹⁷⁸

The date gardens were usually held on payment of half the crop to the owner of the soil. In Muhammareh, however, the sheykh, who claimed all land in the district,¹⁷⁹ took two-thirds and sometimes three-quarters of the crop and the rest was given to the cultivators. Sometimes a fixed rate of 1 *qeran* per date tree was charged.¹⁸⁰ While in Fallahiyeh, for each *kareh* (just over one *kharvar*) a levy of 3 tumans was collected by the governor/tax-farmer of the district, which usually worked out at 1-1½ *qerans* per tree.¹⁸¹ The practice of *kharrasi* in Muhammareh was usually as follows: when the dates were nearly ripe, an estimate of the crop, which was 'always excessive' was made by the employees of the sheykh. The headman of the village or each group of gardens was invited to guarantee, say, half this estimate. Some outsider generally offered to take the garden on this estimate, and unless the headman for himself and the other date owners agreed to this estimate, they were turned out of the gardens and their houses until the crop was gathered; the party who had accepted with his men being put in their place. To avoid this, the garden minders usually agreed to guarantee an excessive crop, and 'it often' happened that they had actually 'to buy dates to make up the landowner's estimated half' of the crop. Consequently, and quite naturally the farmers took little care of the trees, and land was going out of cultivation,¹⁸² since people could not afford to tolerate these oppressions. In 1910, for example, it was reported that within the previous 40 years 'thousands of acres' had gone out of cultivation within 10 miles of Muhammareh, though some other areas had been reclaimed.¹⁸³ Paradoxically, this decay was not, as was the case elsewhere, so much due to the greed and high-handed policy of the government as to its lack of control and power. It could not check the extortionate tendencies and repressive regimes of the local potentates. By contrast, on the Turkish side of the river, though the tenure was on the same terms, it was differently carried out. There the crop was valued twice, once by the government for the tax and once by the landlord. The latter arranged with each occupier separately. In the event of dispute, the occupier got half of his valuation and the landlord the balance, and in no case was a stranger put in. This, according to reports, worked well¹⁸⁴ and in any event was much more just than the regime prevalent in Khuzestan. The Turks had therefore managed to develop, as both Najm and Qaragozlu have many times referred to, almost the entire region along the Shatt and beyond. While in Khuzestan it was the reverse.

Irrigation

Obviously, in a dry country like Iran water is one of the main limiting factors in agriculture. It is not surprising, therefore, that there should be 'a body of law' concerned with irrigation based on the *sharia* and custom.¹⁸⁵ Irrigation was a

monumental problem on the national level, but in this regard Khuzestan was the exception, although its immense water resources were not properly used. For instance, near Ahvaz on the Karun, cotton cultivation was not undertaken since, as reported, 'artificial irrigation there is none' and agriculture was 'entirely dependent on the rainfall'.¹⁸⁶ At the same time it is well-known that in the past Khuzestan had possessed large-scale hydraulic works and irrigation networks some of which have survived even to this day. These include a weir constructed by the Sasanid ruler Shahpur with the labour of prisoners of war taken on the defeat of the Roman Emperor Valerian in AD 260. Najm also referred to the existence of many dams, ruined and otherwise. It is obvious that an important cause of the decay, which was at this time universal in the province, was the disappearance of these elaborate hydraulic networks. Their remains indicate that in olden days the region had possessed rich and flourishing centres. These networks, which would not allow 'even one drop of water to go unused', had been responsible for these population and economic centres.¹⁸⁷

The destruction of the Valerian or Shushtar (also known as Shadravan) Bridge/Dam illustrates this gradual process of ruination for which the chief reason in this case was misgovernment. In the early 1880s this bridge, which was the foundation stone for a very elaborate irrigation network was still almost entirely intact. Thus the whole plain of Miyanab, which at this time was *khaleseh*, was *faryab*. However, in 1885 Shushtar and its neighbourhood suffered heavily by its destruction. The bridge, which had been referred to by Tabari and others as 'one of the wonders of the world' was about 600 metres long, 7 metres wide,¹⁸⁸ and some 12 metres high.¹⁸⁹ It had 43 arches, eight of which – some 95 metres – were carried away by an unusually high flood in the spring of 1885, and the bank on which the bridge rested burst.¹⁹⁰ Up to this time all the Miyanab plain was *faryab*, but the water-level being thus lowered by the river flowing through the breach, the Miyanab canal on the left bank was emptied and the large tract of fertile land south of Shushtar being deprived of its irrigation became untilled.¹⁹¹ This caused an annual loss of 4,000 tumans in taxes to the government, but 'local reports' put the loss at 'very much higher',¹⁹² meaning that far more than the acknowledged amount was levied by the officials.

The loss of this irrigation system told heavily upon the population of the place, the great majority of whom depended for their livelihood on the irrigated area. A large number of them emigrated, as had become customary, into neighbouring Turkish territory. It was after this catastrophe that, referring to the excessive poverty of the Shushtaris and their miserable conditions, Qaragozlu observed that the majority of them lived on a diet of dried bread. He also noted that about half of the inhabitants, most of whom were *seyyeds*, did

absolutely nothing; they just walk about and are (even) in need of their daily bread. It is understood that, because of the lack of development (of the area) they have no way of earning a living, and the difficulties of (communication through) the Lorestan (i.e. Dezful–Khorram Abad) road have prevented them from going in search of a craft or work elsewhere.¹⁹³

He then went on to discuss the effects of this poverty on the economy of the place. This misery, however, seems to have been fairly recent. Najm, for instance, had reported that due to unfavourable socio-economic conditions many people had emigrated, but he had not referred to this high degree of indigence. In 1891, the governor of Shushtar told Gordon that he considered the place to be 'now held together as a town mainly by the presence of the troops and the people connected with them and the government', whose wants created a demand which employed the inhabitants and enabled them to live.¹⁹⁴ At this time, Shushtar was the seat of the governor-general of Khuzestan.

No other example can better demonstrate the meaning of misgovernment. Three years before the destruction of the bridge/dam, i.e. in 1882, Najm who had thoroughly examined it had reported some defect in one of the arches. Furthermore, he had clearly warned that if this minor fault was not repaired soon, 'a great damage will be done to the state . . . (so) the sooner this repair is commenced the better'. He calculated the entire cost of this repair at 1,800 tumans.¹⁹⁵ But as was customary, this important warning went unheeded until the damage was irreparably done. In 1886 the governor of Khuzestan, Ehtesham-us-Saltaneh, tried to reconstruct some parts of the broken bridge but the usual spring-time floods demolished all that had been done.¹⁹⁶ The next governor, Nezam, who appears to have been more energetic than most other officials at this time, made two successive attempts in 1888 and 1889, but the spring-floods again overtook them and swept away the new erections.¹⁹⁷ Gordon observed that 'want of energy in prosecuting the work when once started appears to have wrecked all on each occasion'.¹⁹⁸ As far as Nezam was concerned this criticism was not justifiable; but the result of this general official inertia was disastrous. This was by no means an exception. In 1907, for example, the same fate befell Dezful and its inhabitants.¹⁹⁹

Insecurity

Lack of security was another cause of Khuzestan's relative poverty and under-development. This poverty itself gave rise to insecurity which hindered all economic activities in the region. No adequate measures were taken, for instance, to protect the settled and semi-settled population. The majority of the various tribal groups in different parts of the country migrated annually from winter to summer pastures and back. They were no doubt often contumacious and lawless. In the areas through which they migrated extensive damage was frequently done to the crops of the settled population. We have already mentioned that due to the inroads of the Lors and Bakhtiyaris the areas outside Shushtar, which had formerly contained prosperous villages, in the late 1860s lay in ruins.²⁰⁰ Another example was the fate of the settlements near Shush, between the Dez and the Karkheh rivers where the peasants could not engage in farming activities because of the inroads of the Bani Lam.²⁰¹ The conditions were similar in areas to the north and north-east of Ram Hormoz and Janaki which were almost regularly raided by members of the Bahmai tribe.²⁰² Their

crops were also damaged by the flocks of the Bakhtiyaris. Thus, Najm ascribed the agricultural backwardness of the province partly to the prevailing insecurity caused by the semi-nomadic nature of the Arab as well as non-Arab tribes. With respect to this unusually high degree of insecurity in the region some generalizations have been made. The Lurs in general, for instance, have been branded as robbers,²⁰³ and Durand had described the Dirakvands as 'the most noted robbers among all the Lurs',²⁰⁴ implying that all of them were bandits. Whether these remarks were justifiable or not does not concern us here. It should only be remembered that around this time the British generally tended to label those who impeded their sea trade as pirates, and those on the land routes as robbers.

As to the causes of this high degree of insecurity in the tribal areas²⁰⁵ a few points could be made. Namely, with hindsight, it is not difficult to establish a direct link between the excessive poverty of the nomads and the absence of law and order in their areas. This social ill was further aggravated by the influx of fire-arms into the region. Indeed, this illegal trade, which had been responsible for the arming *en masse* of tribes, was one of the principal problems with which the Iranian authorities had to wrestle. This could also be regarded as a further sign of the penetration of the area by the British since the rifles were almost entirely British-made. But for Britain it proved to be a double-edged sword. While this fairly lucrative trade boosted the British trade, it made the establishment of security even more difficult for the central government. Consequently, the trade routes which passed through tribal areas were frequently the targets of these armed 'bandit' elements. An indication of this is the fact that the most important trade artery of the south, namely the Lorestan road, could not be constructed and utilized until well into the twentieth century. Already by 1881 the problem had become acute enough to force the Persian government to place an embargo on the importation of arms and ammunition into the kingdom.²⁰⁶ With the uncontrollable frontiers and a very long shore line, the influx continued nevertheless. By the 1890s its trade had become so important that in 1892 about 1,000 Martini Henri rifles were imported by Persian merchants from Kuwait through the small port of Mashur alone.²⁰⁷ Around the same time Qaragozlu, who was the commander of the Persian troops in the area, estimated that there were more than 15,000 Martini and other rifles among the Lurs,²⁰⁸ and put the number of rifles in Khuzestan at 20,000.²⁰⁹ A decade earlier it had been reported that in Khuzestan 'no one . . . walks about without a rifle'.²¹⁰ Indeed, in these areas the only signs of prestige and wealth had become the possession of good rifles and mares.²¹¹ In other areas of the south, such as Bushehr,²¹² the story was the same.

The excessive poverty of the population must have contributed to their lawlessness and alleged predatory habits. This insecurity, in turn, made it almost imperative for individuals to arm themselves as a means of defence against lawless elements. In this connection again, the questions of the arbitrary enforcement of 'law', as well as the excesses of nature, must also be studied. With regard to the second point, for example, in 1897-8, owing to 'want' con-

sequent on bad harvests, it was reported that there was a 'considerable amount of crime' in Khuzestan and the roads were unsafe.²¹³ In the same year food-stuffs had to be imported into Bushehr from India and Basra.²¹⁴ In 1892 the crops around the Karun were 'very poor' and this, 'combined with the weakness of the governor', contributed to the lawlessness in the province.²¹⁵ Such examples are countless. The conclusion to be drawn is that generally in tribal areas the degree of lawlessness was higher than in regions with a settled population. Thus, the equation was: the higher the degree of sedentization the lower the extent of insecurity and vice versa. In this equation, however, poverty seems to have played an aggravating role. Namely, the cases of breaches of peace and security were higher among the poorer communities. Only in this framework is it possible to explain why, in 1897, there was more insecurity in Khuzestan than in Bushehr. Or why in Lorestan, which by comparison was one of the poorest areas of Iran, disorder and insecurity had become the order of the day.

Obviously, one result of this excessive poverty, which could basically be attributed to misgovernment, was that these communities were unable to meet their obligations with regard to taxes, etc. But the local officials, who had already paid a lump sum as the revenue of the area to the central government, were not prepared to forfeit the levies. The result was the sending out of groups of soldiers to track down the tax-evaders and, therefore, breaches of security became inevitable. Under these circumstances, those who suffered most were the settled communities which usually found themselves sitting targets for two different types of social predators: the official one who always tended to overtax, especially when the tax-payers were in no position either to fight back or flee; the second type was the bandit element. Within this somewhat peculiar social system there appears to have existed a direct link between the strength of the officials, on the one hand, and on the other the ability of the rebellious elements to evade the government's control and thus render that particular area insecure. So, when the authorities were weak these groups, especially those among the tribes, grew bolder. In 1900, the people of Khorram Abad were again beginning to cultivate under the protection of the new governor-general, Eyn-ud-Dowleh, whose ruthless character was well known. They told Durand that they had not engaged in farming 'of late for fear of the Lors'.²¹⁶ At another place, 'Sardara', he was told that the Lors had completely ransacked and looted it after the Shah's assassination in 1896.²¹⁷ In the same year the oil-seed crop of Khuzestan was below the average owing to fear of disturbance at the time of sowing consequent to the Shah's death.²¹⁸ Losses due to robbery were also incurred by British firms.²¹⁹ In 1904, the rumour of the Shah's death created unrest.²²⁰ These were the conditions in areas with high concentrations of nomads, when it was perceived that the government was not strong. By contrast, a powerful government would not tolerate any breaches of peace or non-payment of taxes. For instance, in 1889 the governor of Khorram Abad was said to have allowed the Lors to get out of hand. So that to vindicate authority, Zahir-ud-Dowleh was called upon to act in severe manner. Troops were accordingly sent out to collect taxes and, the government demands not being satisfied, distress ensued.²²¹

Therefore, in either case the result was almost the same: the disappearance of peace and security. Poverty, of course, had a lot to do with this vicious circle. At the same time, for the reasons given above, and also due to the nature of the nomadic life, security disappeared when economic conditions were bad. Lack of security in turn gave rise to unfavourable conditions, since it was detrimental to commercial and agricultural activities. It ought not to have been hard for the government to cure these chronic ailments, since it all stemmed from the very nature of the government which was also responsible for the poverty of the people. In this regard, Durand remarked: 'Any Englishman, given a free hand and allowed to deal with the Lurs direct, would have the (Khorram Abad-Dezful) road open and safe in a very short time, for the Lurs are very poor and most anxious to earn a little money by service'.²²² Najm apparently did not believe that only Englishmen could do the job. Some 20 years earlier he had suggested that the government should establish security, induce the nomads to take to farming, and encourage cultivators from other areas to go and settle there. These, however, were long-term plans, which could not possibly be carried out unless there was an entire change of policy by the Shah. By this time it had become clear that, short of the implementation of these changes, which entailed extensive administrative reforms and the setting up of a firm but just order, the government's attempts would not succeed. These measures, if taken, would bring about the kind of peace and tranquility, which was necessary for the harmonious coexistence of nomads, agriculturists, and town dwellers side by side. This in turn would lead to the emergence of prosperous communities which themselves would take care of the growth of all types of economic activities.

Manpower problems

A combination of these unfavourable socio-economic conditions had an immense impact on the region's population whose paucity and 'special habits' have been blamed for the obvious lack of development. With regard to the second point, namely the view that the population of this area was 'content, lazy and ignorant of the science of farming',²²³ it is possible that there is an element of bias in these generalizations. However, at the same time it is true that the population of Khuzestan, particularly the Arab element, gave the impression that it was content with its conditions and reluctant to improve them. For instance, with reference to the average Arab it has been suggested that all his belongings consisted of a rifle (his means of defence) valued at 15–20 tumans,²²⁴ a mare (his means of transport), and sometimes a few sheep²²⁵ (his means of subsistence). Contrasting this abject state with their apparent contentment, Najm concluded that the people had become used to it. Therefore, they would never seriously endeavour to improve their conditions through the cultivation of land and production of surplus, which would benefit the country as well as themselves. Furthermore, even if they were willing to do so, they lacked the necessary expertise and knowledge.²²⁶ Thus it was suggested that without the

introduction of '*ajams* of all classes' – shopkeepers, craftsmen, cultivators, merchants, military men, and even *mollahs* – the development of Khuzestan could not be effected. 'They (i.e. *ajams*) must be distributed all over the region',²²⁷ since it was 'impractical' to rely for such an undertaking on the Arabs alone. For the cultivation of rice and opium, the production of silk, etc., 'industrious and hardworking' *ajam* peasants from Yazd, Rasht, and Esfahan were to be induced to immigrate to Khuzestan. For example, it was said, every three of these would supervise and train a group of ten Arabs for a few years. After this period the latter group itself would become fully familiar with these techniques and would not need any assistance.²²⁸

Apart from these perceived racial characteristics, this apathy appears to have stemmed from other factors. The chief element, as mentioned above, was the type of land tenure which prevented the creation of any organic ties between the population and the land. 'Therefore', Najm correctly pointed out, 'it is not possible to count on their loyalty as citizens and subjects (of Iran). As soon as they are upset (by the officials) they take their meagre belongings and emigrate to the Ottoman territory'.²²⁹ The other factor was that the Arabs feared and somewhat despised the *ajam* element and its penetration of their territory. They endeavoured to thwart all the efforts of these non-Arab elements to penetrate the region, and resisted the government's plans to consolidate its shaky hold over them. A good example of this resistance was the attitude of Sheykh Mazal of Muhammareh towards the Karun valley development. Though 'friendly at least to the English', he had opposed this project, 'being suspicious of a closer interest on the part of the Persian government in him and his large possessions which might follow on the country being opened up to commerce'.²³⁰ The sheykhs were aware of the fact that more prosperity meant more attention and interference by the government. This infiltration had to be blocked, even if it meant less development and the perpetuation of the miserable conditions of their subjects. Najm's shrewd observations sum it all up:

The policy of the governors (i.e. *valis*) of Hoveizeh is to keep it (as it is) in ruins. They are confronted with two awkward options: if they go to Turkey it is not possible for them to put up with that Government's impositions; if they stay in Iran it is not possible to trust the Iranian Government. Thus, they remain (in Iran) but refrain from having any real ties (with the country). They view themselves as a boat (afloat) on the water. What they value is cash, mares, flocks, herds, etc., so that, in time of necessity, they can escape without much trouble.²³¹

It goes without saying that under these circumstances the real beneficiaries of these conditions were not the ordinary Arabs but their sheykhs. They tried to maintain their hold over their subjects and to prolong their rule through the preservation of the existing socio-economic structure.

In any event, before 1890 the combination of these unfavourable social and economic conditions forced large numbers of people to emigrate from

Khuzestan. In Turkey, for instance, substantial colonies of Iranians, both Persians and Arabs, were to be found²³² who lived and worked in all towns and villages of Arab Iraq. In places like Amareh the inhabitants were 'almost entirely Iranian subjects',²³³ and some even went to India.²³⁴ A lot of these immigrants had left their homes before and during 'the famine'²³⁵ (1869–72). It is not surprising, then, that the region's manpower shortage has been referred to by almost all observers as the reason for the lack of development. The historical evidence, too, bears out this view. For example, the problems connected with the Raghayva question²³⁶ have already been referred to. In the mid-1900s, this question became 'the marrow' of all difficulties of Khazal with the Bakhtiyari *Ilkhani*, Samsam, who wanted the former to pay either an annual rent of 1,000 tumans or to buy the place for 20,000 tumans. Khazal did neither. Instead he put pressure on the governor-general of Khuzestan to get permission from Tehran for the repatriation of the Arab population who had sought refuge in Raghayva.²³⁷ After this was done the lands reverted to Samsam, since Khazal knew that even the best land without the human element to utilize it would be worthless. Another illuminating example is the fate of the plain of Miyanab which, prior to 1890, was *khaleseh-ye-divani*. Up to Najm's visit this fertile area had been populated by some Arabs and Bakhtiyaris (from Janaki)²³⁸ who had lived and worked there for many years. In the early 1880s, the *Ilkhani* who was also Khuzestan's tax-farmer, moved all the population to his *arbabi* lands in Janaki. As a consequence, the agriculture of Miyanab suffered immensely.²³⁹

These two episodes help us to understand the enormity of the problem of manpower shortage. Another phenomenon was the one Baring has referred to, namely the division of the rural population into two categories of *badi*, 'or villagers whose movements are free, in contradistinction to *khaki* who are not allowed to emigrate'.²⁴⁰ This was the case in an area just outside the boundaries of Khuzestan, but the peasants had to pay taxes to the governor of Fars as well as the sheykh of Muhammareh. This case, if correctly perceived by the author, indicates that the reason for this type of classification was again the sparseness of the population and the fact that its movements had to be prevented or regulated. This division could not be applied to tribal areas, of course, since no such organic ties could exist between the land and the semi-settled population, the majority of whom were still nomads. Thus adoption of land policies similar to those of the Ottomans was advocated by experienced observers.²⁴¹ These measures included the free grant of the *khaleseh* land to cultivators, exemption of their revenue from taxes for a number of years, the creation in all Khuzestan of basic facilities,²⁴² and finally firm guarantees on the future of the lands on which the would-be cultivators were to work.²⁴³ These were considered as the preconditions for the inducement of the Arab population to take to agriculture. This was also regarded as the only way in which the non-Arab cultivators could be attracted to Khuzestan. All those who had left would, thus, willingly come back, 'particularly now that in Turkey the principle of military service has been introduced. (It is stipulated that) all those who do not wish to do the service should pay (a levy of) 50–100 (Turkish) lira instead'. Najm, as later developments

showed, rightly predicted that, if conditions were favourable, most of these people would come back and settle in Khuzestan.²⁴⁴

Conclusions

In conclusion it could be argued that up to the opening of the Karun, which effected fairly significant changes in the socio-economic structure of the area,²⁴⁵ the development of the province had been blocked by a number of factors. Of these, the ones which affected this socio-economic matrix to a great extent were the systems of land tenure and taxation. These factors, along with other administrative shortcomings, such as the inability to preserve the existing irrigation networks and to establish security, led to the emergence of conditions which, on the whole, were adverse to the growth of trade and agricultural activities. These circumstances were all attributable to one thing, namely misgovernment. These unfavourable conditions were, in turn, aggravated by the fact that the sheykhs took advantage of the government's lack of control. Their goal was to preserve the existing system which perpetuated the miserable conditions of the masses but served their own interests better.

5 Patterns of trade in south Persia up to 1889

A short commercial history of the Persian Gulf

For centuries prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, the Persian Gulf had been one of the great highways of Asiatic trade. From the eighth to the sixteenth century the trade of the Gulf was in the hands of the Arab tribes who had colonized the maritime border of Persia.¹ In November 1497, Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and discovered a new waterway to the East. Thereafter, the principal trade routes of Asia with Europe veered southwards, and they did not resume their ancient course until the isthmus of Suez was pierced in the second half of the nineteenth century.² In 1578, the Crowns of Spain and Portugal became united and ten years later the maritime supremacy of the two Powers was shattered by the destruction of the Invincible Armada. The English were not slow to take advantage of this event and in 1600 the East India Company received its first charter. The Company had not been long in existence before its agents were found in Persia. Their first ventures regarding trade with Persia originated in the north-west Indian port of Surat in 1612.³

In 1622, the Persians, in alliance with the English, turned the Portuguese out of Hormoz.⁴ The fall of Hormoz ended Portugal's supremacy and opened the markets of Arabia and Persia to British commerce. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the English suffered greatly from Dutch competition, and by the end of the eighteenth century trade in the Persian Gulf had dwindled to a trickle.⁵ During the nineteenth century, however, the tables were turned. The establishment of order in Iran by the Qajars, and the consequent revival of the Persian economy, together with the increasing security in the Gulf itself provided by the British navy, led to a rapid growth of trade. Between 1800 and 1900, the commerce of the Gulfs of Oman and Persia grew about 20 times.⁶ By the second quarter of the nineteenth century the position of England there had become unassailable, and from then on the so-called 'guardianship of the Persian Gulf' rested in British hands.

Trade of southern Persia, general and conditions in Persia (1873–89)

For the period under study, in Persia there were no statistics as such. The information, which constituted the basis for the series of trade reports and the statistics therein was usually collected 'with considerable difficulty from several quarters, through native agents'⁷ and in most cases were no more than estimates and guesswork. The difficulty of obtaining trustworthy and accurate data was immense. In south Persia the conditions, subject to climate and other important influences, were so shifting and precarious that even persons well acquainted with the country held 'widely different opinions as to its trade, prospects and possibilities'.⁸ This difficulty was to a great extent due to the system of tax farming which gave everyone connected with customs and revenue a direct interest in understating the facts.⁹ It should therefore be borne in mind that until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the new customs regulations came into effect, the statistics and information contained in these reports do not necessarily correspond with the realities. Nevertheless, the economic phenomena are by no means uninformative. It is possible to find out, by critical and careful use of the available data, the main features of the economy and commerce of the country, and the changes affecting them.

In this respect the 20-year period leading to the Karun opening has been described as 'relatively a dark period'.¹⁰ In the late 1860s and early 1870s, the conditions under which trade was carried on in Persia underwent considerable changes which were the result of internal factors, such as famines and silk crop failures;¹¹ as well as external ones, like the increased facilities afforded by steam navigation both in the Caspian and the Persian Gulf; and also by the consequences of the Russo-Turkish war. In this period two disasters that struck Iran almost crippled its economy. These were the pebrine disease that sharply reduced the silk crop, and a series of droughts, which culminated in the famine of 1871–2. A further disruptive factor was the rapid devaluation of the currency, due partly to debasement, but mainly to the fall in the price of silver from the late 1860s on.¹² This naturally raised the price of commodities and inflicted much hardship on large sections of the population. The sharp fall in world prices of raw materials in the 1870s also had adverse effects on its economy. From 1869–70 to 1872–3, the total value of the trade between Calcutta, Bombay, and Karachi, on the one hand and the Persian Gulf on the other, 'decreased steadily'.¹³ This fall appears to have continued during the following year.

Notwithstanding these problems, subsequently the trade of the south of Persia steadily increased. Since the opening of the Suez Canal, steam communication had been regularly established between London and the Persian Gulf, and small steamers began to run on the Tigris.¹⁴ From 1874, a 'constant and considerable rise' in the aggregate value of the Gulf trade took place, and it was nearly doubled between 1873 and 1878.¹⁵ During the last three years leading to 1878, the trade of India with Persia increased by almost 5,000,000 rupees, and the direct trade between the Persian ports and London trebled in the five years ending 1878.¹⁶

Effects of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8 on the Gulf trade

It would naturally be supposed that one of the advantages gained by the Russians, in view of their occupation of Batoum, would have been to draw the Persian transit trade entirely into their own territory. This however was not the case. The commerce, which was temporarily withdrawn from the war zone remained in the south.¹⁷ Due to the war, merchants directed their attention to the Suez Canal and Baghdad route, and a British firm at Tabriz set the example of adopting it.¹⁸ The closing of the northern routes immediately resulted in a large increase to the regular trade of the Gulf ports (see Appendices, Table I). During the war it was shown that trade from the Gulf with Tehran and north Persia was capable of developing in proportion. The goods transported by the southern routes were delivered at a cheaper rate than those imported by other routes.¹⁹ Goods were so promptly introduced by the south that little hardship appears to have been felt and prices 'did not attain the high figure expected'.²⁰ The routes which enjoyed the major proportion of the increased traffic were those of Bushehr–Esfahan–Tehran, and Bandar Abbas–Khorasan. The time required for the transit of goods from England via Bushehr–Esfahan and that of Tabriz to Tehran was 'almost the same'.²¹ Consequently, any improvement in the former or its substitution by a shorter route such as that from Muhammareh to Esfahan and Tehran, was obviously to the advantage of the Gulf trade.

Immediately after the 1878 war, Ross observed that the import trade of south Persia had become 'more English' or at least less affected by Russian commerce which, after having made itself felt in 'the markets as far south as Shiraz and even Bushire', had 'of late' been thrown back, western European commerce having assumed pre-dominance from the sea-coast to Esfahan.²² The British competed successfully with Russian trade 'even as far as Tehran' in some articles.²³ The value of the imports and exports of Bushehr increased in 15 years (1873–88) by almost five million rupees, and in a period of ten years (1878–88) the trade of Bandar Abbas increased to a similar extent.²⁴ This was almost entirely due to the increase in the commerce of this region with the British Empire, including India, Aden, and Hong Kong.

Trade methods and conditions in Persia

The British officials and merchants had some complaints regarding the conditions which prevailed in the south and which, they claimed, impeded their trade. The major factor was, of course, communications. What was puzzling to them was the stubbornness of the Shah on the Karun question.²⁵ The British wanted to establish a commercial monopoly in the south, and at the same time move on further to the north to capture the larger markets, like Tehran.

Together with the establishment of a more just local administration, Britain also had the following requests: a more efficient commercial treaty, mixed Persian and European commercial courts, and the abolition of the system of sales on credit. Until the beginning of the twentieth century the arrangements existing for

British trade in Iran rested partly on the commercial treaties of other powers, and partly on local usage. The stipulation was 5 per cent *ad valorem* on foreign exports and imports to, and from, all ports of Persia. The British merchants argued that this amount was unfavourable to them in the case of goods purchased for exportation, and asked for a refund of 2 per cent on such goods. They also wanted British-owned goods to be exempt from all further octroi or *rahdari* (transit dues). Britain, therefore, pressed the Iranian government either for a new treaty or some modification of the existing rules. This would enable them 'to compete more successfully in all respects with the Persian traders at the seaports'.²⁶

In order to put the commercial activities in south Persia in their proper context, it might be useful to refer to some of these trade methods and conditions which the British found so objectionable. The general impression was that business in Iran usually entailed long credits, but the great majority of transactions were closed in an average of 3 months' credit.²⁷ The accepted method between the importer and the wholesale Persian dealer, or *bonakdar* was that prices were quoted at long terms, piecegoods often at 18–22 months, woollen and silk goods at 45–50 months, but according to the existing custom these terms were subject to discount at the recognized rate of 12 per cent per annum. As a rule, a contract note was the only document given. An acknowledgement for the amount was sometimes asked for after the client had had time to check the goods delivered. The right of the creditor to claim payment under discount appears, therefore, to have rested on mercantile usage, but this was an established usage. The transaction between the importer and the *bonakdar* was really, therefore, an open account and was generally paid off in instalments. The *bonakdar* sold to the inland trader or to the retail trader on similar conditions. The retail trader sold usually for cash, occasionally on book accounts with customers. Negotiable bills were not made for any of these transactions and the *sarrafs* advanced to the traders on current account. The retail trader advanced goods on credit to pedlars who worked the neighbouring districts, often taking produce in exchange for goods which were in turn brought back to urban centres and sold for cash. The inland trader, who forwarded his goods to a correspondent or agent in another town drew real bills which could be negotiated by the *sarrafs* and foreign bankers. The liability of all parties to these bills was by the late nineteenth century quite clearly established on the same basis as similar instruments in Europe. Protest for non-acceptance or non-payment was not usual with inland bills, and the days of grace to be accorded varied considerably.²⁸

The British traders were not used to these methods. In the Persian system, for example, the business morality of the client was of quite as much importance as his means, there being no code of mercantile law. The rise of the celebrated Amin-uz-Zarb could be regarded as a good case in hand. Haj Mohammad Hasan, according to his eldest son, Hoseyn, rose to prominence and fame only because of his honesty. On his departure from Esfahan for Tehran his entire fortune was 100 *qerans* in cash,²⁹ with which he started a business. In the course of time his enterprise developed into a commercial empire with branches in Asia as well as Europe. The honesty and integrity of Persian merchants on which the

entire commercial, and even economic system of the kingdom was based, did not escape the attention of foreign observers either. For example, Arthur de Gobineau³⁰ has observed that merchants were the most respectable part of the population because they were regarded as being very honest. As a result of this, the people did not hesitate to entrust merchants with their money; and in this respect Iranian merchants played the same role as European credit institutions. Thus, their role in the finance of the country was pivotal. They held most of the capital and even the government borrowed from them.³¹ European merchants did not, or were unable to, understand these methods which were based on personal relationships. An important feature of commercial transactions in Iran was that, until the end of the nineteenth century, the formation of companies in its Western form was unusual, and the liability of shareholders, and to some extent the partners, was undefined. All of these were regarded by the British as impediments to their trade. Thus, the Persian government was pressed to take measures to reform and depersonalize this system.

Trade of Bushehr (1873–89)

General

Despite earlier attempts by modernizing prime ministers like Amir Kabir³² and Sepah Salar³³ to establish factory industries and workshops, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Persian economy was still an agrarian economy with its customary attributes. The transition from a subsistence agriculture to a market-oriented one was very slow, and the beginning of the modern industry in earnest is not discernible until well into the twentieth century. Given the conditions regarding the agrarian-based Iranian economy and considering that Iran is situated in the arid zone, it is not surprising that as a rule the volume of trade was directly dependent on climatic fluctuations. This was even more so in the southern parts of the country. Adequate and timely rainfall would normally boost the export and thus the import trade, and vice versa. In this period the most important articles in the foreign import trade were textiles and cotton goods, and in the export trade were opium and cereals.

One aspect of the Bushehr trade was the great increase in the last three decades of the century of imports from the United Kingdom, so that what in 1873 amounted to less than half of the imports from India became more than double the Indian imports during the decade ending 1903. A glance at the figures on the importation of piecegoods into Bushehr (see Appendices, Table III) helps to understand this process. While in 1873–4 the total value of piecegoods imported from England and India was 668,000 and 1,090,000 rupees respectively, by 1879–80 the value of piecegoods imported from England had grown almost ten times to 6,500,000, and that of Indian imports had increased to only 2,200,000 rupees.³⁴ Admittedly, this was an exceptional year for the southern trade which, due to the Russo-Turkish war, had swollen artificially; nevertheless it was indicative of a trend which continued.

Imports

During the period under review piecegoods constituted the most important article in the import trade of Bushehr. In 1873, of the total imports of Bushehr to the value of 4,602,000 rupees (or £460,200) (see Appendices, Table I) piecegoods from India and England constituted 38 per cent or 1,758,000 rupees (see Appendices, Table III). For 1879 and 1883, the percentages were 46.5 and 43.5 respectively. Whereas by 1888, out of the total value of imports – excluding specie³⁵ – of 7,810,000 rupees, piecegoods accounted for 60.5 per cent or 4,715,000 rupees. In the absence of a sound and rigid tariff system which could work as a barrier, the only obstacles in the way of the expansion of British trade in the south were the ‘natural limits’³⁶ such as the population size, wants of the people, etc. Despite the continual complaints of the British, duties were set at a level where they did little to impede imports. Until the introduction in 1901 of the new Customs Regulations there was practically absolute freedom for foreign merchants to import into Iran with no impediments as such to protect the local and traditional industries. In the early nineteenth century, the duties collected on exports were trifling, and on imports the average was not above 4 per cent. Later on, however, the duties levied were determined by the Treaty of Torkamanchai (1828), which after the defeat of Persia was imposed on Fath Ali Shah by Russia. By this Treaty a uniform and reciprocal 5 per cent for export and import for foreigners was agreed to. These also became the regulations which governed all aspects of the commercial transactions between Iran and other powers till the end of the century. In 1903 Russia succeeded in negotiating with Iran a new Customs tariff which substituted for 5 per cent *ad valorem* tariff a system of specific duties.³⁷ Until this date with Turkey, however, a special convention fixed a reciprocal 12 per cent export and 6 per cent import duty, and 75 per cent on tobacco and salt.³⁸ However, nothing like the amount of duty leviable reached the Persian government, and the Customs products averaged barely more than 2–3 per cent.³⁹ Furthermore, it was quite customary for the Customs of the important ports to be farmed out to notables who were either themselves merchants or had close links with them. For instance, in 1887–8 the most influential merchant in the south, Malek-ut-Tojjar of Bushehr, farmed the Customs of Shiraz, Bushehr, Lengeh, and Bandar Abbas with the district revenues of the last two places at 2,150,000 *qerans*, and later sublet them to others.⁴⁰ It goes without saying that at least the merchandise that Malek and his associates imported and exported from these ports, which in fact controlled the entire southern trade of Persia, were not fully taxed, if at all. Foreign merchants also, thanks to certain arrangements, could pay less than the stipulated 5 per cent duty. It was said that the persons who farmed the Customs often allowed them to compromise for less,⁴¹ and this was a matter of favour.

In south Persia, where there was a demand for foreign fabrics, and also due to the absence of any but natural barriers and the relative cheapness of foreign manufactures, first Indian and then British piecegoods found a ready market. In the course of time, and with the improvement in communications, this trade

Table 5.1 The value, and percentage to total imports, of indigo imported into Bushehr (1878-88)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Indigo (rupees)</i> | <i>Total imports (excepting specie) (rupees)</i> | <i>% of indigo to total imports</i> |
|-------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1878 ^a | 480,000 | 6,185,000 | 7.75 |
| 1879 ^a | 1,016,000 | 12,286,900 | 8.26 |
| 1884 ^b | 150,610 ¹ | 8,155,140 ¹ | 1.84 |
| 1885 ^b | 534,180 ¹ | 7,925,520 ¹ | 6.73 |
| 1887 ^c | 519,300 | 8,585,480 | 6.05 |
| 1888 ^c | 384,900 | 7,809,690 | 4.92 |

Sources: (a) Ross, 'Contrasted statement showing the value and description of goods imported into Bushire during the years 1878 and 1879', 'Report on Trade and Commerce of the Persian Gulf for 1879', Bushire, 26 May 1880: V/23/37. (b) Miles, Acting Consul-General, 'Return of principal articles of import to Bushire during the year 1885', 'Report on the Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1885': FO 60/483. (c) Ross, Table no. 2, 'Return of principal articles of imports into Bushire during the year 1888', part III, 'Report on Trade of south Persia and the Persian Gulf for 1888': FO 60/505; V/23/56.

Note

1 In the reports these figures are given in pounds sterling. The calculation here has been on the basis of Rs10 = £1.

expanded. Markets were thrown open to manufactured goods which flooded both seaports and the interior. A great and general demand for these articles was created to the extent that British and Indian manufactures became articles of prime necessity, especially among the country people and peasantry. For the period under study, on average, nearly half of the total value of annual imports into Bushehr were British and Indian piecegoods. At this time almost the entire Iranian peasantry wore loose trousers and some sort of tunic of indigo-dyed cotton cloth.⁴² By the late 1880s, the coarser stuffs were still of 'native hand-make', but already a very large proportion of what was generally worn was 'English material dyed in Persia' (see Table 5.1).⁴³

Exports

Unlike the opium whose exports from the south steadily increased in the last three decades of the century (see Appendices, Table IV), the export of cereals from the south seems to have been very erratic and subject to wild fluctuations. For example, the total value of grain and pulse exported from Bushehr in 1878 was the meagre figure of 9,200 rupees against 5,152,200 rupees for opium; whereas for the next year the figures were 3,230,000 and 5,100,000 rupees receptively (see Appendices, Table V). However, the exportation of cereals was directly beneficial to the economy of the area from which it was being exported, whereas opium did not have the same impact. It can be explained in this manner: as a rule, due to the absence of good and cheap means of communication, almost all the grain which was exported from the south had been locally produced, while with the opium export it was quite the reverse. Almost all of it

had come to the seaports from other provinces where it was produced and prepared. This was mainly due to the fact that opium was neither bulky, like cotton, nor cheap in value, like grain. Therefore, from the point of view of transport, it was possible to convey it by means of pack animals over long distances of hard terrain and still realize good profits. Thus, until the cultivation of opium had been established in southern Persia, any increase or decrease in its export did not have a direct bearing on the life of the region as such. Nevertheless, expansion in the cultivation of cash crops in general, which is discernible from the 1870s on, had an important impact on the transformation of the Iranian economy and society on a national, as well as regional, scale. Cash crops helped its advance from a traditional, subsistence economy to a system in which, due to partial changes in socio-economic relationships, money played a far greater role than before.

Export of opium

In the period under review the chief article of Persian export from the south was opium.⁴⁴ Indeed the considerable expansion of opium cultivation and export, especially to China, is one of the interesting features of the Iranian economy in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Opium has been used in the Middle East for medical and other purposes since ancient times. In Iran, its cultivation started from the end of the eleventh to twelfth centuries.⁴⁵ However, its production and consumption were small until the middle of the nineteenth century,⁴⁶ though a small quantity was exported from Bushehr by the end of the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ It seems that the techniques of its cultivation and preparation on a large scale for export came from India into Iran in the mid-1850s.⁴⁸ The person responsible for this was Aqa Mohammad Mehdi Arbab, known as Forughi, who after his return from India started off this industry in Esfahan.⁴⁹ In the British archives, the earliest record on Persian opium is a memorandum written in 1869 by Ronald Thomson. In it the author has observed that 'of late years' the manufacture of opium had increased considerably, and the quantity exported from Iran in this year was reckoned at 'double of what it was in 1860'.⁵⁰ In fact, in 1859 the quantity of opium produced in the country was estimated at about 300 chests or cases,⁵¹ while a decade later it had risen to 2,610 (see Appendices, Table IV, a). This sudden expansion was checked by a series of droughts and famines⁵² between 1869 and 1872, by which time its production had declined to 870 cases. Its cultivation and export, however, soon picked up again. In 1877 it was reported that, had it not been for their revenue from the poppy, after the famines the Esfahanis would not have been able to earn a living or pay the government taxes.⁵³ By 1880-1, an all-time record of 7,745 chests were exported from Bushehr (5,745) and Bandar Abbas (2,000) which were the main ports of export for the opium (see Appendices, Table IV, c). Until the end of the nineteenth century, on average about 5,000 chests were annually exported from these two ports. By this time, opium had become the chief exchange earner in the foreign trade of Iran and a 'mainstay of the

customs receipts'.⁵⁴ In 1881, opium accounted for 67 per cent of the total value of exports of Bushehr and Bandar Abbas.⁵⁵

Other exports

Apart from opium there were some other articles which were produced in Iran but which, for certain reasons, were not exported from the Gulf ports to any large extent. Two such items were cotton and tobacco. The export trade in cotton in the mid-1870s was said to be capable of great development. This was shown during the American Civil War when the export rose from next to nothing to 100,000 bales annually. Later, however, mainly owing to difficulties of transit which, after the end of the American Civil War had again put the Iranian cotton trade at a disadvantage, its trade fell off. The rate of duty, too, was prohibitive, and the rate of profit was insufficient to induce merchants to operate.⁵⁶ By the late 1880s, an increasing quantity of good quality cotton was exported to India, where prices were favourable,⁵⁷ but it never constituted an important portion of the southern trade. By contrast, around the same time cotton was an important article of export to Russia.⁵⁸ Between 1878 and 1888, the total value of cotton exported from Bushehr, chiefly to India, was on average about one-tenth of its total annual exports (see Appendices, Table V). The same point could be made about the cultivation and export of tobacco. In the early 1850s, the value of the pipe tobacco produced in Iran was estimated at £120,000 a year and it continued to increase. It was grown mostly at Esfahan, Kashan, Qom, and Shahrud.⁵⁹ The bulk of this article was shipped 'almost exclusively' to Turkish and Egyptian ports, via the western routes.⁶⁰ A fair amount was also exported from the southern ports, and between 1878 and 1888 this amount steadily increased (see Appendices, Table V).

Conclusions

The purpose of this study of trade in the south in general, and Bushehr in particular, has been to ascertain its general trends and principal features. It is hoped that in the light of this study the analysis of the Muhammareh trade, which in fact was a continuation of the Bushehr trade with somewhat similar characteristics, will be better understood.

The major features of the southern trade up to 1889 were as follows: a diversion of the trade channels from the north to the south primarily because of the war of 1877–8, which left some crucial and permanent effects on the Gulf trade. For instance, better and more regular steam services⁶¹ were introduced into the Gulf, which resulted in a fall in freight charges. This in turn stimulated foreign trade. This development, coupled with the unpredictability of Russian policy on the transit of foreign goods through its territory, caused a considerable falling off in the trade of Tabriz. As compared with the figures of the previous year, for instance, in 1884 the amount of Customs receipts of Tabriz fell by one-third.⁶² With the decline of the Tabriz and northern trade, commerce of the south,

which was dominated by Britain (see Appendices, Table II) showed a corresponding rise. This made some people think that the large increase in the importation to Esfahan and southern markets of European-manufactured goods in these years was due to a general increase in the trade of Persia. Experienced observers, however, put it down to the diversion of trade channels.⁶³ This was the beginning of a process, which gradually resulted in the monopolization of the northern trade by Russia, and that of the south by the British Empire. For instance, in 1888 the British Commercial Attaché found out that British goods were 'hardly to be found in Tehran, and Rasht, and Austria and Russia appear to monopolize the trade'.⁶⁴ While according to Ross, as early as 1885 Russian goods had 'nearly disappeared from the markets of Shiraz and Isfahan'.⁶⁵ As regards advantages of transport, on the eve of the Karun opening Kashan was the meeting ground of British and Russian goods coming respectively from the Gulf and the Caspian. The English had a slight advantage in cost of carriage to Esfahan, and Russian goods had a considerable advantage to Tehran.⁶⁶

At this time, there were five great arteries for trade in Persia:

- 1 from Tabriz and Rasht through Qazvin, eastwards and south-east;
- 2 from the Caspian through Shahrud into Khorasan;
- 3 from Baghdad northwards to the province of Kermanshah and Hamadan and on to Tehran;
- 4 from Bushehr northwards to Esfahan and Tehran;
- 5 from Bandar Abbas northwards to Khorasan.

The first two routes were the main channels for Russian commerce, as those from the Gulf and Baghdad were the main channels for British and Indian trade. Tabriz was the point of junction of three routes: the one from Trebizond by which alone⁶⁷ European goods could be delivered profitably into northern Persia; and two from Tiflis and Astara on the Caspian by which, and especially by the latter, Russian goods were delivered into the same provinces. Therefore, there existed, in commercial terms a fine balance between the two giants. Nevertheless, the complete monopolization of the northern trade by Russia and southern trade by Britain was yet to come.

The focus of the present study is of course South-West Persia. However, until the emergence of Muhammareh as an important port for the foreign trade of Iran the principal Persian ports of the Gulf were Bandar Abbas, Lengeh, and Bushehr. The first two ports do not concern us here since they were located well outside our region.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the role of Bushehr in the foreign trade of the south was greater than that of any other Persian port. During the period under study, Bushehr's importance as a port grew steadily and by the mid-1880s it had become the 'chief port for the general import trade of Persia'.⁶⁹ This had naturally induced some European, particularly British, firms to set up resident agencies there.⁷⁰ Over this period, the principal article of import was piece-goods, mostly Indian and British. The major article of export from Bushehr was opium, which nearly always constituted about 50 per cent of the total value of

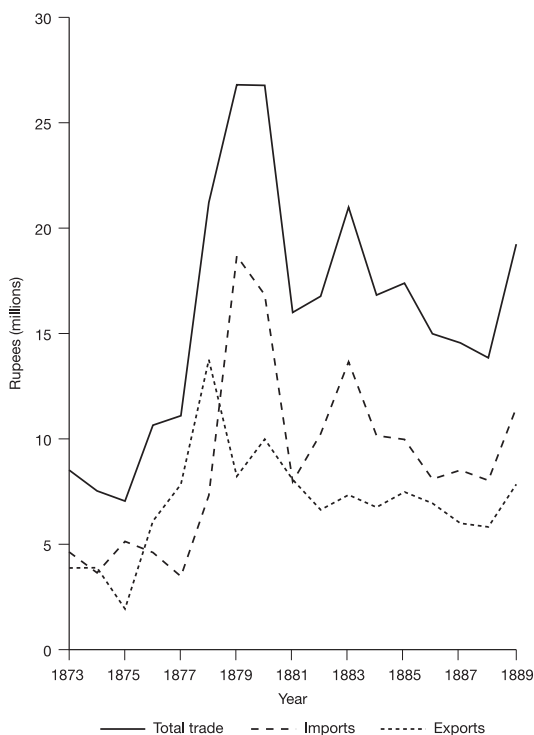


Figure 5.1 Import and export trade of Bushehr (1873–89). Source: Appendices, Table I.

Bushehr's exports. The export of cereals, too, was sometimes considerable, but it depended heavily on the weather and its vagaries, as did the total trade of the region. An interesting feature of the Bushehr trade was that, at this period, imports usually outweighed exports. Indeed, a general trend in the foreign trade of Iran in the last decades of the nineteenth century was that, in terms of value, Iranian exports to Russia almost always exceeded its imports from that country. However, in the south where Britain held sway, imports always outweighed exports, and Bushehr was no exception to this rule (see Figure 5.1).

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6 Trade of the south, Muhammareh (1890–1910)

General

In this chapter our purpose will be to illustrate the gradual expansion of Khuzestan's commerce (see Figure 6.1). This growth started off almost immediately after the Karun opening and slowly but steadily continued. An indication of this is that between 1890 and 1909 the trade of Muhammareh grew about six times, i.e. from £197,600 to £1,134,800 (see Table 6.1 and Figure 6.2).

It should be noted that for a number of reasons, which will be discussed below, the figures for the final years of the period were somewhat inflated. In this regard a distinction should be made between the commerce of the province itself as against the transit trade. For the first 12 years of the period the trade which passed through Muhammareh and other Karun ports mostly belonged to Khuzestan itself, the exception being that portion of it which was destined for Kuwait. At the same time, owing to the socio-economic circumstances, the province's trade could not expand beyond a certain level. This was the reason why the optimistic forecasts of the British for the scale and pace of 'development' in Khuzestan did not materialize. Furthermore, without better means of communication with the interior, an expansion on a wider scale seemed to be beyond the actual capabilities of the province. However, with the inauguration in earnest of the Lynch/Bakhtiyari road in the early 1900s, its transit trade too gained in momentum. To show this expansion it would suffice to mention that between 1903 and 1910 the amount of annual toll collection on the road rose almost eight times, from 8,000 tumans to more than 60,000. Once again it should be remembered that this large increase, which was not sustained, was due to exceptionally favourable conditions in Khuzestan.

The trade of Bushehr was studied in order to illustrate the striking similarities between the commercial 'development' of these two different zones of the southern trade. This part of Iran was at this time economically under British domination. In other words, considering the resemblances the trade of these two ports bore, the study of the Bushehr trade in the previous chapter provides us with both a background to the economic penetration of the south by Britain and a basis for a comparative study of the process.

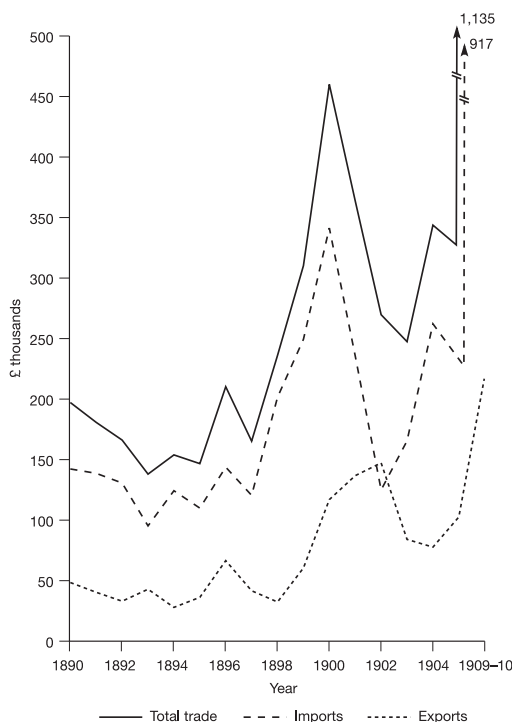


Figure 6.1 Import and export trade of Muhammareh (1890–1910). Source: Appendices, Table VII.

Statistics

Any systematic study of Khuzestan's trade must inevitably be based on statistics contained in the Trade Reports of Khuzestan. For almost the entire length of the period under study, W. McDouall¹ was the British official who compiled these reports for Khuzestan. It should be noted that these reports, like those for Bushehr, do not necessarily represent the real volume or value of the commerce of the province. Owing to Sheykh Khazal's resistance, Customs Regulations, which everywhere else had come into effect on 21 March 1900, were not implemented in Muhammareh until 1902. Up to this date therefore these reports were mainly based on the unofficial information the British officials could obtain from their sources. Among these were those British firms and merchants whose statistics were thought to be reliable, and who were also willing to supply them. Messrs Lynch Bros was one such firm who would, no doubt as a result of its close links with the British authorities, provide the Muhammareh consuls with statistics on its own transactions. Obviously a substantial portion of the trade, which was in the hands of the Persian or Arab merchants, was not fully reflected in these reports. For example, large quantities of dates were taken to India in local boats (*baglas*). But even after the setting up of the British Vice-Consulate at

Table 6.1 Trade of Muhammareh and Bushehr (1890–1910) (£)

| Year | Muhammareh trade ^a | | | | Bushehr trade | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| | Exports (total) | Imports (total) | Total trade | British Empire ¹ | Imports | Exports | UK & India | |
| | | | | (total) % | | | | |
| 1890 | 53,000 | 144,600 | 197,600 | 197,500 | 99.9 | 1,273,000 ^f | 661,000 ^f | 76.6 |
| 1891 | 41,800 | 138,800 | 180,600 | 180,000 | 99.6 | 1,223,000 ^f | 631,100 ^f | 79.8 |
| 1892 | 34,600 | 131,100 | 165,700 | 158,400 | 95.5 | 1,033,500 ^g | 571,500 ^g | 70.8 |
| 1893 | 43,400 | 94,200 | 137,600 | 134,200 | 97.5 | 953,200 ^g | 471,600 ^g | 78.0 |
| 1894 | 28,200 | 125,100 | 153,300 | 144,000 | 93.9 | 1,000,400 ^h | 492,100 ^h | 75.3 |
| Av. 5 yrs | 40,200 | 126,800 | 166,900 | 162,800 | 97.5 | 1,096,600 | 565,500 | 76.1 |
| 1895 | 36,000 | 110,600 | 146,600 | 134,000 | 91.4 | 1,016,900 ^d | 528,800 ^d | 76.5 |
| 1896 | 67,000 | 144,000 | 211,000 | 181,200 | 85.8 | 788,300 ^d | 440,300 ^d | 65.6 |
| 1897 | 41,600 | 121,400 | 163,000 | 126,500 | 77.6 | 1,145,320 ^d | 392,530 ^d | 75.0 |
| 1898 | 33,000 | 156,400 ² | 189,400 ² | 170,200 | 89.8 | 843,460 ^d | 426,721 ^b | 64.5 |
| Av. 4 yrs | 44,400 | 133,100 | 177,500 | 153,000 | 86.1 | 948,490 | 447,080 | 70.4 |
| 1899 | 59,000 | 206,900 ² | 265,900 ² | 223,000 | 83.8 | 916,528 ^d | 529,348 ^b | 58.0 |
| 1900 | 116,600 | 283,500 ² | 400,100 ² | 386,700 | 96.6 | 1,323,060 ^{d, 3} | 710,330 ^b | — |
| 1901 | 136,700 | 232,500 | 396,200 | 329,400 | 89.2 | 1,631,470 ^{d, 3} | 573,640 ^b | 55.0 |
| 1902 | 146,600 | 123,500 | 270,100 | 237,200 | 87.8 | 1,179,990 ^{d, 3} | 348,200 ^b | 63.0 |
| 1903 | 81,000 | 164,200 | 245,200 | 222,600 | 90.7 | 870,800 ^d | 366,660 ^b | 49.0 |
| Av. 5 yrs | 102,600 | 202,400 | 310,100 | 279,800 | 90.2 | 1,184,370 | 512,840 | 56.2 ⁴ |
| 1904 | 79,400 | 264,000 | 343,400 | 307,000 | 89.4 | 889,820 ^d | 454,980 ^b | 55.0 |
| 1905–6 | 93,400 | 223,900 | 326,400 | 258,300 | 79.1 | 761,930 ^d | 469,980 ^b | 59.0 |
| 1906–7 | 115,000 | 286,600 | 401,600 | 303,800 | 75.6 | 863,840 ^d | 598,420 ^b | 62.0 |
| 1907–8 | 206,800 | 284,700 | 491,500 | 385,100 | 78.3 | 1,052,040 ^d | 497,990 ^b | 77.0 |
| 1908–9 | 122,000 | 261,900 | 383,900 | 272,700 | 71.0 | 793,460 ^c | 432,600 ^c | 70.0 |
| Av. 5 yrs | 123,300 | 264,200 | 389,350 | 305,400 | 78.4 | 872,220 | 490,790 | 64.6 |
| 1909–10 | 218,000 | 916,800 ⁵ | 1,134,800 | 937,100 | 86.9 | 676,000 | 349,000 ^c | — |

Sources: (a) Table VII, Appendices (rounded figures). (b) H.G. Chick, Vice-Consul, 'Report on the trade of the Consular District of Bushire for the Persian Fiscal Year 22 March 1907 to 21 March 1908': A&P, 1909, xcvi. (c) H.G. Chick, Vice-Consul, 'Report on the trade of the Consular District of Bushire for the Persian Fiscal Year 22 March 1908 to 21 March 1909': A&P, 1910, ci. (d) 'Report on the Trade and Commerce of Bushire and District for the year 1897': (IOR) V/23/73. (e) Table VIII, Appendices. (f) Bushire Trade, 1891: (IOR) V/23/61. (g) Bushire Trade, 1893: (IOR) V/23/65. (h) Bushire Trade, 1894: (IOR) V/23/67.

Notes

- 1 Including India, Aden, Hong Kong.
- 2 Excepting the transhipment to Karun ports.
- 3 The imports for 1900–2 were swollen by £647,718, mostly bar silver for coinage in Tehran which did not affect the normal trade of South-West Persia itself.
- 4 Average 4 years.
- 5 Increase due to (1) large imports of machinery, etc., for Anglo-Persian Oil Co.; (2) increased import of goods destined for Esfahan diverted from Bushehr.

Muhammareh it was not possible to obtain statistics on the total quantity or value of this export. Thus, the figures given in the appended tables mostly represent those parts of the date exports which were carried by British vessels. This was the case in the years 1889–92 and 1894.² Vessels from neighbouring Persian ports and also from Kuwait, Muscat, and Zanzibar called frequently. No returns were available for vessels not under British colours.³ With regard to the export

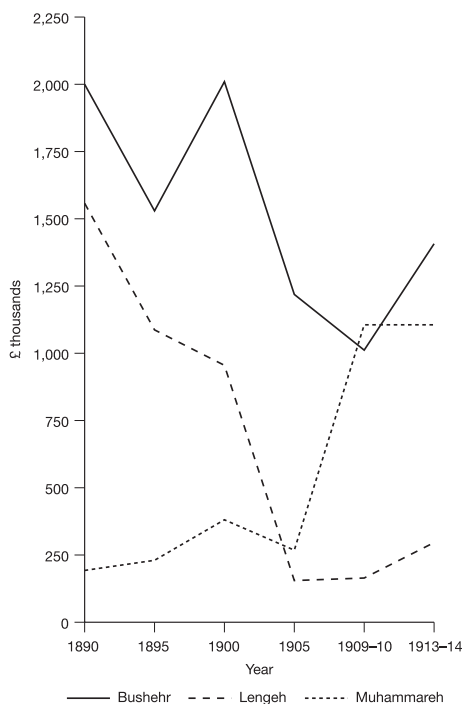


Figure 6.2 Total trade of Bushehr, Lengeh and Muhammareh (1890–1913). Source: Appendices, Table VIII.

of cereals and other articles it was the same. In 1891 it was reported, for instance, that a large amount of the Karun produce was conveyed to Basra for which no account was obtainable.⁴ The same thing could be said about the statistics and figures on the import trade of Khuzestan.

The second point worth remembering is that the frontier between Iran and Turkey was uncontrollable and almost open. Furthermore, tribes generally did not recognize any national or international boundaries as barriers. It therefore becomes clear that there must always have been a fair volume of trade among the commercial centres of the area, regardless of the frontier and the customs houses of either of the two countries. To the indigenous population this method, which by outsiders might have been branded as contraband, was considered a most natural way of conducting commercial transactions. In 1882 Najm reported that the Iranian passport officials tried to make the possession and showing of passports compulsory for the traders and owners of the local craft who crossed the frontier. Merchants and boatmen tried to beat this scheme by avoiding the crossing points, which were supposedly under control. As a result of this the normal rhythm of the local trade was disrupted and the people of Muhammareh who depended on Basra suffered greatly. Consequently the plan was abandoned.⁵

On the other hand, until 1901 a good deal of the Muhammareh imports, particularly piecegoods, were for Kuwait markets. This could be shown by the fall in imports since the summer of 1901 (a sharp decline from £232,500 to £123,500, see Table 6.1) when the British India steamers began to call regularly at the latter port.⁶ This was also due to the introduction of the new Customs Regulations in Iran.⁷ With the establishment of this link a direct trade between India and Kuwait sprang up. Therefore, the trade figures and statistics of Muhammareh up to this time also included those of Kuwait. It was reported that by 1891 just under one-third of the total imports of Muhammareh was intended for Kuwait.⁸ So in fact the actual increase in the Muhammareh trade, which was discernible after this date was greater than the figures would suggest. Thus it was not possible, even after the new Customs Regulations came into effect, to give an absolutely accurate account of the volume of total transactions. Therefore, the tables and information on which the present study is based did not, at least until 1902, represent all trade.⁹ However, in the absence of other alternatives, any systematic study of the province's trade has to be based on these reports which will, nevertheless, enable us to ascertain the major trends in the economy of the area.

Commercial methods

In Muhammareh, as in Bushehr, there was a system of unlimited credit, which British officials believed made it impossible for Europeans to sell direct to the retail dealers. The wholesale dealers issued goods to the shopkeepers and usually every Saturday went round to their clients to collect what they could on account. Some goods were sold to be paid for after the harvest in October, which was the busiest time in the Muhammareh bazar.¹⁰ Goods imported were usually sold on three or six months' credit and paid for in instalments or after the harvest.¹¹ This was the main factor which hampered the growth of European transactions. In other commercial centres of the province, like Shushtar and Dezful, most of the Persian firms were supplied from Bombay by Persian merchants there, and goods and cash were sent in return on a running account.¹² Another difficulty was the system of advances by which buyers of produce acted as bankers to the cultivators and gave advances before the prospects of the harvest were assured.¹³ If prices were too high to permit export, advances would be either carried over to the next year or, if possible, recovered.¹⁴ Therefore the combination of long credits and advances did not allow the European merchants to monopolize the internal trade of the area, as they had almost done with its foreign trade.

Transportation

Another problem was the transportation, which was directly related to the weather. As the means of transport were only pack animals, abundant supply meant lower prices of fodder which would bring down mule hire and the cost of

transport, which would in turn stimulate trade, and vice versa. In addition to this there was the practice resorted to by government officials of 'impressment of pack animals on various pretexts' of public emergency.¹⁵ In the second half of the period under study, the high transport rate in the south was one of the serious problems the merchants faced. This seems to have been due, amongst other causes, to: (a) the inadequate number of mules; (b) the high price of foodstuffs and forage; (c) the exactions of the road guards. It was reported that the number of mules in the south was diminishing.¹⁶ Owing to the high prices of food, to keep a mule till it reached a serviceable age would cost so much that the rearing of mules, which had been one of the major economic activities in Lorestan and elsewhere, had become unprofitable. Also, owing to the better roads in the north and the increasing Russian imports in the opening years of the century, a number of muleteers had been drawn in that direction from the south. In addition to these, there was also the periodic purchase of transport mules for the government of India, which invariably took place in the south.

General features and composition of trade

The first important aspect of Khuzestan trade is the way in which it began. Initial attempts to open up the area were made by Indian firms. This could be explained by geographical contiguity and, therefore, lower freight costs. It seems that for understandable reasons, the British-based merchants were also reluctant to commence commercial activities in an untested market. Therefore, initially the job had to be undertaken either by India-based firms or those British merchants who by this time had already established agencies in India. Both these categories of traders had gained valuable experience in commercial activities in the area, which qualified them to engage in Khuzestan trade. Furthermore, even before the Karun opening, there were relatively large commercial transactions between India and Khuzestan. For instance, great quantities of dates were sent to India every year.¹⁷ Thus, in the first four years of the period, the trade of the area was entirely monopolized by India, and the United Kingdom's trade was almost nil (see Figures 6.3 and 6.4).

By conventional wisdom, an increase in exports causes an increase of imports from the same country. The trader becomes familiar with the routine of business, the agent who disposes of his produce serves also to effect purchases, and suitable articles of commerce are brought to his notice. Banking commission on the return of funds is saved, and so on. This was very true of Khuzestan's trade with India and the trade returns of the first few years, after the setting-up of a Consulate at Muhammareh tend to prove it. The real boost in imports from Britain started in 1896 and culminated in the overtaking of Indian imports by 1903 (a rise from £5,000 in 1896 to £119,000 in 1900 and £90,000 in 1903). While this rise was sharp, the rise for imports from India was gradual. In two other years, 1905 and 1908–9, the British import trade actually dropped below that from India. However, due to large importation of metal manufactures and instruments for drilling oil wells and similar purposes, by the end of this period

imports from Britain shot up to £641,000 which far outweighed imports from India (see Appendices, Table IX).

The export trade, though, was a little different. The value of exports from Muhammareh to Britain started off low and gradually rose until in 1896 it exceeded that to India (£22,000 and £20,000 respectively), and then fell below it for the rest of the period, the exceptions being 1903, 1906, and 1907–8 (Figure 6.4). However, throughout the 20-year period, one feature of the foreign trade of Muhammareh and Khuzestan, which stands out is that it was practically monopolized by Britain and its colonies, particularly India, and the ports of Aden, and Hong Kong, the latter being only the destination for the opium exports. Towards the end of the period, however, other countries like France – which in the meantime had established a near monopoly in the export of sugar to Muhammareh – Turkey and its dominions, and the German late-comers started to make inroads in the trade of the province. The total trade (exports and imports) of the British Empire with Khuzestan, which for the first 5 years of the period had constituted 97.5 per cent of the total trade of the province (for Bushehr the figure for the same period was 76 per cent), fell to 78.4 per cent of it (64.5 per cent for Bushehr) in the last 5 years. For the entire 20-year period, however, trade with the British Empire accounted for no less than 86.9 per cent of the total value of Muhammareh trade (Table 6.1). This shows very clearly that the British were the chief beneficiaries of the Karun concession. An important feature of the Muhammareh trade was that throughout the 20-year period (except in 1902) imports always exceeded exports. The year 1902 was an exception since the implementation of the new Customs Regulations, which in other Persian ports had been effected in 1900, was delayed in Muhammareh until the autumn of 1902. Consequently, the export duties on opium at Muhammareh were much less than in other ports of the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the opening of the Lynch road in the early 1900s¹⁸ made it possible to export opium via Muhammareh in a profitable manner. Therefore, in 1902 opium, mainly from Esfahan, constituted two-thirds of the value of the total export trade of Muhammareh (£66,000 out of £97,000).¹⁹ On the other hand, there had been two consecutive bad harvests, i.e. 1900 and 1901, which checked the imports. Furthermore, by 1902 a direct trade had already been established between Kuwait and India, and Muhammareh no longer served that place as a port. A combination of these factors caused this anomaly in 1902.

A comparison between the trades of Muhammareh and Bushehr in the first ten years of their respective periods reveals that from 1873–83 the difference between the volume of imports and exports of Bushehr was not as large as that of Muhammareh in its first ten years (1890–9). At Muhammareh imports were, on annual average, three times as large as exports (£47,860 and £155,600 respectively). By contrast, in Bushehr for almost half of the ten-year period (i.e. 1876, 1877, 1878, and 1881) exports actually exceeded imports; and except for 1879 and 1880, in which Russo-Turkish war boosted the imports of the south, for the rest of the period (i.e. up to 1889) imports were not much larger than exports (Figure 5.1). Later, however, this trend was reversed and in Bushehr

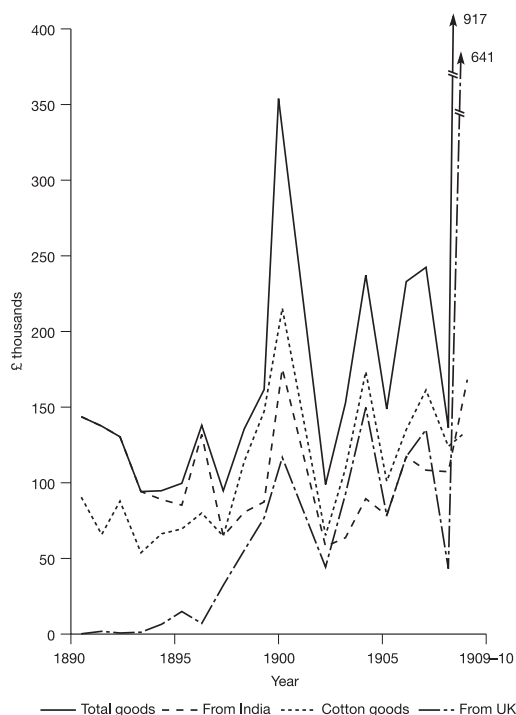


Figure 6.3 Muhammareh imports (1890–1910). Source: Appendices, Table IX.

too, imports began to exceed exports substantially (Table 6.1). For the period 1899–1908, the ratio of imports to exports for both ports was about two to one. For Muhammareh it was, on annual average, £112,900 to £233,300; and for Bushehr it was £501,800 to £1,028,300 for exports and imports respectively (Table 6.1).

The exports of Muhammareh consisted largely of agricultural and animal produce and raw materials, and were governed by the accident of good or bad harvests, and by prices, which by this time were to a great extent determined abroad. Imports consisted principally of manufactured goods of which usually large stocks relative to business had to be held, on account of the long time they were on the way.²⁰ They often arrived at the port of entry with a rush after a good trade had depleted these stocks and encouraged orders, thus swelling the trade statistics of one year at the expense of another. A detailed analysis of the import and export trade of Muhammareh is given below. Here, our concern is to study its general features and compare them with those of Bushehr. Due to a gradual and steady increase, between 1873 and 1883 the trade of Bushehr expanded by almost two and a half times (see Appendices, Table I); while the growth of Muhammareh trade for 1880–1900 was, with minor fluctuations, very slow and gradual (see Table 6.1). This was due to several factors. The principal

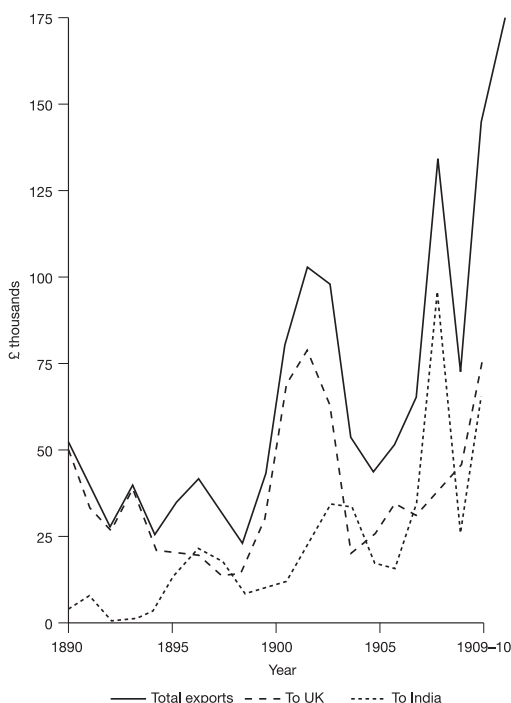


Figure 6.4 Muhammareh exports (1890–1910). Source: Appendices, Table X.

reason, as far as the commerce of Khuzestan itself – as distinct from the transit trade – was concerned, seems to have been the ‘manpower problems’.

Effects of exchange and currency fluctuations

Another factor that severely hit the Iranian economy during this period was the wild fluctuations in the value of silver. From 1871 onwards, silver had practically become Persia’s currency though Iran was still, nominally at least, bimetallic.²¹ These fluctuations created many problems for merchants and caused a great depression in trade. This can be illustrated by the following example. Generally, in 1890 the trade of South-West Persia was not so satisfactory as that of the previous year. For the southern trade the year 1889 was, on the whole, a very good year. The Shah’s European visit, the Karun opening and the establishment of the Imperial Bank had received wide publicity abroad, and this drew the attention of foreign, particularly British firms to Iran. The result of this sudden interest was an increase in imports into the area. For instance, the piecegoods imports were so large that there were indications of a glut in the markets. Continued large importation of cotton goods in the following year served to increase this evil.²² Two major developments aggravated the unsatisfactory trade of the south in 1890: a bad harvest, and the great

fluctuations in the price of silver resulting from legislation in the United States of America.²³ The advance in silver, coupled with the Shah's visit to Europe, resulted in the silver *qeran's* rise, between mid-1889 and mid-1890, in exchange value from 36 to 30 to the pound sterling. This was the first such appreciation in value for about 20 years,²⁴ and caused stocks to be pressed heavily for sale. The Persian dealers, who thought they had bought at cheaper rates found goods offered at still lower rates and falling week by week. The result in a market where credit was the rule and where buyers were generally without reserves was inevitable; that is to say, cancellation of engagements became frequent and in many instances Persian dealers became insolvent.²⁵ Thus, when the United States' Congress issued silver's subsequent 'death warrant' in the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890,²⁶ after an initial recovery the silver *qeran* began to fall heavily, not merely from a normal exchange position but from a peak of a speculation mountain. Persian merchants lost any advantage they might have gained from the sudden devaluation, because many of the goods imported during the boom had been bought on credit often linked to value expressed in sterling.²⁷

In this regard the following example, which relates to the 1900s would also be of relevance. The advance in the prices of piecegoods in Manchester started in January 1903 and by March and April had reached 'unheard-of prices'. Attempts were made in Esfahan to keep pace with Manchester, but with an inflexible market this was difficult. Prices had to be advanced slowly to prevent other consequences such as the intervention of local *Mollas* in support of the populace. Therefore, the Esfahani imports trailed slowly but surely after Manchester.²⁸ They might have later got almost on level terms, but owing to the exigencies of the Russo-Japanese war preparations (begun in February 1904), the railways and the steamers about the Caspian had been almost entirely taken up with military transports. Hence Persian produce destined for Russia had been kept unsold at Baku or the Persian ports. All this, combined with the events of the war, so upset the money market that in Esfahan exchange rate in July equalled 58½ *qerans* per £1.²⁹ This rise continued and for the next two years at Muhammareh and Bushehr respectively the rates reached the unprecedented figures of 58 and 60 *qerans* and 60.20 and 60.12 against the pound sterling (see Appendices, Table XI). Apart from the more important consequences of this on the Persian trade in general, one side-effect of this depreciation in the value of the *qeran* was that owing to it being worth more as silver than as coin, in 1906 it was reported that 'the country was denuded of currency'.³⁰ In the wheat season, no other coin being current in the interior, the demand caused the exchange value of £1 to fall to 42 current *qerans* (48 in Muhammareh; see Table XI). In Muhammareh these were not obtainable and there were three rates of exchange for the Indian rupee, Turkish pound, and obsolete *qerans* which became current, but not acceptable by the Customs or telegraphs. The rupee, which had been current all over Khuzestan since 1890,³¹ if not earlier, was current at 3.75 *qerans* but varied from 3.20 to 3.50 *qerans*. The Turkish pound was at 51 *qerans* but only worth 42–47 *qerans* in actual cur-

rency.³² These examples show some of the difficulties and uncertainties caused by currency fluctuations.

Lengeh and Bandar Abbas

After the Customs in the south came under the direct management of the Persian government,³³ the trade of Lengeh suffered greatly. The commercial importance of Lengeh was that it was used as a distributing centre for the Arab coast, and merchandise imported paid a nominal transshipment duty. At the beginning of the control, the Belgian administration adhered to the former practice. However, later they began to levy a regular 5 per cent on all goods imported and a similar rate at the time of re-exportation. In early 1902, the British officials had predicted that if this practice continued merchants would send their merchandise directly to the Arab coast.³⁴ There was also the imposition of a 5 per cent duty on dollars, which used to be largely imported to Lengeh for the purchase of pearls. Later on, the customs officials having realized their mistake abolished the duty, but the damage was already done. Direct shipments from the Arab coast continued on a larger scale while that of Lengeh decreased.³⁵ The sharp decline in the Lengeh trade (see Figure 6.2) can thus be accounted for. Trade at Bandar Abbas, too, greatly declined during this period. The reason was that the new trade route from Quetta via Nushki and Sistan had diverted a good deal of the trade which previously used to find its way to this port, and also the fact that the Russian imports into Khorasan via northern routes had increased.³⁶

Climatic changes and composition of trade

Bearing in mind the composition of the population of Khuzestan, an interesting feature of the southern trade was that the climate affected not only the volume of trade but also its composition. The following example makes this point clear. Each year a fair trade was carried out in skins and wool at Muhammareh. With a good crop, the export of these items followed the average years, while a bumper harvest would boost their export, which was quite natural. The unusual phenomenon, however, was that with a poor harvest too the export of these items increased in the short term. For instance, the value of exports of hides and skins rose from a mere £191 in 1891³⁷ which was a good year to £1,215 in the next year, which was a bad year. For wool export, the figures were £1,104 and £5,500 respectively. In both cases the export was boosted five times. Why did it happen? The answer is that the crop failure, coupled with the excessive poverty of the populace, which led a hand-to-mouth life, meant scarcer and more expensive fodder. Faced with such problems, people were forced to slaughter their animals on a large scale. It would usually take them a few years to replenish their reserves and this had far-reaching consequences for their economy. Therefore, a bad year affected the harvest and production of subsequent years as well since, under the circumstances prevailing in Khuzestan, it depleted their

stocks of seeds and animals. Owing to this scarcity of seed and the poverty of the cultivators, there was sometimes less ground under cultivation than usual, even though the prospects for the next harvest were good.³⁸

In other parts of the south, where the population showed more ingenuity and versatility, some interesting phenomena could be observed. For example, in 1898 the failure of the crop for three successive years led many of the cultivators to resort to weaving for a livelihood. A demand was thereby created for yarns and twist and similar commodities. Thus, although the southern trade generally was depressed in this year, the import of these items into Lengeh was doubled and there was an increase of 15 per cent at Bandar Abbas.³⁹ At Muhammareh and other commercial centres of Khuzestan, too, this development was observable. The total value of the thread and twist imported into Muhammareh during the years 1896, 1897, and 1898 was £968, £692, and £1,453 respectively. This shows a sharp rise in the importation of this article, and bearing in mind that one of the most important industries of this region was cloak and rug weaving this rise could only be described in terms of more people having been engaged in weaving. In 1895 it was reported that the twist was imported chiefly for Shushtar where it was woven into cloth, which was afterwards printed and sold and exported in the form of quilt covers. The woof of the carpets made in Shushtar was also of this cotton twist, the warp being wool.⁴⁰

Analysis of the import and export trade of Muhammareh

Imports

Until the opening of the Lynch road direct importations from Europe for local consumption were practically confined to piecegoods, sugar, metal – in bars or sheets – wood in planks for date cases, gunny bags for grain exports, matches, and miscellaneous articles (see Appendices, Table IX). In the subsequent decade, however, new consumer articles, such as tea, rice – in some years when the Hoveizeh crop was insufficient, e.g. 1901,⁴¹ – hardware and charcoal were added to this list. Some of these articles were not imported for direct local consumption as such, but for export of another kind of produce. Jute and gunny bags, and wood for cases were two such items, which were directly linked with the exportation of cereals and dates respectively. For example, in 1896, with a good harvest, the import of gunny bags was doubled on the figures of the previous year, and for the next four years, due to bad harvests, it declined. In 1907–8, when the export of cereals from Muhammareh was ‘unusually large’ and the grain crop was described as ‘an unprecedented one’,⁴² the total value of this article imported rose to the comparatively high figure of £6,700 (see Appendices, Table IX). Some of the material for boxes for packing dates, which entered Muhammareh was afterwards forwarded to Turkish territory.⁴³

The importation of some other articles was, interestingly enough, the result of the emergence of new consumption habits, which at the same time indicated

a relatively higher degree of prosperity among the populace. For instance, the introduction of new brands of piecegoods, sugar, iron, coffee, tea, and matches had such effects on the population of these areas and beyond. A glance at the tables (see Appendices, Table IX) shows that in fact the demand for such consumer goods was generated by their mere introduction into the area. The Arab, who previously had not been used to drinking any kind of beverage but water, first took to coffee and later on to tea. Prior to the implementation of the new Customs Regulations some of the coffee import of Muhammareh went to Kuwait.⁴⁴ According to the new regulations, high duties were levied on goods such as coffee, tea, and spices. As a result, their legal import for local use stopped. But Muhammareh was very favourable for smuggling,⁴⁵ the province being open on three sides, respectively Turkish territory, river, and sea.⁴⁶ Despite the high duty on tea, 'large quantities' were reportedly imported and the use of this beverage amongst Persians 'in no way diminished by the increased duty'.⁴⁷ On the other hand, because of the high duty, no shipment of coffee was made, at least legally, to Muhammareh. In 1904, the quantity of imported coffee which in the previous 5 years had averaged 1,108 cwt. fell to a mere 4½ cwt. (see Appendices, Table IX) and later completely stopped; while tea replaced it and grew in value from £555 (926 cwt.) in 1906–7 to £12,470 (2,026 cwt.) in 1909–10 (Appendices, Table IX).

This, of course, had something to do with the fact that prior to the opening up of the province the average person did not have even enough cash to satisfy their most pressing needs, let alone indulging in the consumption of luxury items such as tea. But the relatively enhanced prosperity meant more money in the hands of the hitherto pauperized population, which in turn resulted in the broadening of the market for foreign, primarily British, consumer goods. The following examples will help us to understand this point better. In terms of value in the import trade of the south, sugar was the most important item after piecegoods. During this period two different kinds of sugar were suitable for the Iranian market, loaf sugar and crushed types. Around the 1900s, the bulk of the Muhammareh sugar import was Marseilles beet sugar, which was preferred as being more soluble, but Egyptian sugar was making its way and there was a small consignment of Belgian sugar too.⁴⁸ In 1906, beet sugar sold at 70–75 *qerans* (£1.5s.6d. to £1.6s.9d.) per case of loaf and at 80–84 *qerans* (£1.8s.7d. to £1.10s.) per bag of granulated⁴⁹ when stocks were normal, but varied according to the amount in stock. There was no sugar of British manufacture imported for sale⁵⁰ and no demand for cane sugars, except by confectioners who obtained a few bags of Java or Mauritian type from Bushehr.⁵¹ Crushed sugar was cheaper than loaf sugar and as such more popular among the poor classes.⁵² For example, in 1898, due to the second consecutive bad harvest, there was a considerable fall off in the import of loaf sugar into the Persian Gulf, amounting to 40 per cent on the figures for the previous year; whereas the import of soft sugar increased by 50 per cent. As reported, this was due to the poor classes 'being constrained by necessity to favour the cheaper article, viz., the soft sugar'.⁵³ This was the situation in this part of the south.

At Muhammareh, however, there seems to have been an anomaly, i.e. in this same year import of sugar, especially the more expensive type – loaf sugar – ‘showed an increase, there being a demand for this from the tribes near Shushtar and Dizful’.⁵⁴ This increase was even larger in 1900 and 1908 but in the latter year some of it was forwarded up-country by the Lynch road.⁵⁵ This anomaly could be explained thus: by 1898 sugar was still a new article of import, which because of the poverty of the area and its inaccessibility, had not been used widely by the people. Therefore as a novelty it found more and more consumers. It also implies a fair degree of prosperity, which after the Karun opening, was observable in the area. The rapid growth of this trade would further confirm this view. In 1890, the total value of crushed sugar imported into Muhammareh was £4,330 and that of loaf sugar £5,411. By 1895 the figures were £3,800 and £6,262 respectively, which represented a fairly modest increase in loaf sugar imports. But it should be noted that the first year’s import cannot be considered as an index. In the absence of high tariffs and other barriers to check the imports, natural market forces and mechanisms had to come into play in order to regulate the level of imports through the price structures. Hence the decline in the next two years, 1891 and 1892, in the import of this commodity. By 1900, though, the figures for the crushed and loaf sugar were £11,050 and £39,470 and in 1909–10 they were £22,180 and £57,060 respectively (see Appendices, Table IX). However, not all this was consumed locally, since some of it was conveyed over the Lynch road to the interior. This is a good example of the emergence of new consumption habits.

Another interesting case is the increase in the import of matches, chiefly Swedish, which evidently was due to their widespread use. In 1890 and 1891, small quantities (37 and 54 cases to the value of £51 and £162 respectively) were imported. However, at least legally, its direct import, stopped almost completely for the next 4 years. Then, apparently due to a gradual increase in the welfare of the people, its imports started again and began to rise. In 1900, £760 and in 1906–7, £1,560 worth of matches were imported and in the last year of the period, some 2,500 cases to the value of £5,600 were imported into Muhammareh alone (see Appendices, Table IX) of which some were conveyed to the neighbouring districts. Prices around 1900 were 180 *qerans* for sulphur and 250 *qerans* for safety per box of 40 gross.⁵⁶

The increase in the importation of other articles such as candles, metal, house utensils, iron, and kerosene oil very clearly indicates an improvement in the standard of living in the province. An interesting point in the consumption of these articles and its growth is that by the end of this period, in terms of ‘development’, Khuzestan was almost a decade behind Bushehr. In 1898, it was reported from the latter place that kerosene oil was coming into general use and it was gradually finding its way into the markets of the interior. It was also reported that with the increased use of this illuminant, ‘a large demand of lampware, especially of cheap quality, will be created’. All lamps in use there were either of Austrian or German make and the British manufacturers were urged to participate in this trade which ‘though yet young, promises to become promi-

ment'.⁵⁷ Almost a decade later it was reported that in Muhammareh, too, there appeared to be an increase in enamelled iron goods such as bowls, plates, glass, and crockery, and also cheap lamps mainly of Austro-Hungarian origin.⁵⁸ Some two years previously, McDouall had referred to this general trend, which illustrates the extent to which the opening of the Karun and the ensuing developments had transformed, in a fairly short period, the basic consumption habits of the people and affected the natural course of development. He observed that there was an increased trade 'in enamelled iron goods, especially bowls of different sizes, plates and teapots. They have taken the place of wooden bowls formerly used by nomads, and are also competing with earthenware.'⁵⁹ This quotation alone clearly illustrates the effects of the province's opening up to foreign trade. The important point is that, under identical circumstance, the nature of economic penetration was similar. In terms of commercial development, Muhammareh followed in Bushehr's footsteps with a time-lag of only ten years. Otherwise the nature and pattern of this penetration into Muhammareh was almost identical to that witnessed in Bushehr.

Piecegoods

Throughout the period under study piecegoods in general and cotton goods in particular constituted the most important article of the import trade of Iran. In 1910–11, one-fifth of the total value of imports into the country – about 17,000,000 tumans – was piecegoods.⁶⁰ Fifty per cent of the value of piecegoods imported into Iran was from Britain and India, of which about 75 per cent found its way into the interior from the Persian Gulf ports and the remaining quarter came in from the Kermanshah route. Of the remaining 50 per cent, about three-quarters were imported from Russia and the rest from other countries.⁶¹ It is possible to say that, as far as the British were concerned, cotton goods were the chief article of trade in the south. The piecegoods trade of Muhammareh as of Bushehr, was distinguished by the size of imports of cotton goods. The quantity and value of the import of this item, at least until 1900, was subject to weather fluctuations and other natural causes, such as epidemics and so on, and usually followed the pattern which has been discussed earlier. At the beginning of the period, there were some 30 shops in Muhammareh, which imported piecegoods from Bombay through local merchants. About 10 bales were opened weekly to supply shops and petty traders from Hoveizeh, principally cheap kinds of shirting and chintz, some of Indian but principally of English manufacture. A large percentage of imports at this time was for Kuwait; some went by caravan to Dezful and other places up-country, and after supplying shops the remainder went by steamer to Shushtar.⁶² By 1891, about one-quarter of the imports was consumed locally in Muhammareh and the rest was almost equally divided between Dezful by caravan, Shushtar by steamer, and Kuwait by local coasting craft.⁶³ In October 1891, the Persian government arranged that goods imported by sea-going steamers should be transhipped to the river steamers in bond, and arrangements were made for

issue of through-bills of lading to the ports on the Karun by the companies whose steamers called at Muhammareh.⁶⁴ Through-shipment from Bombay to Shushtar was later taken advantage of by shippers and the amount of cargo thus shipped gradually increased.⁶⁵ Around 1893, the greater part of the chintz for local supply was imported by a Jewish firm from Basra, which had established a branch in Muhammareh.⁶⁶ It seems that later on this same firm established a near monopoly of the piecegoods trade at Muhammareh.

Regarding the illicit trade, which had been going on between Muhammareh and Kuwait, the Ottoman officials allowed it to continue even until a few years after the Karun opening. However, apparently when it became clear that in order to avoid payment of Ottoman dues – which were increased in 1894 – goods were brought to Muhammareh for reshipment to Kuwait, the Turks tried to stop it through more border controls. However, this could only stop the smuggling of expensive articles, such as silk, into the Turkish territory.

Accordingly, some goods destined for Kuwait were diverted to Bahrain.⁶⁷ It appears, however, that after a while this illicit trade between Muhammareh and Kuwait again increased. An indication of this is the sharp decline – from £192,300 in 1900 to £60,200 in 1902 – in the import of piecegoods into Muhammareh after the introduction by Iran of new tariffs (see Table 6.2). This falling off was, however, not entirely due to the diversion of the Kuwait trade from Muhammareh since other factors too were responsible for it. Another sign that after 1894 Muhammareh still played an important role in the Kuwait trade is that in the trade reports for the following years there were still references to this trade⁶⁸ and also the observation that Muhammareh was beginning, in earnest, to take the role of a distribution centre for neighbouring districts both inside and outside Persia. For instance, in 1899 the principal increase in imports was in cotton goods, which was reportedly ‘due to increased purchases in the Muhammareh market for neighbouring districts in Persia and Turkey, and for Kuwait’.⁶⁹ By 1900, there was an increasing demand for piecegoods from these districts. As a development, which indicates a larger consumption market for piecegoods, McDouall observed that by this time the importers usually sold to retail dealers by the bale and not by piece as formerly.⁷⁰

An interesting feature of the Muhammareh piecegoods trade was that, by about 1908 it was the only trade in which ‘practically a gold standard was in operation, and krns 56 were consequently equivalent to £1’,⁷¹ whilst in this year the average rate of exchange for transactions in other fields was 50 *qerans* to £1 (see Appendices, Table XI). With the fluctuations in the Persian currency as well as the system of long credit, it was necessary to adopt this artificial system. Another determining factor in this regard was the sudden rise, and then fall, in the prices of piecegoods in European, and particularly British markets. For example, due to scarcity in the cotton market and speculation, the enormous rise in the price of coal, higher wages and rates of interest, in 1901 prices in Britain went up to an unprecedented extent. In September of that year the price of cotton goods was some 35 per cent higher than 18 months previously.⁷² In south Persia the effect was gradual, the holders of good stocks did very well,

Table 6.2 Import of piecegoods into Muhammareh (1890–1910) (declared value in £ – rounded figures)

| Year | Total ^a | % to total imports ^a | From India | % to total | From UK | % to total | Others | Total % | Notes on others |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------|------------|--------|---------|-----------------|
| | | | Total | | Total | | | | |
| 1890 | 94,500 | 65.3 | 94,500 ^b | 100 | | | | 100 | |
| 1891 | 65,000 | 46.8 | 65,000 ^b | 100 | | | | 100 | |
| 1892 | 89,200 | 68.0 | 89,200 ^c | 100 | | | | 100 | |
| 1893 | 49,600 | 52.6 | 49,350 ^d | 99.4 | 250 | 0.6 | | 100 | |
| 1894 | 65,500 | 66.8 | 61,100 ^d | 93.2 | 4,000 | 6.7 | | 100 | |
| Av. 5 yrs | 72,760 | 59.9 | 71,900 | 98.5 | 860 | 1.5 | | 100 | |
| 1895 | 68,200 | 61.6 | 53,350 ^e | 78.2 | 13,100 | 19.2 | 2.6 | 100 | 1 |
| 1896 | 77,300 | 53.6 | 70,450 ^e | 91.1 | 4,700 | 6.0 | 2.8 | 100 | 1 |
| 1897 | 60,600 | 49.9 | 32,800 ^f | 54.1 | 27,400 | 45.2 | 0.7 | 100 | 1 |
| 1898 | 112,300 | 71.3 ⁵ | 51,000 ^f | 45.4 | 47,900 | 42.6 | 11.9 | 100 | 2 |
| 1899 | 145,200 | 58.5 | 58,900 ^f | 40.5 | 67,300 | 46.4 | 13.0 | 100 | 2 |
| Av. 5 yrs | 92,720 | 59.0 | 53,300 | 61.8 | 32,080 | 31.9 | 6.3 | 100 | |
| 1900 | 192,300 ^g | 67.8 | 49,300 ^g | 25.6 | 103,250 | 53.7 | 20.7 | 100 | 2 |
| 1901 | 134,400 | 57.8 | 25,100 ^h | 18.7 | 69,700 | 51.9 | 29.4 | 100 | 2 |
| 1902 | 60,200 | 48.7 | 6 | | | | | 100 | |
| 1903 | 108,000 | 64.2 | 6 | | | | | 100 | |
| 1904 | 174,300 ⁷ | 66.0 | 6 | | | | | 100 | |
| Av. 5 yrs | 133,850 | 60.9 | 37,200 ⁸ | 22.2 | 86,475 | 52.8 | 25.0 | 100 | |
| 1905–6 | 99,400 ^h | 51.0 | 39,400 ^h | 39.6 | 59,000 | 59.3 | 1.1 | 100 | 3 |
| 1906–7 | 137,200 | 47.8 | 47,400 ^h | 34.5 | 87,100 | 63.5 | 2.0 | 100 | 3 |
| 1907–8 | 162,800 | 57.1 | 46,700 ⁱ | 34.0 | 97,000 | 59.6 | 6.4 | 100 | 4 |
| 1908–9 | 119,600 | 45.6 | 46,100 ⁱ | 38.5 | 62,400 | 52.2 | 9.3 | 100 | 4 |
| 1909–10 ⁹ | 123,500 | 41.1 | 64,600 ⁱ | 52.3 | 34,800 | 28.2 | 19.5 | 100 | 4 |
| Av. 5 yrs | 127,480 | 48.5 | 48,840 | 39.8 | 68,060 | 52.6 | 7.6 | 100 | |
| Av. 20 yrs | | 56.8 | | 56.7 | | 34.7 | 8.6 | 100 | |

Sources: (a) Table IX (Appendices). (b) McDouall, 1891: V/23/61. (c) McDouall, 1892: V/23/63. (d) McDouall, 1894: V/23/67. (e) McDouall, 1896: V/23/71. (f) McDouall, 1899: V/23/77. (g) McDouall, 1901: V/23/80. (h) McDouall, 1907: A&P 1907, xci. (i) Wilson, 1910: A&P 1910, ci.

Notes

1 Persian Gulf Ports, Turkish Arabia, and Aden (American).

2 Aden (American).

3 Russia, Netherlands, Belgium.

4 Netherlands, Germany, and others.

5 Transshipment to Karun ports not included.

6 Individual figures not available.

7 Increase for interior by Bakhtiyari route for first time.

8 Average two years.

9 Excluding £617,000 which was the value of material imported by the Anglo-Persian Oil Co.

but many buyers did not have the courage to increase their orders as the Manchester market went steadily up; those who did reaped a further advantage. This advantage, however, was more largely obtained by the European firms, and by one or two Persian firms in Esfahan. Other Persians who learned that their rivals were making handsome profits went in at the top of the market and placed large orders in Britain, but after September 1901 prices began to fall and the result was an over-stocked market with a dull bazar, and this continued throughout that year.⁷³

In Muhammareh, however, although the process was similar, the agents who brought it about were rather special. At the beginning of the period, McDouall had observed that Jewish traders from Basra tended to monopolize the import of piecegoods into Muhammareh.⁷⁴ When this trade was in its infancy, the hold of these merchants could not have been very strong, but it seems that as the importance of the trade became apparent, the role of the Jewish merchants also grew. By 1897, McDouall observed that the Muhammareh trade in cotton goods was almost entirely in the hands of 'one native' firm importing direct from Manchester,⁷⁵ and 'native' in this context did not necessarily mean 'Persian'. It only indicated that the firm was not British. In 1900, it was reported that this trade was 'nearly entirely in the hands of Jewish firms, importers from Manchester', the imports from India being largely Manchester goods for Kuwait.⁷⁶ These Jews were 'agents to Manchester firms',⁷⁷ and were of 'Turkish nationality' connected with some other firms in Manchester.⁷⁸ By the end of the period it was reported that the Muhammareh trade was 'entirely in the hands of the agents of firms of Turkish origin established in Manchester'.⁷⁹ They forwarded some goods to Ahvaz and some Persian traders purchased from them for the interior.⁸⁰ Therefore, in a gradual process, which had started almost immediately after the Karun opening, the Jewish merchants who in fact acted as agents for Manchester firms began to dominate this relatively lucrative trade, and by 1909 their monopoly had become almost total. McDouall reported that European firms were unable to compete with 'natives' for local sale on their own account as, at least up to 1901, Europeans paid an *ad valorem* duty⁸¹ while 'native' firms imported at a lower rate.⁸²

In Iran there was no barrier such as a rigid tariff system. There was only a 5 per cent *ad valorem* tax levied on imports and exports⁸³ by foreigners, and 3 per cent by Persians.⁸⁴ At Muhammareh, the new tariff did not come into operation until autumn 1902 and before that its Customs, along with revenues of the whole province were farmed out to local sheykhs.⁸⁵ According to one of the reports, for example, the Jewish traders had made arrangements with the sheykh to compound all duty on their imports for a yearly lump sum of £1,000.⁸⁶ Whereas in 1900, for instance, the value of piecegoods imported into Muhammareh was £192,000. Thus instead of £1,000, the duty should have been about £9,600. In other words the Jewish merchants paid about one-tenth – i.e. 0.5 per cent – of the actual duty on the import of piecegoods. In terms of volume of import trade though, this particular year was rather exceptional. Nonetheless, on average, the duty paid was even less than a quarter of the actual duty (i.e. £1,000 annually instead of £4,137 for the first 10-year period). Furthermore, the 'small Jewish traders' who controlled the business in Muhammareh in imported prints dealt much in odd lots and auctioned goods, which could be placed on the market at even lower prices.⁸⁷ These two factors meant that the dealers could, first, pocket a handsome profit on the imported piecegoods; second, the cheapness of the goods ensured for them a larger market since more people could afford to buy the goods.

Another point is that at the beginning of the period, Basra played a vital role

in the supply of piecegoods to Muhammareh and beyond. Later on, however, it lost its importance. By 1895, for instance, the shopkeepers who had been formerly importing chintz from Basra were supplied by an importer in Muhammareh (probably the same Jewish firm) who received goods by steamers direct from Manchester and Aden.⁸⁸ This, indeed, was one of the interesting features of this trade. For the first three years of the period under review, this branch of trade was in the hands of merchants who imported the needs of Muhammareh and adjacent areas from India. During the first five years, i.e. 1890–4 inclusive, on average 98.5 per cent of the cotton goods imported into Muhammareh came, sometimes via Basra, from India and the rest from the United Kingdom. The Indian piecegoods were mostly of Manchester origin. The share of India in the trade of this article, however, declined rapidly while there was a corresponding rise in Britain's share. For the second five-year period, i.e. 1895–9, the percentage of total import of piecegoods from India and Britain was 61.8 and 31.9 respectively, whereas for the last five-year period piecegoods imported from India accounted for just 39.8 per cent and imports from the United Kingdom constituted 52.6 per cent of the total import of this item (see Table 6.2). Already, by 1897 the British Consul at Muhammareh was reporting that there was a growing tendency towards an increase of direct trade with Europe as against India; this was due to 'the principal articles of export being bought by European firms and particularly to the growing scarcity of rupees which were formerly remitted as specie by small retail dealers in payment of imports'.⁸⁹ The cotton goods for Shushtar and Dezful were formerly entirely imported from India, again of Manchester manufacture. By 1908 these were to a certain extent replaced by European goods imported direct to Muhammareh.⁹⁰ In 1904, for the first time, Manchester goods destined for the interior passed through Muhammareh via the Bakhtiyari route.⁹¹ Considering that, by and large, goods imported from India were of cheaper quality, this trend shows a distinct shift from the less expensive types of prints to the Manchester types, indicating an enhanced degree of relative prosperity in the area.

Another point is the unsuccessful Russian attempts, starting in 1901, to compete with the British when the southern ports of Iran were flooded by Russian cotton goods. Extra shipments from Odessa to Bushehr, failing to find a market in the southern towns, were brought up to Esfahan and sold for what they would fetch. As the volume was considerable, it had a disturbing effect on the southern markets.⁹² Then from 1903 a firm of merchants from Lodz started its operations in the south and set up an agency at Esfahan. Owing to the assistance which, according to British sources the Russian merchant received from the government – said to be equal to '25 per cent of the *ad valorem* price of his goods'⁹³ – it was possible to sell the Russian goods for instance at Esfahan 'at Moscow prices'.⁹⁴ But although the agents of the Lodz firm who visited Muhammareh in 1904 obtained some orders, there was no demand for them because they were too narrow and still too high in price.⁹⁵ Russia's failure was also owing to the fact that some British firms turned out 'imitations of Russian prints'.⁹⁶ The Russo-Japanese war, too, had an adverse effect on the

Russian piecegoods trade in south Persia. Thus their efforts ended up in failure and the British could prevent the Russian trade from gaining a foothold in the south.

Towards the end of the period, i.e. from 1906 on,⁹⁷ another mighty rival, namely Germany entered the scene, which could compete with Britain not only in cotton goods but also in other fields of the southern trade. By 1914, it had managed to capture a substantial portion of the Persian Gulf trade as well as its shipping. In the first five years, i.e. 1890–4, 100 per cent of the piecegoods trade of Muhammareh was controlled by Britain and India. In the next seven years, however, other countries, particularly the USA, which used Aden as a transshipment port for export to Muhammareh, appeared on the scene. Though in the 1895–9 period their average share of the market was only 6.3 per cent, in the next couple of years it rose to over 20 per cent (see Table 6.2). However, as almost all this trade from Aden was destined for Kuwait, where the cotton material was used for the production of sails of Arab sailing craft,⁹⁸ after the introduction of new tariffs in 1902 this import trade was diverted from Muhammareh to another port. In any event, in the last 5 years of the period foreign competition to Britain started in earnest and gradually gained importance (Table 6.2).

In the early 1900s, Holland lost a lot of the ground it had gradually gained in the southern trade through the failure of one of the most important foreign firms in Iran, which was originally from Holland. The failure of Messrs J.C.P. Hotz and Son, trading in London and Persia and having branches in Bushehr, Shiraz, Esfahan and Yazd, and allied firms on the Karun, in Basra, and Tehran, brought down with it all these firms. Also the Persian Carpet Manufacturing Co. at Soltanabad, a British company, which had taken over Messrs Hotz's carpet trade under certain guarantees suffered the same fate. This was the first failure of a European firm in Iran and naturally caused considerable concern among the Persians, and had disastrous effects on them.⁹⁹ First they thought that all the European firms would go, but 'as time went on and they (i.e. Persian merchants) saw that these others carried on their business as usual, confidence was restored'.¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, 16s. in the pound was paid to the creditors. It was after the bankruptcy of this firm that the Russians tried to fill the gap and replace the Dutch. But this attempt, as discussed earlier, ended in failure.

A feature of the piecegoods trade of Muhammareh was its large size and volume relative to the total imports into this area. As soon as the Karun was opened, Indian and British fabrics flooded the markets of the region, prices were low, and the demand was high. For the first 15 years of the period, on average some 60 per cent of the total value of imports into Muhammareh was piecegoods, usually of cheap quality, whilst in the last five years the average figure fell to 48.5 per cent. Nonetheless, for the entire 20-year period this item alone accounted for no less than 56.8 per cent of the total value of Muhammareh imports of which 56 per cent came from India and 34.7 per cent from the United Kingdom – a total of 91 per cent – (see Table 6.2). This shows the extent to which Britain had succeeded in gradually building up her commercial

supremacy in the markets of South-West Persia. In 1890 piecegoods, entirely from India, constituted over 65 per cent of the total value of imports into Muhammareh while during the subsequent years, ostensibly as a result of this sudden flooding of the markets, the importation of this article declined. In these new and untested markets, with such an impoverished population, the demand was satisfied almost immediately. Therefore, not surprisingly the import of piecegoods into Muhammareh did not reach the levels it had attained in 1890 until 1898 (see Table 6.2) by which time some qualitative and quantitative changes had affected the basic features of the region and its socio-economic structure.¹⁰¹ Another point is that the importation of piecegoods to Muhammareh, relative to the total value of imports, dropped from an annual average of nearly 60 per cent in 1890–4 to 48.5 per cent in 1905–9, despite the fact that in terms of absolute value, it actually doubled (see Table 6.2). This shows a gradual change in the composition of the Khuzestan trade in general, and import trade in particular. More consumer goods, as we have already pointed out, were imported in a relatively larger variety. This indicates an increased prosperity of the population and a change in its lifestyle, as well as a shift from basic necessities of life to so-called luxuries.¹⁰²

Exports

At the beginning of the period the town of Muhammareh itself had little exports except dates, and prior to the Karun opening there were no resident merchants of any importance. In the early 1890s there were only forwarding agents to firms up-country or the town of Kuwait. The export trade of the province – wheat, oil seeds, wool, and cotton – was chiefly in the hands of Basra merchants who purchased produce up to the Karun and conveyed it to Basra for sale or export. Different types of dates, which were grown in large quantities and were the principal crop in the immediate neighbourhood of Muhammareh, were chiefly exported to India. Local boats would come up in the season to purchase them. A certain number of mules and horses were also exported to India¹⁰³ mainly for the use of the army. The superior qualities of the Persian mule were appreciated by many nations who rated them, in terms of endurance and strength, as the best means of transport for rugged and difficult terrains. Najm, in the early 1880s, complained that every year buyers from Bombay came to Fars and Khuzestan to buy mules and horses and estimated that from Muhammareh alone some 1,000 horses were thus exported annually.¹⁰⁴ Najm advised the authorities to put an end to this practice, which he rightly believed would have injurious effects on the country. It seems that as a direct result of this uncontrolled trade the export of horses from the province itself diminished. By the early 1890s the horse trade of Muhammareh really belonged to Basra¹⁰⁵ and Turkish territory, which was carried out in Muhammareh to avoid increased customs dues prevalent on the Turkish side.¹⁰⁶

In most parts of the south the trade in wheat and barley crops was reportedly in the hands of Jews who were ‘the chief exporters’.¹⁰⁷ At Muhammareh,

however, this does not appear to have been the case. In the early 1890s, the exports of specie from Muhammareh were large and no business in bills was done locally. Therefore, at the beginning of the period there was no rate of exchange with Great Britain¹⁰⁸ (see Appendices, Table XI). The Indian rupee and Turkish lira were current. However, an export in natural products such as bugloss, reeds, and gums gradually appeared owing to increased demand in India, and it continued to increase. In the late 1880s, the war in the Sudan and isolation of those tracts had affected the supply of gum. The effects of this were, at this time, being felt in Iran where gum was extensively collected from the wild almond, *gavan* (*astragalus*), and other shrubs and trees, and measures were being taken to prevent the wholesale destruction of such woods.¹⁰⁹ The gum export from Muhammareh, which by the end of the period had become fairly substantial (5.3 per cent of the total value of exports in 1909–10; see Appendices, Table X), was mostly from up-country, conveyed to Muhammareh after 1900 by the Lynch road. But even in 1895 there was a demand for it at Bandar Naseri for shipment to London, which had not previously been the case.¹¹⁰ Later its export from Muhammareh and Naseri increased because new districts were tapped from the latter place.¹¹¹ Bugloss and reeds, which were used for pens, grew wild in the Dezful district. Cotton was grown in the Shushtar district – about 65 to 80 tons annually. The larger portion was consumed locally in the manufacture of quilts, which at this time was a flourishing industry in Shushtar. Caravans from Hoveizeh brought ghee and rice, arriving about once in 20 days.¹¹²

There was also a large quantity of wool of fair quality produced in Khuzestan, of which only about 15 per cent was white. Some was exported to Basra where there were presses, and the rest went to Bandar Deylam for Bushehr.¹¹³ Opium, which was grown in small quantities in Khuzestan, was first exported from Muhammareh in 1892. In the following year its quantity, mostly from up-country, rose substantially (from 53 chests worth £3,700 to 270 worth £16,200), and in that year opium constituted 37 per cent of the entire export of Muhammareh. But this trend did not continue since almost all the opium shipped by this route was from up-country. So, owing to delays, partly from interruption of caravan routes due to the disturbed state of the tribal areas, and partly because of shipping delays at Muhammareh, merchants preferred the Baghdad route.¹¹⁴ As a consequence, the opium export from Muhammareh decreased sharply and did not recover until 1900 when, after the completion of the Lynch road, some opium from up-country began to find its way to Muhammareh. Most of this – 170 cases out of 183 – was exported to the traditional market of the Persian opium, i.e. Hong Kong. Of the rest, ten cases went to Britain and three to the Persian ports.¹¹⁵ In the following couple of years its export from Muhammareh increased. However, apart from 1902 in which some 920 cases (worth £66,300 or about 45 per cent of the total export of Muhammareh; see Appendices, Table X) were exported – 303 to Great Britain and 536 to India – for the rest of the period the value of opium export was not as substantial.

Nonetheless, thanks to the Lynch road, the importance of opium in the

Table 6.3 Muhammareh exports – principal items (1907–10) (£)

| Articles | 1907–8 | 1908–9 | 1909–10 |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Dates | 8,381 | 25,024 | 21,000 |
| Wheat and barley | 114,301 | 5,259 | 5,722 |
| Opium | 5,735 | 18,357 | 89,899 |
| Tobacco | 2,063 | 3,891 | 12,338 |
| Other articles | 68,718 | 77,949 | 89,017 |
| Total | 119,198 ¹ | 130,480 ¹ | 217,976 ¹ |

Source: Wilson, 'Report', 22 March 1910: op. cit.

Note

¹ Including specie.

export trade of Muhammareh gradually grew until by 1909–10 its value rose to the record figure of £90,000 which was about 44 per cent of the total export of Muhammareh (see Appendices, Table X). In this year, which was an unfavourable season for cereals in Khuzestan, the great bulk of opium and tobacco grown in Esfahan was exported via Ahvaz. Total exports for this year (including specie) amounted to £217,976 compared with £130,480 for 1908–9,¹¹⁶ but after excluding opium and tobacco, the apparent increase would turn into a decrease. Unlike other articles of export which were normally produced locally, the export of opium and tobacco did not benefit Khuzestan in any direct way (see Table 6.3).

In 1908–9 there was a general decrease in the trade of Muhammareh. This was partly because there was no surplus of wheat for export from the Karun area, and partly due to the disturbed condition of Persia consequent on the Constitutional Revolution and the insecurity of the Shushtar–Dezful road. At the same time the decrease in trade on the Ahvaz–Shushtar route to Esfahan was not very substantial since it was the only safe road from the coast to the interior of Iran.¹¹⁷ In the subsequent year, the continued disturbed state of Iran combined with an unfavourable season for cereals in Khuzestan would lead one to expect a further shrinkage in the Muhammareh trade. The reverse was, however, the case since the prolonged disturbance on the Bushehr–Shiraz road induced shippers to forward goods for Esfahan via the Ahvaz–Esfahan road, which was perceived to be more secure. Thus, the bulk of Esfahan's opium and tobacco was exported through Ahvaz.¹¹⁸ This boosted, to an unrecognizable degree, the volume of total trade of Muhammareh, so much so that in this respect it overtook both Bushehr and Lengeh (see Figure 6.3). Furthermore, the material imported by the Oil Company for oil exploration, etc., greatly helped this sudden increase.

Another interesting feature of the Muhammareh export trade seems to have been the tendency by the farmers to grow more cash crops such as oil seeds, beans, and rice. The oil seeds, like linseed and sesame, were grown *faryab* in the Dezful and Ram Hormoz districts.¹¹⁹ They were also exported from the Jarrahi area as early as 1891.¹²⁰ In 1890, the total value of this crop exported from

Muhammareh amounted to £5,200, which was about 10 per cent of the total export. However, its exports in terms of value fluctuated. In 1897, it was reported that the oil seed crop was good and more sesame was grown than usual, owing to the demand for exports,¹²¹ which 'is encouraging cultivators to sow more'.¹²² Consequently, by 1899 its export grew to £5,560 and then to a record £10,600 in 1907-8 (see Appendices, Table X). One factor which impeded the growth of cash crops on a larger scale seems to have been the frequent embargoes which were placed by the government on the export of provisions of all kind from the southern ports. A good case in hand was the cultivation of beans in Khuzestan. Beans were for the first time shipped to London (112 tons at £1,120) in 1897 (export figures for 1894 and 1895 were £62 and £51 respectively).¹²³ In 1896 there seemed a prospect for a fair export trade in this crop and a large amount was consequently grown in 1897. However, after a general prohibition was declared in May 1897, the surplus crop was wasted.¹²⁴ Therefore, in succeeding years only enough was grown for local consumption.¹²⁵ Rice was another crop whose cultivation modestly increased towards the end of the period. By 1908 it was reported that rice cultivation was increasing in new areas on the Jarrahi. It had always been largely cultivated on the Karkheh but this was of inferior quality and the surplus was exported to Basra and Kuwait.¹²⁶ In 1891-2 there were some exports of this crop from Muhammareh, but the records show that in the ensuing years no rice was exported until 1906-7 from which year on there appears to have been a fairly steady increase in its export, with the only exception being 1909-10 (see Appendices, Table X). Some rice of better quality was also grown near Dezful but, according to McDouall, bad carriage from there to Ahvaz markets made its price at Muhammareh equal to that imported from India.¹²⁷ It is interesting that rice cultivation was introduced into Dezful after the Karun opening by Nezam who had brought high quality seed from Najaf. The result, apparently, was very good but it failed to have any immediate impact.¹²⁸

Dates

Dates were by far the most important article of export from Muhammareh itself. As we have discussed, the statistics available on the export of this particular crop from Muhammareh are not entirely reliable. Therefore, it is necessary to benefit from the observations of a contemporary authority in order to make an estimate of the total production and export. In the late 1880s, it was estimated that there were more than a million date trees in and around Muhammareh, which was not the only region in Khuzestan where date groves existed.¹²⁹ In Muhammareh, each tree produced about 12 Tabriz *mans*¹³⁰ worth 3-5 *qerans*.¹³¹ Assuming that on average at least half of the date trees bore fruit, in any given year the figure of 6,000,000 *mans* or 18,000 tons is arrived at as the total production; yielding, at 4 *qerans* per 12 *mans*, some 200,000 *tumans* (110 *qerans* per ton) per annum. Of this at least half was exported, mainly to India. The rest went to Persian ports, Oman, and the Red Sea ports for which no returns were available.¹³²

The total quantity of dates exported from Iran, almost entirely from Khuzestan, in 1908–9 and 1909–10 was 3,308,792 *mans* (9,927 tons at 333 *qerans* per ton) and 3,245,197 *mans* (9,736 tons) respectively.¹³³ By calculating the average yield per tree as 12 *mans*, the number of date trees whose produce was exported was thus about 275,000. Here the important point is that the quantity of total production of dates had remained almost unchanged. However, as a result of the trebling of the price, by the end of the period the annual amount of exchange earned by this item of export alone was, on average, about 360,000 tumans. It has also been reported that the dates grown in Muhammareh were not of the best varieties and were, therefore, unsuitable for European markets.¹³⁴ In 1904, however, the high price was given as the reason for the small quantity of date exports from Muhammareh to Europe and America,¹³⁵ which confirms the view that its price had increased.

Cereals

Along with dates, another staple article of export from Muhammareh, in varying degrees, was cereals. The export of this item, however, usually depended on natural conditions and climatic changes. Until 1890 the surplus was traditionally exported to Basra in river boats, a custom which was maintained even after the Karun opening. For instance, in 1894, which was a good year for harvest, some 7,500 tons of wheat were sent there, and export to Basra in the next year, too, was substantial.¹³⁶ During the succeeding two years the Muhammareh export in general was good. But except 1907–8, which was a bumper year when the grain export reached a record level of 471,500 cwt. (£114,000, or 58 per cent of total value of exports; see Appendices, Table X), for the rest of the period the amount of recorded export was modest. The frequent embargoes declared by the government on its export did much to hamper the natural growth of this trade. The question of embargo was indeed a major source of irritation, and a thorn in the side of the British officials and the merchants who were engaged in this branch of trade. Ross, who called the embargoes ‘capricious and unnecessary’, believed that they tended greatly to impede trade in all fields with negative effects on the country and its population.¹³⁷ When the harvest was bad, in order to prevent an artificial rise in prices and scarcity and consequent famine, an embargo, sometimes nominal, was placed on the export of grain. For example, in Muhammareh between 1890–1910 there were, to varying degrees, crop failures and total or partial embargoes in 1892, 1893, 1896–1902, 1904, 1905, 1908–9, and 1909–10. In 1903 the crop was ‘unusually large’,¹³⁸ in 1906 it was reported to be ‘good, but prices high’,¹³⁹ and in 1907–8 exports were very large and the grain crop was an ‘unprecedented one’.¹⁴⁰ So, on average, in each decade there were about three good harvests and the remaining seven years did not induce trade. A short crop and embargo usually resulted in a stationary situation in the trade in general. Owing to merchants being unable to purchase grain, the populace had little cash and retail traders would do little business.

British officials claimed that the embargo was freely evaded by those who knew how to do it since one of its objects, in their eyes, was the levy of 'an illegitimate cess for connivance at its evasion without an open violation of the treaty rights' governing the duties in foreign trade.¹⁴¹ Given the exposed position of the province of Khuzestan, however, it was also difficult to strictly carry out an embargo order. For instance, in 1900 export and sale of wheat to merchants was prohibited and no 'legitimate trade' was possible on the Karun. A portion of the crop, however, was conveyed by land to the sea coast for shipment 'as in former years'.¹⁴² Much of the British criticism in this respect seems to have been unwarranted. In many of these years the crop failures were serious enough to force the authorities to declare an embargo, particularly in view of the bread riots which had become widespread in the late 1890s and early 1900s. This was, therefore, quite justifiable and within the government's rights. Thus, sometimes this criticism was the result of selfish considerations rather than genuine grievances.

In any event, the negative effects of these embargoes on the economic development of the region were undeniable and far reaching. Sometimes the declaration of an embargo was due to a bad harvest in the south generally, and the officials suspended the exportations of provisions from all southern ports although the crop in, say, the Karun region was good. In these situations, as a result of the prohibition and also due to poor means of communication, which would normally make the conveyance of the surplus into the interior costly and uneconomical, the cultivators could not sell their surplus to exporters. They had to either wait until the embargo was lifted, or until buyers who knew how to evade it appeared on the scene. This, coupled with the growers' excessive poverty, had another detrimental effect. A couple of bad harvests and the consequent embargoes deterred the farmers from sowing enough seeds for the next season since this was regarded as a kind of gamble. Therefore, the tendency was to sow fewer seeds and to put less land under cultivation, as a consequence of which less grain would be produced, and in the following year the economy of the region would suffer even further. In 1899, for example, the Arab sheikh at Ahvaz told Durand that his people were everywhere letting their land go out of cultivation as they had no sale for the produce.¹⁴³ An important reason for this was that, in the 1890s the people who worked the land in this area were still rather amateur farmers whose main concern was to earn as much revenue as possible from the land regardless of the way in which it was utilized. This, one is led to believe, is a feature which characterizes those communities whose economy is principally based on pastoral nomadism. Thus, in 1898, after two consecutive bad harvests, one of which coincided with the 1896 famine in India,¹⁴⁴ McDouall observed that the wheat crop was good, 'the area sown was much less than usual, but the return larger'.¹⁴⁵ Conversely, the advent of a good harvest encouraged the farmers to sow more land, and thus after two fairly good years, in 1899 'a larger area than usual' was sown for the following year¹⁴⁶ when prospects were believed to be very good.

So, either way, there was an exaggerated snowballing effect in the cultivation

of cereals in Khuzestan which was, perhaps distinctly, characteristic of the non-professional way in which the farmer-cum-nomads who predominantly inhabited the province went about their business. Another interesting point is that sometimes a good harvest had adverse effects on the export of other less important produce, e.g. reeds, bugloss, etc. This was due to high freights and want of space in steamers to India, owing to the large quantity of grain available for shipment at Muhammareh and Basra, and these articles had to be kept by shippers till the rates would go down again.¹⁴⁷ For example, the increases in export of natural products in 1895 was reported as being due to their non-shipment the previous year.¹⁴⁸

The Karun trade and the Lynch road

Trade on the Karun between Muhammareh and the River Ports of Ahvaz (Naseri) and Shushtar

After the establishment of regular fortnightly steam services on the Karun in the late 1880s,¹⁴⁹ a limited trade sprang up between Muhammareh and the Karun ports. Owing to a peculiar system of dues prevalent on the Karun, however, this trade could not grow very rapidly. At the beginning of the period, all goods owned by Persian merchants were liable to dues at each place on the river they passed through. Consequently, goods for places beyond Shushtar were sent by caravan, directly from Muhammareh in spite of the advantages, such as speed and greater security, of conveyance by river.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, as long as this system existed, the river route seemed unable to compete with the caravans in the case of goods owned by non-Europeans. By land there were no dues levied after leaving Dezful until arrival in Muhammareh, whereas by river there were customs leviable at Shushtar and dues to 'river chiefs' amounting to 7 shillings per chest of opium or bale of piecegoods. European-owned goods did not pay these dues.¹⁵¹ However, this system gradually disappeared and by the late 1890s few caravans reportedly arrived in Muhammareh from Dezful since its trade was 'now entirely by river to Shushtar'.¹⁵² The other factor was that, despite several attempts – e.g. in 1893 by the Naseri Company – the Dez could not be navigated. So the needs of Dezful as well as its exports, had to pass through Shushtar.

In this manner, the river trade which had started off very modestly, gradually grew.¹⁵³ For instance, during 1890–6 the value of imports into Ahvaz and Shushtar from Muhammareh rose from £11,000 (less than 10 per cent of Muhammareh's imports from abroad) to £72,500 (just over 50 per cent of Muhammareh's imports) (see Appendices, Tables IX, XII, XIV). In 1898, too, there was reportedly an increase in trade to the Karun ports, 'chiefly from India, due to increased prosperity and increased enterprise on the part of Shushtar traders'.¹⁵⁴ In this year the total value of Muhammareh's import trade from abroad, transshipment to Karun ports not included, was £156,500 (see Appendices, Table IX), while that of the Karun ports was about £73,000 (see Appendices, Table XIII), which constituted about one-third of the total imports

of the province.¹⁵⁵ With the exception of dates, other articles of the import trade of Ahvaz and Shushtar were the same as those of Muhammareh. The same applied to the composition of the export trade. This gradual growth continued until by 1910, according to the Iranian Custom House, the total value of imports into Naseri and Shushtar reached £627,500 of which only £20,000 was for the latter place. However, most of this trade was material for the Oil Company (see Appendices, Table XIII). It should also be remembered that up to 1900 almost the entire river trade was for the towns and districts of Khuzestan itself. But after the opening of the Lynch road, goods for up-country, as well as those for local consumption, were imported into Ahvaz and to some extent Shushtar. Thus, the statistics for 1900 onwards relate to both transit and local trades.¹⁵⁶

With regard to imports into Muhammareh from the Karun ports¹⁵⁷ the following observations could be made. In just a decade, i.e. 1891–1902, the total value of this trade gradually increased about ten times (see Appendices, Table XIV). In this trade, too, there were the usual fluctuations, but its growth was steady. In 1907–8, for example, owing to a record crop of grain following on a good crop in 1906–7,¹⁵⁸ there was great activity in both the trading and shipping fields (see Appendices, Table XV). Large quantities of wheat were available for export and Messrs Lynch Bros¹⁵⁹ took full advantage of this. But perhaps the best indication of this expansion in the river trade are the statistics contained in Table XV (see Appendices) which demonstrate that from 1905–6 the shipping on the river steadily increased. In 1907–8, the record figure of 26,000 tons total shipping (in both directions) was reached which was due to a bumper harvest in Khuzestan. In the succeeding years, too, the Oil Company's imports kept the shipping companies busy. In 1910, for instance, the volume of imports was so large that the Oil Company found it necessary to supplement the conveying capacity of the two steamers on the upper Karun by an oil launch towing two barges.¹⁶⁰ In the next year the import trade exceeded all previous records and reportedly Messrs Lynch Bros' 'hands were quite full'. Their steamer on the lower Karun carried more cargo than in any previous year, quite apart from the Oil Company's material, and their second steamer was also kept busy for the greater part of the year. In this year the Lynch road, too, was 'much patronized' by the muleteers. The good harvest stimulated general trade as well as the shipping.¹⁶¹ With the construction of the Lynch road, the Karun trade route was completed and began to play a much more important role in the southern, as well as national trade.

The Lynch–Bakhtiari road

In April 1897 a 60 years' concession¹⁶² was granted by the Persian government to the Bakhtiari *khans* for the construction, maintenance, and exploitation of a road, with its *caravansarais* from Ahvaz to Esfahan via Malamir, Godar-e-Balutak, etc., in the Bakhtiari region. It conveyed to the concessionaires the right of levying tolls at certain specific rates. They were also authorized to obtain the aid of capitalists for carrying out the necessary works, and were

charged with responsibility for the safety of the road. Shortly afterwards, in March 1898, a subsidiary agreement¹⁶³ was concluded between the *khans* and Messrs Lynch, guaranteed by the Persian government, for the construction and maintenance of the road by the British firm for the Bakhtiyari concessionaires on the following conditions: Messrs Lynch Brothers were to be allowed full liberty to adapt existing ways or tracks, and in formation of diversions and constructions, or in any way in connection with the road. They were also to put an iron bridge over the Karun at Godar-e-Balutak.

Messrs Lynch contracted to carry out these works for a sum not exceeding £5,500. The *khans* were to pay them 6 per cent per annum on the outlay and to repay the capital by annual instalments of 1,100 tumans, the first instalment and the first year's interest to fall due on 3 March 1901. Subsequent interest and instalments were to be paid at the end of each succeeding year. The length of the road was 277 miles,¹⁶⁴ which passed through very difficult terrain. One of its principal features was the iron suspension bridge over a gully at Godar-e-Balutak, which was completed on 14 December 1899, and the road was soon after opened for traffic.¹⁶⁵ However, as could be anticipated, some serious difference arose between the *khans* and Lynch Bros who intended to overcharge the *khans* and claimed that, contrary to Article 3 of the Agreement, they had spent £7,500 for the construction of the road.¹⁶⁶ This became a vexed issue which has been discussed elsewhere.¹⁶⁷ The agreement had two major effects. First, it empowered the British Legation at Tehran to act as arbiter regarding the amount of tolls to be charged, etc. (Article 9). Second, for a decade prior to this Agreement, Messrs Lynch Bros had been the only European firm which had tried, through a variety of methods, to monopolize the use of the Karun trade route. But this had been successfully resisted by Persian merchants. The construction and eventual control of this road by them, however, gave the British firm a great advantage over their Iranian and would-be European rivals since this was the natural continuation of the Karun route. It also gave their business a boost.

Despite the road's disadvantages and pessimistic views about its future success,¹⁶⁸ an expanding trade upon the Lynch road was quickly established. Early in 1900, three Esfahan *qafelehs* (convoys) arrived in Ahvaz with opium, tobacco, dried fruits and other products for sale, and purchased goods imported from Europe and India. A number of pilgrims for Mashad, too, travelled by the new route in June.¹⁶⁹ In the course of the next year, there was a considerable increase in traffic,¹⁷⁰ which also attracted an increasing amount of cargo, especially for Tehran, there being a saving of time compared with the Bushehr route.¹⁷¹ During the first three years after its opening the road progressed fairly well and came more into use as it became better known. But as a trade route it had two major disadvantages: first, quite often it was blocked by snow for a few months in winter;¹⁷² second, the scarcity of fodder and the non-existence of villages on the route reduced the number of mules.¹⁷³ In 1901, for example, due to scarcity of fodder, many of the local mules were taken to other districts to feed.¹⁷⁴ The Persian *charvadar* (muleteer) who was reportedly 'one of the most

conservative creatures in the world',¹⁷⁵ still resisted using this road, despite many inducements, which were held out since it was reported that 'he takes up a certain line and scarcely anything will drive him to go elsewhere'.¹⁷⁶ In 1902, the Indo-European Telegraph Department began to send their stores for the New Central Persian Line along this route and this was of great assistance in bringing the Bakhtiyari road to notice. Also, as Muhammareh customs had not been taken over by the Belgian Customs officials who ran the Iranian customs, and the duties levied at that port were nominal – a chest of opium paid 12 *qerans* as against 160 elsewhere – a 'good ebb and flow' was created.¹⁷⁷ A toll-collecting station was established at Godar-e-Balutak, and in 1903 the *khans* leased it to a contractor at 8,000 tumans.¹⁷⁸ Tolls were paid by the *charvadar*. Loaded animals paid 5 *qerans* per horse or mule, 6 per camel, and 3 *qerans* per donkey; and animals without loads paid half rate. Due to the very mountainous country through which the road traversed, packages could not exceed 165 lbs. in weight for mules, or 275 lbs. for camels, and because of severe winters until 1904 the road was usually impassable between December and March.¹⁷⁹

During the year 1903, cholera brought an absolute stagnation of all traffic on the Shiraz–Bushehr road. Thus, merchants from Esfahan and other central provinces sent their goods 'with freedom' along the Lynch road. During 1903–4, 2,460 animals were sent from Esfahan to Ahvaz by the Lynch firm; and 2,300 from Ahvaz to the former place, a grand total of 4,760.¹⁸⁰ It was also reported that, in this period about the same number of animals were sent and received by local merchants in the two places. To these figures must be added 'a considerable coming and going' from Chahar Mahal and Faridan to Shushtar and Dezful. So, taking it all into account 'not less than 10,000 animals must have passed' over the road during those 12 months. During the first four months of the next year, i.e. April–July 1904 inclusive, the amount of traffic on the road nearly doubled in comparison with the same months of 1903.¹⁸¹ In 1905, Messrs Lynch Bros sent 2,200 animals – 4,090 packages – down from Ahvaz to Esfahan and 5,077 – 10,830 packages – up the road. Thus its traffic continued to grow, although in the same year it was again blocked by the snow.¹⁸²

Apart from this, in the subsequent years the road suffered from the disturbed state of the country, but 'more from the state of the track'¹⁸³ for whose maintenance Messrs Lynch Bros were responsible.¹⁸⁴ The Revolution years of 1907–8 were not prosperous years for the Lynch road. A large decrease in trade was chiefly attributed to 'general stagnancy of trade in the interior of Persia' consequent on the political disturbances,¹⁸⁵ the collapse of the central authority, and the insecurity of the trade routes in general. However, on this road the trade soon picked up. It was reported that due to the 'almost total closure' of the main southern artery, namely Esfahan–Bushehr, due to the grave political conditions of the country, the year 1909 was 'an unprecedented one in the annals of the Lynch road'. A large portion of the Bushehr–Esfahan trade was reportedly diverted to this route, in addition to its normal trade.¹⁸⁶ For the same reason, 1910 proved to be even better for the Lynch road (see Appendices, Table XVI). A good indication of this unexpected expansion of the transit trade

was the amount of tolls collected on the road in these two years. The Godar bridge tolls for the Persian year ending 20 March 1910 had been farmed out by the Bakhtiyari *khans* for a sum of 17,000 tumans,¹⁸⁷ whereas the actual takings for this year were about three times as much (48,000 tumans), and for the next year they were reported to be not less than 60,000 tumans. So, a new method of bridge tolls based on a system of paper check was soon introduced by the *khans*.¹⁸⁸ It is also interesting that when the thaw came a record *qafeleh* of 1,200 animals left Ahvaz for Esfahan in April 1911.¹⁸⁹

The factors which under normal circumstances induced the merchants to use the Lynch road rather than the other route were as follows. The fastest journey from London to Esfahan via Ahvaz was 3½ months, whilst via Bushehr the usual time was about 5 months.¹⁹⁰ This could be shortened, of course, by paying the *charvadar* extra money for fast travelling.¹⁹¹ On the other hand, the average charge per bale of Manchester goods from Muhammareh to Esfahan was 2.80 *qerans* river freight plus 40 *qerans* road freight – a total of 42.8 *qerans* (15s. 7d.) – while the charges from Bushehr to Esfahan were 48 *qerans* (17s. 6d.).¹⁹² For a variety of reasons, such as insecurity or fodder scarcity, these rates fluctuated, but over this period they progressively rose (see Appendices, Table XVII). An important factor which, among others, was responsible for this steady rise was reportedly the general increase ‘in prices throughout southern Persia’¹⁹³ which by this time had become a part of the international market and reflected its fluctuations.

Beyond 1910, however, this growth of the transit trade was not sustained. This could be seen from a comparison of the statistics with those of the previous year. The principal reason for this falling-off was given as the insecurity of the road. For example, the loss of goods on it through robberies was estimated at some £15,000 of which over £10,000 belonged to British subjects. According to reports, this insecurity in turn had two different causes. The first was the absence of all the senior *khans* from the Bakhtiyari country, due to their elevation to national politics during the greater part of the year, which resulted in a relaxation of control over the tribesmen. The second cause, which again was a result of the *khans*’ political prominence, was ‘calling out of all available *tofangchis* (armed men)’¹⁹⁴ by the *khans* for their military campaigns in northern Iran. Thus, the tribesmen were left helpless to resist the Kohgilu’s raids.¹⁹⁵ The same conditions also prevailed in 1912 until, as the British put it, according to the dictum of ‘setting a thief to catch a thief’, the Bakhtiyari *Ilkhani*, Sardar Jang, and the Kohgilus arrived at an agreement and thus the security of the road was guaranteed. In this year, the Lynch Bros undertook the agency of the Société de Tombac, and tobacco exported by that firm was included in Lynch’s transport statistics. It amounted to about 7,000 cwt. in 1912 and 12,000 cwt. in 1913. To obtain a just comparison for the last 4 years (see Appendices, Table XVI) these figures should therefore be deducted from the totals for their respective years. It will then be seen that, so far as Lynch Bros’ figures were concerned, there was a steady falling-off in downward transport, the figures for the four years being 7,657; 6,560; 5,099; and 3,908 cwt. respectively.¹⁹⁶

In this connection, the general point to be made is that until 1913 the upward trade from Ahvaz to Esfahan, i.e. the imports, always and invariably outweighed the downward, or export trade of Esfahan. The average ratio was approximately two to one and sometimes, as in 1910, even four to one (see Appendices, Table XVI). This condition had been astutely predicted by Durand who had toured the area in late 1899.¹⁹⁷ This phenomenon was not confined to Esfahan's trade but was a reflection of the foreign trade of Iran in general.

Conclusions

The economic penetration of Khuzestan followed nearly the same patterns as in Bushehr, namely, the trends and processes which had characterized the expansion of the Bushehr trade repeated themselves in Muhammareh. The foreign trade of the province was dominated, and in some articles almost monopolized, by the British Empire. Here, as in Bushehr, Indian manufactures, especially piecegoods, first entered the scene and paved the way for English goods. Bearing in mind the predominant economic and political position that Britain had occupied in this area, it becomes clear which maritime power most benefited from the Karun concession. Khuzestan's 'development' and commercial expansion did not exactly follow the patterns predicted by some over-optimistic British observers. In spite of this, it is beyond doubt that the Karun opening had a great impact on the socio-economic conditions of the region. Khuzestan's rich resources were exploited, though not fully. Its trade increased, although slowly, to the extent that by 1909–10 the aggregate trade of Muhammareh (Khuzestan) actually exceeded that of Bushehr, which until then had been the principal port of Persia.

Perhaps the most crucial effect of the Karun concession and the ensuing developments was the re-emergence after centuries of Khuzestan as a centre of trade and economic activity in Iran, a role which was augmented by the discovery of oil in the area. Here it must be noted that traditionally the southern parts of Khuzestan were within an economic and commercial zone, which in addition to Muhammareh also included centres across the frontier such as Basra, Amareh, and Kuwait. In this regard, the position of Basra as a supply and redistribution centre seems to have been pivotal. The Karun opening greatly diminished the role of Basra in the economy of this zone. Instead, Muhammareh itself began to occupy a progressively important role in the economy of, not the above zone but, Khuzestan and South-West Persia, i.e. centres within Iranian territory. This was, of course, a gradual process, the culmination of which appears to have been the construction of the Lynch road and the establishment in Khuzestan of Customs Houses, which were effectively controlled by the central government. Thus once again Khuzestan became a part of the national economy of Iran. By the early 1900s, it had become economically independent of centres across the border, and an integral part of the southern economic zone. For Iran this development, which was the direct result of the Karun opening, proved to be a blessing in disguise.

7 Social and economic changes in Khuzestan after the Karun opening

General

The Karun opening greatly affected the social and economic structure of Khuzestan. The changes which occurred there could be classified, broadly speaking, into social and economic ones. In this chapter the social and demographic developments will be analysed first and then the economic changes will be studied. With respect to the demography of Khuzestan major changes which followed the Karun concession were: an increase in the total population of the province due to immigration (between the 1880s and 1920s it rose from about 180,000 to 410,000); and urbanization, which in the context of nineteenth-century Khuzestan cannot be used but in its broadest sense. The emergence of towns with relatively large populations in the southern parts of the province substantiates this view. A corollary to this was the tendency towards greater sedentarization. These points will be discussed in more detail below. In the sphere of economics, certain undertakings such as the construction of public works had a marked effect on the province. The projects, which were mostly connected with the exploitation of the Karun concession, injected new blood into the stagnant economy of Khuzestan. In this regard certain variables, such as the prices and wages, rents, etc., will be studied in order to ascertain the economic effects of the event. Here, the crucial point is that the process of opening-up the region, which had begun in earnest in the late 1880s with the Karun opening, culminated in the late 1900s in the oil discovery in South-West Persia. The take-over in January 1909 of the D'Arcy concession (including all the assets and the liabilities of the Concession Syndicate Ltd) by the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. could be regarded as a turning point in the history of the region and Iran as a whole. Not surprisingly, the British too were fully aware of the great significance of this development. Hence their view that it was 'undoubtedly the most important and far reaching event affecting British interests' that had happened in Khuzestan 'since the opening of the Karun'.¹ The oil industry, as will be discussed below, somewhat complemented the Karun concession in the sense that it quickened the pace of these developments.

Social and demographic developments

Some aspects of the social life in Khuzestan have already been discussed. Here, therefore, the aim will be to study the social changes which the province underwent after 1889. Perhaps the most important of these were the demographic ones. In any attempt to examine the socio-economic structure of a society a historian will first wish to establish as much accurate data as possible relating to the demography of that area. In the case of Khuzestan this seems to be a difficult task since no general census was held in the province during the Qajar period.² In the absence of such statistics, one has to rely on figures which usually are based on estimations. Allowing for the inadequacy of these estimates, it is possible to make good use of some contemporary sources. The observance of two criteria would enable us to do this successfully. First, we must distinguish between figures which are mere guesswork, and estimates which are based on serious investigations. This means finding out to what extent those who supplied these estimates were qualified and knowledgeable to do so. Second, to try to narrow the margin of error of those estimates which can be relied upon. Another important factor is the method of estimation. Here again a distinction should be made between two different categories of people; namely, those estimators, both Persian and non-Persian, whose scientific method of observation and/or close links with the area had provided them with valuable information on which their works could be based. In the second category are those who either lacked the required intimate knowledge or the scientific method which could compensate for this shortcoming. Observing that 'great misconception' existed on the subject of population, Thomson has rather contemptuously dismissed 'the calculations made by the natives' as 'for the most part worthless'.³ However, as will be seen below, it is mainly thanks to the information and statistics supplied by these same 'natives' that we are now able to discuss this subject with a fair degree of certainty.

The main feature of social and economic organization in Khuzestan was the sharp division of the province into two distinct – and to a large extent mutually exclusive – components. There were the nomadic and the sedentarized (i.e. town as well as village dwellers) centres and communities. The population of Khuzestan was a hybrid race whose main feature was its sparseness. It should also be remembered that in a pre-industrial society, despite a seemingly high birth-rate there was a tendency towards a recurring peak death-rate which was due to many causes. The most important of these were the wars and political upheavals, famines, and large-scale epidemics. Before 1890, for example, several severe epidemics, such as cholera, hit Iran and its southern provinces.⁴ Muhammareh during 1889–90 suffered 'severely' from epidemic cholera which also visited other parts of Khuzestan such as Shushtar.⁵ Up to and even after 1898, when at the request of the Persian government quarantines were sometimes administered at Muhammareh and other Persian ports by the government of India,⁶ there was hardly an epidemic-free year. In 1893, due to outbreaks of cholera, small-pox, and remittant fever, there was a 'considerable mortality' in

Muhammareh and upper Karun, and out of a population of approximately 3,500, 'about 140 deaths occurred' at the former place.⁷ Two years later it was influenza,⁸ and in 1901 small-pox.⁹ The next year a combination of cholera and small-pox caused distress.¹⁰ During the summer of 1904 the whole region in the south was visited by plague and cholera which was generated in Mesopotamia and then travelled to Iran. At Shiraz the peak death-toll was about '1,000 per diem'.¹¹ The south-west of the country was also badly affected and all the major centres of Khuzestan were visited by cholera. The death toll in Muhammareh was put at 200 by 22 July,¹² and the town was again visited by the disease in November.¹³ It was also reported that the epidemic had killed some 3,400 people in Dezful,¹⁴ but in Shushtar there seems to have been relatively fewer deaths¹⁵ because, owing to the intense heat, many of the inhabitants had already left the town. So had the people, including the merchants, of Muhammareh, as a result of which 'business came to a halt'.¹⁶ Another epidemic of cholera, with grave consequences, hit Muhammareh and Khuzestan in 1911.¹⁷

Deprived of reliable statistics, there is no way of measuring any decrease or increase in the total population of Khuzestan. The mean age of the population of Iran during this period is calculated to have been about 25 years,¹⁸ which in the absence of any other specific study may be applied to the population of Khuzestan, too. No information exists on the fertility or mortality rates. Only Schindler has calculated estimates of the average annual birth and mortality rates. 'Medical men', he wrote, 'have stated that the number of deaths in times when there are no epidemics amount to 19–20 per thousand, and the number of births to 25–40 per thousand'.¹⁹ He did not, however, say whether this birth rate was related to live birth or not. But considering the live birth rate of 50.3 per thousand estimated for 1968,²⁰ the Schindler rate seems to be an under-estimation,²¹ the improved conditions by the latter date notwithstanding. Regarding the study of the demographic changes in Khuzestan, however, we should consider ourselves fortunate in having access to a few valuable contemporary Persian sources, which prove how wrong Thomson was in this respect. First, on the order of Naser-ud-Din Shah, in 1286 AH/1869–70, the governor-general of Khuzestan conducted a head counting in the province. The statistics given by Kasravi (see Table 7.1) do not seem to contain the entire tribal population of the province. Therefore, the figure given in the table for the total population (91,500) must be considered as incomplete since presumably the author has not deemed it necessary to quote all the figures at his disposal, save the principal population centres. Robertson's figure, 167,000 for 1878 (see Table 7.2) seems to be more in harmony with Najm's computation. One rather confusing point should be clarified here. Most of the population estimates are given in terms of number of families, and not persons, in certain areas. This creates problems as to the actual number of an average Arab family, since no consensus seems to exist on this point among the authorities whose works are being used. Schindler, for instance, states that the result of his inquiries showed that the proportion of souls per family was among the nomads smaller than that

Table 7.1 Major population centres of the province of Khuzestan (1869)

| <i>Towns and districts</i> | <i>Houses</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Mosques and schools</i> | <i>Shops</i> | <i>Shrines</i> | <i>Caravan-sarais</i> | <i>Bath-houses</i> | <i>Total population</i> | <i>Sedentarized (towns and villages)</i> | <i>Tribal</i> |
|---|--------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| <i>Shushlar (12 quarters)</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The town itself | 2,467 ¹ | 7,467 | 6,372 | 13,839 | | | | | | | | |
| With adjacent villages ² | 3,538 ³ | 10,909 | 8,736 | 19,645 | 36 | | 35 | | | 19,645 | 19,645 | |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Dezful</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Town and its suburbs | 3,434 ⁴ | 14,367 | 13,069 | 27,463 | 49 | 141 | | 4 | 15 | | | |
| Arab and Lor tribesmen around it | | | | 7,773 | | | | | | 35,236 | 27,463 | 7,773 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Fallahiyeh</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The family of Sheykh-ul-Mashayekh | | | | 1,165 | | | | | | | | |
| Town (including above) | | | | 3,838 | | | | | | | | |
| Tribes | | | | 25,434 | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | 29,272 | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Jarahi</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deh Molla | | | | 2,784 | | | | | | | | |
| Hendiyan (Hendijan) | | | | 1,004 | | | | | | | | |
| Bandar-e-Mashur | | | | 2,000 | | | | | | | | |
| Total of Fallahiyeh, tribes and the above districts | | | | 750 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | 36,609 | | | | | | 36,609 | 11,175 | 25,434 |
| Other | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total for the above | | | | 799 | | | | | | 91,490 ⁵ | 58,283 | 33,207 ⁵ |

Source: Notes

Census held by the governor-general of Khuzestan, Prince Bahram Mirza, Moez-ud-Dowleh in 1286 AH/1869-70. cf. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e-Pansad Saleh-ye Khuzestan* (Tehran, 1333s/1954), pp. 146-7.

1 5.6 persons per household.
2 Consisting of four boluks of Aqli and Miyanab which in 1869 were Iaryab, and Gar Gar and Deymchek.

3 5.55 persons per household.
4 7.99 persons per household.
5 These figures do not seem to represent the entire nomadic population of the province.

of residents in towns and villages and gave the average number for the former as five,²² a figure which has been given by Qaragozlu, too; while Kasravi thought it was the opposite and gave as the average number of persons per family among the nomads between seven and eight.²³ For the computation of the statistics compiled in Tables 7.2 and 7.3, the figures seven and five have been taken to represent this average number in the estimates of Najm and Qaragozlu respectively.

Another point, which should be borne in mind, is that the tribal population of Khuzestan, like other areas with large concentrations of nomads, was constantly shifting. In these movements the administrative boundaries of the province, or even the national frontiers, did not constitute any obstacles. Schindler has estimated the entire population of the nomadic Arabs in Iran, scattered in several provinces, as approximately 52,000 families (Table 7.2). Considering that at this time, i.e. in 1881, Khuzestan had the largest colony of tribal Arabs in Iran and assuming that at least some 50 per cent of the Arab population of Iran resided in Khuzestan, the figure of 130,000 persons is arrived at. A year later Najm estimated the total 'Arab population' of the province at 'no more than 20,000 households',²⁴ or some 140,000 souls, to which figure the total number of the non-Arab population of Khuzestan, which at this time constituted the minority, should be added. Thus, it would be safe to assume that prior to the Karun opening the total population of the province, Arabs as well as Persians, must have been between 160,000 and 180,000 and in any event a little less than 200,000. It should be noted that owing to migration of Lor and Bakhtiari tribesmen and also the movements of Arabs across the international border, this total was changeable and varied from winter to summer. It seems that the best way to check the accuracy of the above figure would be to test it against the amount of revenue derived from the province since, according to Thomson's calculations, the rate of government taxation, which was 'pretty much the same' all over Iran, was about 1 tuman for each individual,²⁵ some discrepancies regarding this figure notwithstanding.²⁶ In the early 1880s, Najm has given the total revenue of Khuzestan as about 180,000 tumans whereas Baring's figure is 200,000 tumans.²⁷ Table 7.4 confirms both Thomson's as well as Najm's views in this regard.

This population was a somewhat unique mosaic of different races, religions, cultures and traditions. The dominant element was the Arab population which itself was a hybrid race with a considerable infusion of Persian blood. Among the Iranians there were the Persians, Lors (from Bakhtiari and Lorestan proper), and even the Qashqais. The town of Ram Hormoz, for example, contained a small population which was composed of all these elements.²⁸ There were also some Jews, who by the 1910s constituted a considerable part of Muhammareh's population,²⁹ Sabians who had lived in Khuzestan since time immemorial and, to complete the picture, some gypsies who earned a living as dancers.³⁰ In the southern half of the province the Arab tribes predominated but the northern half was traditionally a battleground between tribal groups of the Lors, including the Bakhtiaris and the Arabs, who were not generally on

Table 7.2 Population of the province of Khuzestan and its major towns and districts (1869–1924)

| Towns | 1869 ^a | 1878 ^{b,3} | 1881 ^c | 1882 ^d | 1889 ^e | 1890 ^f | 1907 ^g | 1908 ^h | 1909 ⁱ | 1916 ^j | 1924 ^k |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Dezful | 27,436 ¹ | 30,000 | 25,000 | 20,000 | 110,000 ⁵ | 25–30,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 15,000 | 15,000 | |
| Shushtar | 13,839 | 22,000 | 20,000 | 8–10,000 | | 22,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | |
| Ahvaz (Nasiri) | | | | 420 ⁴ | | 1,000 ⁴ | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 4,000 | |
| Ram Hormoz | | 7,000 | | 1,400 ⁴ | 27,000 ⁶ | 3,500 ⁴ | 10,000 | 10,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | |
| Mashur | 750 | | | | | 1,500 ⁴ | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | |
| Hendijan | 2,000 | | | 700 ⁴ | | 3,750 ⁴ | | | 500 | | |
| Fallahiyeh | 3,838 | 30,000 | | 1,400 ⁴ | | 2,500 ⁴ | | | | | |
| Jarrahi | 2,784 | | | 700 ⁴ | | | | | | | |
| Deh Molla | 1,004 | | | | | 3,500 ⁴ | | | | | |
| Bozi (Boziyeh) | | | | | | | | 200 | 1,000 | 1,000 | |
| Muhammarch | | 45,000 | 15,000 ³ | 3,000 | | 6,000 ⁴ | 10,000 | 10,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 | |
| Hoveizeh | | 33,000 | | 4,200 ⁴ | | 6,500 ⁴ | | | | | |
| Total of the province | | | | | | | | | | | |
| of Khuzestan | 91,490 ² | 167,000 | 260,100 ⁴ | 138,180 ⁴ | 170–200,000 | 267,250 ⁴ | 500,000 ⁷ | | | | 407,200 |

Sources: (a) Census taken in 1286 AH (1869–70) by Shahzadeh Bahram Mirza, Moez-ud-Dowleh by order of the Shah, cf. A. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Parsand Sal-e-Khuzestan*, 2nd edn (Gutemberg, Tehran, 1333s/1954), pp. 146–7, 150. (b) P.J.C. Robertson, 'Memo on the Topography of Khuzestan', App. C. to part I: Administrative Report of the Persian Gulf, Political Agency, 1878–9, 'Selections from the Records of the Government of India', Calcutta, Superintendent Govt Printing, 1879, no. 154, p. 20. (c) A. Houtum-Schindler in Dickson, 'Report on the Trade of Persia', Tehran, 31 October 1884, enclos. in Thomson to Granville, Tehran, 31 October 1884, no. 12, Commercial, I and IO: FO 60/463; also see Houtum-Schindler, 'Persia', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, xxi (1911), 192. (d) Najm, *Safar Nameh*. (e) G. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, ii, pp. 321–2. (f) Qaragozlu, op. cit. (g) McDouall, 20 March 1908: A&P, 1908, cxiv. (h) McDouall, 20 March 1909: A&P, 1910, ci. (i) A.T. Wilson, 22 March 1910: A&P, 1910, ci. (j) Dr C.H. Lincoln (Acting British Consul for Arabistan (Khuzestan)), 'Trade of Muhammad for the Persian Fiscal Year March 21st, 1916 – March 20th, 1917', Bursaire, 30 September 1917: no. C43, M.E.C. Library. (k) 'Military Report on Arabistan (Khuzestan)', Area no. 13, Simla, 1924, p. 92: L/Mil/17/15/16.

Notes

- 1 Towns and suburbs.
- 2 Incomplete figure only covering urban centres.
- 3 The districts' population.
- 4 Originally given as number of families.
- 5 Dezful, Shushtar and Hoveizeh together.
- 6 For the district.
- 7 Approximate of the province.

the best of terms with each other.³¹ The north and north-western parts were used as winter quarters (or *qeshlaq*) by the Posht-e-Kuh Lors. The Lor tribes, such as the Dirakvand, Sagvand, and Feyli would leave the Lorestan mountains in winter time and descend into the plains of Dezful; in the spring they would return to their summer pastures. In a similar way, the Bakhtiari used the plains of Shushtar and Ram Hormoz as their *qeshlaq*. No doubt, as a result of generations of contacts, the Arabs of Khuzestan had more in common with their fellow Persian countrymen than with their brethren across the border in the Ottoman territory. According to Robertson (Basra Consul) they 'strike one as being exceptionally intelligent, which they probably owe to contact with the subtle and witty Persians'.³² They had adopted various Persian ways and customs. Their manners on ceremonious occasions were 'altogether rather Persian than Arab', and their dress, with the exception of the headdress was 'often Persian'. However the two elements, namely the Persians and Arabs, usually did not get on well. The Persians looked down upon the Arabs, while the latter distrusted and disliked the former.³³ But perhaps the most interesting point is that the Arabs of Khuzestan were predominantly Shiah.³⁴ Of the Sunni creed there were few, 'almost all of whom are to be found in the Hendian district and they are afraid to profess their faith openly'.³⁵ Persian was spoken in Muhammareh concurrently with Arabic. Elsewhere, outside the towns and especially in the south, Arabic was spoken³⁶ which contained a certain proportion of Persian words.

Ostensibly, and as expected, thanks to the emergence of favourable socio-economic conditions consequent upon the Karun opening, population was attracted both from within and without Iran to Khuzestan. The immigrations had two major and different sources. First, it was from adjacent provinces like Fars where, due to some scarcity,³⁷ depression of trade, or insecurity of property,³⁸ people emigrated. The second source was the Turkish territory³⁹ where, as Najm had correctly predicted some 10 years previously,⁴⁰ people left its Arab parts because, among other reasons, they wanted to avoid conscription.⁴¹ Some also came from other areas. For instance, in 1892 it was reported that about half of the population of Muhammareh, totalling approximately 3,500, were 'natives of Bahrain'.⁴² Later, their number grew even more. So by 1910 the 'vexed question' of their status had to be temporarily settled by an agreement with Khazal.⁴³ It appears that an important factor, which induced the Bahrainis to immigrate to Khuzestan was the revitalization of its economy. For example, in 1909, due to the emigration of Bahraini boat carpenters from Turkish territory, there was an increase in the local demand in plank wood into Muhammareh, which was described as 'now the principal place on the Shatt for building river boats' (canoes).⁴⁴

The growth in the population of the province was most noticeable in towns that were on the trade routes. The number of the inhabitants of the river ports of Muhammareh and Ahvaz (including Naseri), for example, increased respectively from about 3,000 and 420 in 1882, to around 12,000 and 3,000 in 1909 (see Table 7.2). This general growth was also observable in other agricultural

Table 7.3 Comparative table showing the population of Khuzestan and its major centres (1882 and 1890)

| Towns and districts | Sedentarized | | | | Tribal | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Families | | Persons | | Families | | Persons | |
| | 1882 | 1890 | 1882 ^a | 1890 ^b | 1882 | 1890 | 1882 | 1890 |
| <i>Dezful</i> | 2,800 ¹ | 5,000 | 20,000 | 25/30,000 | | 1,700 | | 8,500 ² |
| <i>Villages (Lors and Arabs)</i> | 300 | 1,500 | 2,100 ¹ | 7,500 ² | | | | |
| Total | 3,100 | 6,500 | 22,100 | 32,500 | | 1,700 | | 8,500 |
| <i>Shushtar</i> | 1,430 ¹ | 4,000 | 10,000 | 22,000 | | 2,100 | | 10,500 ² |
| Villages | 20 ¹ | 100 | 130 | 500 ² | | | | |
| Total | 1,450 | 4,100 | 10,130 | 22,500 | | 2,100 | | 10,500 |
| <i>Muhammareh</i> | 1,000 | 1,200 | 3,000 | 5,000 | | | | |
| Tribes: Bavi | | | | | 2,800 ¹ | 5,000 | 20,000 | 25,000 ² |
| Mohaysin | | | | | 3,000 ¹ | 8,000 | 21,000 | 40,000 ² |
| Feyliyah | | 500 | | 2,500 ² | | | | |
| Ahvaz | 60 | 200 | 420 ¹ | 1,000 ² | | | | |
| Naseri | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 1,060 | 1,900 | 3,420 | 8,500 | 5,800 | 13,000 | 41,000 | 65,000 |
| <i>Hoveizeh</i> | 600 | 1,300 | 4,200 ¹ | 5,000 | | | | |
| Tribes | | | | | | 3,600 | | 18,000 ² |
| Total | 600 | 1,300 | 4,200 | 5,000 | | 3,600 | | 18,000 |
| <i>Bani Torof</i> | | | | | | 1,300 | | 5,000 |
| Dependent tribes | | | | | | 5,000 | | 25,000 ² |
| Total | | | | | | 6,300 | | 30,000 |
| <i>Fallahiyeh</i> | 230 | 500 | 1,610 | 2,500 ² | | | | |
| Tribes | | | | | 4,000 ³ | 9,500 | 28,000 ¹ | 47,500 ² |
| Total | 230 | 500 | 1,610 | 2,500 | 4,000 | 9,500 | 28,000 | 47,500 |
| <i>Jarrahi</i> | 100 | | 700 ¹ | | | | | |
| <i>Hendiyan</i> | 100 | 750 | 700 ¹ | 3,750 ² | | | | |
| <i>Deh Molla</i> | | 700 | | 3,500 ² | | | | |
| <i>Mashur</i> | | 300 | | 1,500 ² | | | | |
| <i>Band-e-Qir</i> | 260 | | 1,820 ¹ | | | | | |
| <i>Shush</i> | | | | | 300 | | 2,100 ¹ | |
| <i>Ram Hormoz</i> | 200 | 700 | 1,400 ¹ | 3,500 ² | | | | |
| Adjacent villages | | 1,500 | | 7,500 ² | | | | |
| Delfan tribe (Lors) | | | | | 3,000 | | 21,000 ¹ | |
| Total | 660 | 3,950 | 4,620 | 19,750 | 3,300 | | 23,100 | |
| Total population of Khuzestan | 7,100 | 18,250 | 46,080 | 90,750 | 13,100 | 36,200 | 92,100 | 179,500 |
| % of total | 35.2 | 33.6 | 33.3 | 33.5 | 64.8 | 66.4 | 66.7 | 66.5 |

Sources: (a) Najm, *Safar Nameh*, 1882. (b) Qaragozlu, 1890.

Notes

- 1 Author's figure based on average number of persons per family calculated as seven for Najm's estimates.

2 Author's figure based on average number of persons per family calculated as five for Qaragozlu's estimates.

3 Men.
4 1 bazar.
5 1 large, many small.
6 2 large, 16 small.

Table 7.4 Population of Khuzestan and its districts and their revenue (1878–83)

| <i>District</i> | <i>Population (date not given)</i> | <i>Revenue (1878) tumans</i> | <i>Revenue (1883) tumans</i> |
|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Muhammarch | 45,000 | 33,000 | 46,000 |
| Fallahiyeh | 30,000 | 22,000 | 15,000 |
| Deh Molla | 9,000 | 12,000 | 12,000 |
| Hoveizeh | 33,000 | 21,000 | 23,000 |
| Shushtar | 22,000 | 22,000 | 23,000 |
| Dezful (with Kathir Arabs) | 30,000 | 30,000 | 40,000 |
| Ram Hormoz | 7,000 | 9,000 | 14,000 |
| Total | 176,000 | 149,000 | 173,000 |

Source: Saldana, 'Persian Gulf Gazetteer', 1903, p. 6: op. cit.

and commercial centres of the province with the exception of Dezful and Shushtar, which as will be discussed below, actually lost some of their population. Between 1882 and 1890 the number of the inhabitants of Hoveizeh almost doubled and that of Ram Hormoz grew from about 1,200 in 1882 to 10,000 in 1907 (Table 7.2). As for the total population of Khuzestan, only 2 years after the Karun opening it had risen to 54,500 families, or approximately 270,000 individuals (Table 7.2), which indicates this major trend that became even more pronounced in later stages. In 1908, after 18 years of almost uninterrupted residence in Khuzestan, McDouall stated that 'though impossible to estimate, the population of the province, still partly nomadic', was around 500,000.⁴⁵ This figure, the British Consul's detailed knowledge of the area notwithstanding, seems to be much on the high side and based perhaps on guesswork rather than computation. The figure of 350,000 seems to be a more reasonable estimate for this time. Nevertheless, McDouall's estimate is in line with the general trends of the demographic changes which were occurring in these parts of Iran, and the estimate for 1924, i.e. 407,000 (Table 7.2) bears this out.

Other chief trends, which are discernible in this development are urbanization and sedentarization, the latter being in fact a corollary to the rise in the urban population. Here, in connection with the process of sedentarization, a crucial point should be considered. Within the context of nineteenth-century Khuzestan, there were no clear distinctions between villages and towns which were mostly, with the exception of Dezful and Shushtar, large villages. Therefore, it is rather difficult to use, even in the case of the above towns, the term 'town dwellers' as against 'villagers', except in its broadest sense. With regard to this increase in urbanization, the growth of villages like Naseri and Ram Hormoz into towns, and also of towns like Muhammarch, have already been alluded to. The case of Muhammarch, however, can be of particular interest since this steady population expansion brought with it the usual social and economic malaise, such as housing shortages, price and rent increases,⁴⁶ and sanitation. These problems are usually attributable to a process of natural development which takes place without prior planning. The growth of Muhammarch

was so sudden and haphazard that by 1908 it was reported that the town 'is now overcrowded and a new suburb has been planned'.⁴⁷ This population increase followed the general expansion of commercial and agricultural activities. In 1891, the population of Muhammareh, about 2,300, was divided into

- 1 the merchants and tradesmen who were 'principally Persians'⁴⁸ from Shushtar, Dezful, Behbahan and Bushehr;⁴⁹
- 2 the cultivators who were 'all Arabs'.⁵⁰ But a little more than 15 years later its population, about 10,000, was described as 'almost entirely agricultural'.⁵¹

The principal agricultural produce of the town and its district was dates. Creeks dug for the irrigation of palm gardens formed an excellent breeding ground for mosquitoes and as the local inhabitant usually built his hut on the bank of some creek, the conditions for the propagation of malaria, etc., could not have been better. The water of the creek was also used for every possible domestic purpose, the creek being a depository for the household filth, and at the same time the source of the household supply of drinking water.⁵² Another point worth noting is that towards the end of the period the large scale growth of an industrial sector, namely that of oil, helped this process of urbanization. Thus, in 1911, on the island of Abadan a growing village of some 1,200 souls sprang up on what had formerly been 'a bare place'.⁵³ It should be remembered that at this period the oil industry, as a sector which had almost artificially been grafted onto the economy of Khuzestan, had still a limited impact on the area.

An interesting and somewhat puzzling aspect of this tendency towards urbanization was that most of the new urban centres emerged in the south and, over a period of time, the traditional population centres of the province moved southwards to the new centres of gravity. This is a phenomenon, which may require a detailed analysis but here it suffices to mention that the principal factor behind this trend was the prevalence of a fair degree of security in the south and lack of it in the north. This shift also stemmed from the fact that, consequent upon the Karun opening and the establishment of this trade route which circumvented the traditional commercial centres of Khuzestan, namely Dezful and Shushtar, the population was naturally attracted to the new centres of economic activities of the province which were in the south. Apart from the fact that the north remained a battleground between Sheykh Khazal and the Bakhtiyaris, the existence of a peculiar social structure in the major centres of the north, i.e. Dezful and Shushtar, contributed to a great extent to this lack of peace and security. The city of Shushtar, for instance, was divided into two large *mahalehs* (quarters) called Dastva and Karkar (or Gargar), which in turn were divided into 16 smaller quarters. The entire population of the town was 'pure' Shiah, half of whom were *seyyeds*. No followers of other religions or sects 'such as the Armenians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Babis' could be found there.⁵⁴ Dezful, too, had a similar social fabric. The city was divided into six *mahalehs*, each of which had traditionally been under the jurisdiction of a *rais* (chief) or *kadkhoda* (headman)

locally and collectively known as *aqavat* (Kasravi, *aghavat*), who were very powerful within their *mahalehs*.⁵⁵ This power was derived from several sources. First, the chiefs had access to the provincial administration and often held office either as tax-farmers or as the *nayeb-ul-hokumeh* (deputy governor) of the town. Second, the *aghavat* controlled, through their close alliance with the important elements of the *olama*,⁵⁶ such as the chief *mojtaheds*, the administration of justice⁵⁷ and were, therefore, often independent of the government; so much so that the populace hardly found it necessary to use the services of the governor-general and his administration. Furthermore, the residences of all important *mollahs* and *seyyeds* of Dezful, for example, were regarded as places of sanctuary or *bast*, which could not be violated by the governor and his officials. Most of the followers of the *aghavat* were armed and by virtue of their links with the *olama* committed atrocities against people's lives⁵⁸ and properties.⁵⁹ Inter-*mahaleh* feuds, under the guise of religion, between the Heydaris and Nematis⁶⁰ were common occurrences and usually exploited as excuses to pillage and loot the houses and bazars belonging to the opposite faction.⁶¹

This diffusion of power among various chiefs, coupled with the central government's inability to enforce law and order had resulted in such social instability and insecurity that the inhabitants, especially the rich, lived in constant fear for their lives and properties.⁶² With the Karun opening, and largely due to the firm and energetic regime of Nezam⁶³ who suppressed, along with the rebellious and recalcitrant elements, these *aghavat*, the conditions in the major centres of the province became more secure and conducive to economic activities. With Nezam's departure, however, insecurity and later chaos once again became the order of the day. In consequence, the tradesmen of Shushtar and Dezful emigrated to the more secure towns of the south which were at the same time gaining more and more in economic importance. Indeed, the emergence and development of Ahvaz has partly been attributed to this social phenomenon.⁶⁴ Later, in the 1920s, it was reported that Ahvaz, being immediately under the power of Khazal, differed from Dezful and Shushtar in that the 'religious heads have no control over the people . . . Any power that he (the *mojtahed*) might wield is kept in check through fear of the Shaikh'.⁶⁵ (It should also be remembered that this was a time during which the Iranian clergy was bracing itself to play a more prominent political role at the national level.) The opening of the Lynch road in the early-1900s further augmented this process. The great fluctuations in the number of the inhabitants of the two northern towns is, thus, better understood. The population of Shushtar, for instance, decreased from 14,000 in 1869 to between 6,000⁶⁶ and 10,000 in 1882. By 1890, after about two years of good government by Nezam, it again increased to 22,000. But with the disappearance of peace and security, which was more or less a feature of social life in northern Khuzestan for the succeeding two decades, by 1909 the population of the town had dropped to about 10,000. A similar trend is discernible with regard to the population of Dezful (see Table 7.2). The following quotation might shed some light on the subsequent social developments which had plagued these two towns. These events, no doubt, should be seen within their proper historical context,

which at this period was the ascendancy of the Bakhtiyaris at the national level and that of Khazal at the regional. 'The trouble', it was reported

which so constantly breaks out at Shushtar, the supposed centre of Government, owes much to the fact that the town is the headquarters of the borderland where the Shaikh and Bakhtiari meet. Each Mohalla (*sic*) possesses a feudal lordling whose condition, when at peace, is not one of the plenty while . . . when disturbances arise, he levies a contribution for the defence of his quarter which provides him with a living, thus the conditions are perfect for trouble.⁶⁷

The Bakhtiyaris partly accused the Sheykh, with some justification, of stirring up strife in order to fish in the troubled water and to further his ever-increasing influence in the north. Khazal, on the other hand suspected the Bakhtiyaris, while between the two the *aghavat* eked out an honest existence and the inhabitants suffered. The situation was not dissimilar to the medieval Italian towns. The *olama* too played a prominent role in these troubles and were always associated with one or other of the feuding factions.⁶⁸

The other principal trend in the demographic development of Khuzestan was the increase in the number of sedentarized, as opposed to tribal and nomadic, population. Here it should be pointed out that the rural population of Iran was split into two main groups, the settled and the semi-settled, between whom there was always an absence of understanding. The rural population, both settled and semi-settled, has acted in the past as a kind of population reservoir and there has always been an almost constant seepage into the towns from countryside and from the tribes into the villages and towns.⁶⁹ It appears, not surprisingly, that the same pattern was repeated in Khuzestan. If the statistics provided by the Iranian sources and given in the tables in this chapter are to be relied upon, it would be possible to make the following general remarks. The figure given for the total number of sedentarized population of the province in 1869, i.e. 58,000 (see Table 7.1), is probably the most accurate of all the statistics provided in that table, since it was the result of a house-to-house headcounting. The decrease, by 1882, in this figure to 46,000 could be explained by the consideration that in the interim period and almost immediately after this census was taken there was a series of prolonged famines in addition to 'the great famine of 1871'⁷⁰ all over the country. As a result of this some of the inhabitants of Khuzestan perished and a great many emigrated.⁷¹ It goes without saying that apart from the scarcities, the insecurity and the neglect of the central government were among the chief causes of these waves of emigration.

Towards the middle of his reign and no doubt due to the great diplomatic pressure Britain applied for the Karun route opening, Naser-ud-Din Shah began to show some interest in the development of Khuzestan.⁷² Hence the dispatch of the Najm mission and the appointment of an able governor-general, like Nezam, before the Karun opening. The enhanced security, coupled with new and favourable conditions, encouraged the agricultural activities of the

populace. Gordon's observations in 1891 tend strongly to support this proposition. For instance, the local officials told him that wheat cultivation had largely extended between Dezful and Shushtar, and one informed source stated the increase 'this season to be tenfold'. Describing the prosperity that the Karun opening had brought to the Arab population, he remarked that labour at one *qeran* (8d.) a day had in the space of a year put many in possession of sufficient capital to buy a pair of donkeys (which did most of the plough work in Khuzestan) and a plough, and seed-corn wherewith to cultivate 'government lands on their own account', besides leaving a small balance in hand with which to live without having to borrow at robbery rates on the coming crop. 'It was a sight to see', he recorded, 'the whole Arab population on the river banks hard at work taking advantage of the copious rain which had just fallen; every available animal fit for draught was yoked to the plough – horses, mules, bullocks, and donkeys, and even mares with their foals, following them up the furrowes'.⁷³

Further evidence in support of the above point could be found in the case of the Hoseyn Abad lands, near Shushtar. In 1909, these lands were the subject of a concession granted – but not exploited – for irrigation and colonization by the proprietor, Nezam, to one Abbas Aqa Taraverdieff who was a Russian subject. The ground was reported to be very fertile and suited for development but it was far inland and 'in the possession of Arab tribes who settled there, it is stated, many years ago, by express invitation of one of the Shahs of Persia, and look on the leased area as theirs by right'.⁷⁴ Here it has clearly been mentioned that the settling of the tribe had been effected through the encouragement, which the Shah, most probably Naser-ud-Din, had offered. Another indication is the increase in the agricultural population of Muhammareh. By the mid-1900s, its population was reported to be 'almost entirely agricultural'.⁷⁵ In 1890, Gordon was further informed that the then Sheykh of Muhammareh, Mazal, had 'lately planted about 30,000 (date) trees, and that the total late increase of young date palms on Persian soil amounts to nearly 60,000. I remember the Amin-us-Soltan mentioning at Tehran, last spring, the encouragement was being given by government to date palm cultivation . . . and what I heard at Mohammareh would seem to bear this out'. He has also observed that the land tax was light and the government treatment in the main liberal, and 'every encouragement appears to be given to the cultivators'.⁷⁶ As a consequence, in 1894 it was reported that, to avoid the Turkish conscription, most of the sons of the poor peasants who had settled in Fao had returned to Khuzestan and were 'now taking up the waste ground at Gusba and much land is now being reclaimed there'.⁷⁷ It has also been reported that in the late 1900s, 'every mile of desert' around Fallahiyeh had its own name and 'its own custom-ary (tribal) owner'.⁷⁸

Thus, a comparative study of the estimates provided by our Persian sources, which seem to be the most comprehensive and reliable ones, reveals that while between 1882–90 there was almost a twofold growth in the number of settled population – town dwellers and villagers – the ratio of sedentarized to tribal – 33.5 per cent to 66.5 per cent – remained unchanged. This is an indication of a

proportionate and parallel increase in the number of nomads (see Table 7.3); whereas during the same period the percentage of villagers, as opposed to town dwellers, grew from 5 per cent to 20 per cent of the total settled population. The figure for 1869 was about 11 per cent villagers and 89 per cent town dwellers (see Table 7.1). This fourfold increase from 1882 to 1890 in the number of farmers, who instead of residing in towns preferred to dwell in their own villages, is also in line with the general trends of the demographic developments detectable at this period. This phenomenon in itself presupposes the prevalence of a higher degree of security in the countryside. Furthermore, it also proves the initial success of the central government's development plans. It could be used as a method of cross-checking the scattered data on the immigration of the population of Khuzestan and to establish, with a fair degree of certainty, a clear pattern for the better understanding of the social developments of the region. The principal trends in the demographic changes of the province, therefore, could be summarized as follows:

- 1 an increase in the population,
- 2 greater sedentarization,
- 3 a tendency towards the emergence of large settled communities.

Economic changes

The flurry of economic activity, such as the construction of public works, which followed the Karun opening initiated a new era in the economic life of the province. During this period Khuzestan underwent some major economic changes, which were all connected with the enhancement of the commercial position of Britain in these areas. Thus, in this context the term 'development' can be used to convey this connotation as well as genuine economic progress. Bearing in mind this point, it becomes necessary to study economic changes and developments, though the latter term has a more precise meaning, which is associated with modern theories of development. Therefore, change and development are used in this study in an interchangeable fashion and in a broad sense. The developments of the province started off with the Karun concession and were intensified by the discovery of oil. Towards the end of the period under study, a combination of these two events effected a significant transformation in the economic system of Khuzestan. The establishment of better means of communication with other commercial centres, the setting up of branches of the Imperial Bank of Persia, etc., were only the outward manifestations of this gradual process.

Postal and telegraphic communications

In the late 1870s, Muhammareh was brought into telegraphic communication with the capital.⁷⁹ This was a development which seems to have been in line with the Shah's new-found interest in the affairs of Khuzestan. A Persian post

office was opened there in February 1891 and a British one the following year. A telegraph line had already been completed in 1890 from Muhammareh to Ahvaz, Dezful and Shushtar. Communication was also established between Ahvaz, which was fast becoming an important commercial centre of the province, and Bushehr which already was the most important port on the Persian Gulf.⁸⁰ A fortnightly Persian postal service, too, was organized in the next year between Muhammareh, Shushtar and Dezful,⁸¹ which later became a weekly service to Shushtar and the interior.⁸² By 1907, telegrams could be received in Latin characters at the Muhammareh and Naseri offices, and the postal service between these two river ports became twice instead of once a week each way,⁸³ and telegraphic communication between Ram Hormoz and other places was also established.⁸⁴ Later, Persian post offices were set up at Bozi, Mashur and Hendiyan.⁸⁵ The growth of the work of the British Post Office at Muhammareh is a good indication of this development (see Table 7.5). Along the oil pipeline, a telephone line was erected, connecting Ahvaz, Abadan, and Muhammareh, in 1911.⁸⁶ Another novelty was the introduction of electric power in connection with drilling in 1908.⁸⁷

Construction works

The Karun opening was followed by the construction of a series of public works, such as post and telegraph houses, barracks and guards houses, *caravansarais*, a tramway line, etc. There were also new shops, houses, and bazars in the agricultural and commercial centres of Khuzestan. Haj Aqa Mohammad, Moin-ut-Tojjar⁸⁸ was at this time 'the moving spirit of private enterprise' at Ahvaz⁸⁹ and elsewhere in Khuzestan. The governor-general, Nezam, played a similar role in the public sector. By 1890, the former had built at Naseri, which had been no more than a small Arab village, a 'commodious' *caravansarai* at the lower landing place, which contained a shopping centre occupied by shopkeepers, butcher, baker, coffee-house, carpenter, grocery, general goods stores, etc., 'all brought here and established in business by the Moin'.⁹⁰ At the time of Gordon's visit, Moin was also engaged in constructing a tramway line of 2,400 yards, which ran from the river bank at the *caravansarai* to the landing-place above the rapids, with a short connection into the *sarai*. It was completed in 1891. Other buildings such as storage rooms and shelter sheds were also being built at this time. Gordon saw Arabs and Persian soldiers carrying, with their donkeys, the construction materials.⁹¹ The founder of the river port of Naseri (Ahvaz) was Nezam who had built a telegraph house, government house, etc., there.⁹² He also founded the port of Saheb Qaraniyeh⁹³ at the 'Point' where the Karun joins the Shatt – a little below Muhammareh.⁹⁴ The latter place, too, contained a government house, a landing place, a public bath, stores, a telegraph office, and also a battery and an infantry barracks, which were all constructed by Nezam on the opposite side of the Karun.⁹⁵ Nezam also spent a 'large amount' in repairing the great bridge of Valerian, near Shushtar⁹⁶ and despite the intense heat personally supervised the work.⁹⁷ But the repaired

Table 7.5 Growth of the work of the British Post Office at Muhammareh (1910–13)

| | 1910 | 1911 | 1912 | 1913 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Registered letters received | 2,989 | 3,513 | 3,683 | 4,607 |
| Registered letters despatched | | | 830 | 1,749 |
| Parcels received | 1,718 | 3,034 | 3,202 | 4,607 |
| Parcels despatched | | | 195 | 295 |
| Money orders issued (rps) | 183,485 | 222,414 | 332,651 | 484,271 |

Source: Administration Report, Muhammareh, 1913: op. cit.

arches were once more swept away by another flood. By constructing a telegraph office and a guardhouse, he also laid the foundation of another river port at Band-e-Qir, where the rivers of Dez, Shatayt and Gar Gar converged, and called it Aminiye⁹⁸. Another guardhouse was built at Kwank, between Dezful and Shushtar,⁹⁹ and he renovated the old castle of Salasel at the latter place, again under his personal supervision, and made it the seat of government with barracks, stables, an arsenal, a bath, etc.¹⁰⁰ He did the same to the Kushk building, at Dezful, where he also dredged the *qanats*.¹⁰¹

Although the chief indications of this economic progress were to be found at the new commercial centres like Muhammareh and Naseri, the signs of progress and development could be observed in other parts, too. At Hoveizeh, for example, where Najm had not recorded the existence of shops, by 1890 there were about 80 and a *caravansarai*. Also a second mosque had been recently built.¹⁰² At the town of Fallahiye^h, 100 shops were made in 1889.¹⁰³ Two *caravansarais* were constructed at Muhammareh (see Table 7.3) where in 1890 there were about 30 shopkeepers who traded in piecegoods imported from Bombay.¹⁰⁴ By the following year the number of 'shops of all sorts in the town' had risen to 250.¹⁰⁵ The development of Muhammareh along with the growth of its population continued unhindered. In the mid-1900s the greater part of the town's bazars were rebuilt, and in order to satisfy the increasing demands of the populace, two general shops stocked from Bombay were opened, selling glass, enamelled ware and general articles.¹⁰⁶ By then the 'new regime', under Khazal's eldest son, Chasib was interesting itself in luxuries such as sanitation and 'other foreign ideas'. Khazal was also occupied in extending the town, and had begun the construction of a canal between the Shatt and the Karun.¹⁰⁷ By 1909, it was reported that the town was rapidly extending into the desert to provide quarters for immigrants; building in Muhammareh was still going on, but accommodation suitable for the large number of Europeans was very limited. The streets were lit by 30 kerosene oil lamps at night. A new creek, about two miles in length had been dug across the desert connecting with the Karun through the town, and with the Shatt. It was intended to build a new town on its banks. There were some general shops with European goods, such as British biscuits, for which there was some demand. British hosiery and other goods mostly of German or Austro-Hungarian make, such as cheap lamps, enamelled iron

bowls, plates and cups, glass and crockery, were sold.¹⁰⁸ The Sheykh also realized the importance of improving communications inside the town, and inevitably placed the arrangements for a road from the river to Muhammareh in the hands of the British Consul, who gave it to a British subject from Basra.¹⁰⁹ In 1910, Khazal founded a school there, which bore his name,¹¹⁰ and two years later the needs of the town for hospital, better roads, and more schools were being discussed.¹¹¹

Apart from being a commercial centre, Muhammareh gradually became, in a limited sense, an industrial area too. Most of the small boats used on the river, for instance, were built at Muhammareh of materials imported from Kuwait.¹¹² As a result of the immigration of the Bahraini boat makers, Muhammareh became 'the principal place on the Shatt-ul-Arab for building river boats'.¹¹³ Further down, at Breym on the Abadan island, progress was being made with a refinery, surrounded by four miles of expanded metal fencing ten feet high. A short railway was built and steel jetties were being erected.¹¹⁴ A town emerged there, and accommodation for the European staff of the company was constructed.¹¹⁵ It is not, therefore, surprising that as a result of these developments Muhammareh, which only 'a few years ago' had been 'an Arab village', had become 'the most flourishing and progressive port in the Gulf',¹¹⁶ which possessed 'the biggest European population in the (Persian) Gulf'.¹¹⁷

Also, the subsequent development and expansion of Naseri could be regarded as a further indication of this new economic vitality. There, the Naseri Company built a tramway for the transshipment of goods between the lower and upper river, and a bazar, which by 1894, contained about 40 retail shops supplying the neighbourhood for 'at least 30 miles around'. Some 22 houses had been built by traders who belonged to Baghdad, Shushtar, and Bushehr and were 'increasing in number'. By this time Naseri had become 'the centre of the wheat trade on the Karun'.¹¹⁸ As such, its progress and prosperity naturally depended to a large extent on the crop. In 1898, for instance, there were about 80 houses, 60 shops in two bazars, two *khans*, and about 500 inhabitants.¹¹⁹ Two years previously, below Naseri a town named Mozaffariyeh had emerged.¹²⁰ As early as 1890, Gordon had seen at this place 'a machine at work separating the grains, and the Arab owners waiting to take away the unsaleable barley, the wheat being bought for export by a European firm at Ahvaz who owned the machine'.¹²¹

Naturally, each crop failure would arrest this expansion. In 1900, for example, it was said that many of the shops of Naseri 'which promised to become a flourishing centre of retail trade', had been closed.¹²² So, ostensibly in order to compensate for this, two wool presses had been erected in 1896,¹²³ which would prepare wool for export. This to some extent helped the town in 1900.¹²⁴ Naseri's growth, a few bad harvests notwithstanding, continued well into the twentieth century,¹²⁵ and the opening of the Lynch road in the early-1900s augmented this process. The town became a principal commercial centre not only for the regional trade but also for the transit commerce. Thus, towards the end of the period, it was reported that European businessmen were centred at

Ahvaz (Naseri) and Iranian merchants were usually at Shushtar, 'while both classes are to some extent represented at Mohammerah'.¹²⁶ Though the bulk of cargo went from Ahvaz to Esfahan, some goods forwarded by local merchants generally went from Shushtar.¹²⁷ So, from a small Arab village, by the end of the period, Naseri had developed into a town with about 3,000 inhabitants. It was also the centre of the grain trade of Khuzestan as well as a gate for Esfahan imports and exports from up-country to Europe.¹²⁸ Naseri, like Muhammareh, had a branch of the Imperial Bank.¹²⁹

Another centre whose development was noticeable was the town of Ram Hormoz. Its population grew from a mere 200 families (1,400 inhabitants) in 1882 to about 3,500 souls in 1890, and during the next one-and-a-half decades it rose to 10,000 (see Table 7.2). The town's importance as a market increased in a similar fashion. The reason for this commercial importance was that Ram Hormoz was supplied from the seaport of Bozi, with water carriage up the Jarrahi River, to within two stages of the town, by small boats. Shopkeepers at Naseri, therefore, found that they could get goods cheaper there than from Muhammareh, especially those on which there was a high rate of duty.¹³⁰

The oil industry and its effect on the course of developments

Social and economic changes were further intensified by the discovery of oil in the region. Thus, perhaps it could justifiably be said that after the opening of the Karun the single event with the greatest impact on the political and economic structure of the entire region came at the end of the period with the oil discovery. A detailed study of this industry and its subsequent developments does not concern us here. However, we can briefly refer to it in order to have a more complete picture of all the changes which in the course of two decades occurred in South-West Persia.

Although the original concession for oil exploration was granted to D'Arcy in 1901, oil was eventually struck at Meydan-e Manaftun, in the Bakhtiyari territory, on 26 May 1908.¹³¹ With hindsight, this day should probably be regarded as the most important day in the history of modern Iran since it influenced the course of the subsequent developments of not only the region but also the whole country. Shortly afterwards Britain, under the guise of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company Ltd., which despite its misleading name was entirely British, took over D'Arcy's concession. The company's initial capital was £2,000,000 and it was under a 'powerful directorate and with the close support of the Burmah Oil Co.'¹³² This event, which further strengthened Britain's hold on Khuzestan and her position in the southern parts of Iran, should be studied in the light of that power's very close and intimate links with Khazal, whose attitude to British interests had left 'nothing to be desired'. Khazal's agents, too, followed his example, a development which, the British thought 'shows how fully the Shaikh and his people realize what they owe to the steadfast friendship of the British government'.¹³³ The related enterprises, such as the laying of pipelines, the

setting up of the refinery at Breyim, etc., injected more vigour and energy into the economy of the region. In 1910, for instance, the import trade of Khuzestan, mostly because of drilling equipment for the Oil Company, exceeded all previous records and one of the beneficiaries were Messrs Lynch Bros whose hands were reportedly 'quite full'.¹³⁴ Oil reached the Abadan refinery on 25 October 1911,¹³⁵ and shortly after, refined products such as kerosene, benzine, and fuel oil were placed in small quantities on the local market.¹³⁶ The first bulk shipment was made in May 1912 and continued throughout the year.¹³⁷ The quantity of various grades of refined oils exported in 1913 reached a total of 163,000 tons, over and above which heavy consignments of cased oil were despatched for the local market.¹³⁸

In 1911, the Company entered into negotiations with the Bakhtiyari chiefs for the acquisition of the land comprising the oilfields at Masjed Soleyman. It paid them a sum of £22,000 for the 6,131 acres of land and thereby acquired complete rights over this tract of country for the period of the Company's concession (60 years). The *khans* took no steps to provide other land for the displaced tenants who formerly cultivated these lands.¹³⁹ In another move of this nature, early in 1913 the British Consul, ostensibly without reference to the central government, approached Khazal with a view to obtaining permission for drilling operations at Ahvaz. An agreement was reached by which Khazal agreed to accept a royalty of 3 per cent on the net profits of oil found within its limits. Bedazzled by the prospect of such an eldorado, the sheykh even agreed to forego 1 per cent of the above 3 per cent in order to encourage the Company to drill in other parts of *his*¹⁴⁰ country.¹⁴¹ The British government, jealously guarding its interests, strongly resisted the efforts of the Shell Company to gain a share, and thus a foothold, in the future oil bonanza of the Persian Gulf. Britain viewed 'with considerable anxiety' the prospect that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company which was totally British might be 'forced by commercial pressure to come to terms with . . . Shell . . . which is under foreign control, a consideration which could only result in the increase of foreign interest in the Persian Gulf, and a considerable enhancement of the price of oil, a matter of much concern to the British Admiralty'.¹⁴² The question was closely bound with the prospects of the oil concession in Mesopotamia. Further developments in this regard are, of course, beyond the scope of the present study. It suffices to mention that, by the end of the period there were some 30 wells drilled or drilling in the Bakhtiyari oilfields,¹⁴³ and that from then on the Company, with the backing of the British government, went from strength to strength. Although the oilfields were on the fringe of the Bakhtiyari country and outside the limits of Khuzestan, the oil industry also affected the economy of the province. The pipeline ran throughout Khuzestan's whole length until it reached the Abadan refinery, and provided employment for 'thousands of men and additional financial interests for the shaikhs' whose duty was to protect it.¹⁴⁴

Bank

The Imperial Bank of Persia, which had been established in Iran around the same time as the Karun was thrown open, was the other organ through which Britain managed to gain influence in the region. The role of the Bank in the case of Nezam's estates in south Iran¹⁴⁵ bears this out. The setting up of its branches in Khuzestan, nevertheless, was an indication of the economic progress of the region. The bank question was linked with the oil enterprise since it came up almost immediately after the oil discovery. The financial affairs of the Syndicate, it was found, were considerable and promised to increase. In addition, the only European rivals of the Lynch Company in Khuzestan, Messrs Ter Meulen and Gratama, had found it very difficult or 'even impossible' to obtain fair treatment from the Bushehr branch of the Imperial Bank, and Messrs Lynch Bros themselves had also 'entirely given up' dealing with that branch of the bank. There was also the possibility of the setting up of a German bank.¹⁴⁶ Thus, in September 1909, the bank decided to open a branch in Muhammareh, and the business was formally commenced on the first day of January 1910.¹⁴⁷ This was a development that even in the opinion of the British officials was 'no doubt of considerable value to British commercial interests'.¹⁴⁸ The Muhammareh branch did a good business in its first year of existence and fulfilled 'a real need of the commercial community'.¹⁴⁹ Not surprisingly, a second branch was opened at Ahvaz at the beginning of the following year in the 'confident expectation' of handling, among other business, the Customs receipts,¹⁵⁰ which would make the business worthwhile. This arrangement was duly made in March 1911. The Customs, it might be useful to know, had already been hypothecated for the payment of British dues.¹⁵¹ In the next few years the bank's business considerably increased, and the turnover for 1912 exceeded £250,000.¹⁵²

Number of Europeans

The steady growth of the expatriate community in Khuzestan, almost all of them British, could be regarded as another sign of the change which the region underwent. It is also, as British officials put it, 'the best indication of the progress of British industry in the province'.¹⁵³ In 1906-7 the total number of British subjects, Europeans and Indians, in Khuzestan was 49, of whom only 19 were European, while by 1911 the number of the latter group had risen to 78. Two years later, in Muhammareh alone (including Abadan) there were about 60 European and 1,000 Indian British subjects (see Table 7.6). It should be noted that the majority were somehow connected with the oil industry, which apart from the figures given above, by 1911 also employed some 30 Chinese and 1,900 Persians and Turks.¹⁵⁴ The figures given here for the Europeans in Khuzestan do not include government servants or quarantine staff.¹⁵⁵ Thus, by the end of this era Muhammareh reportedly possessed the biggest European population in the Persian Gulf,¹⁵⁶ and Khuzestan had the largest British colony

Table 7.6 The number of British subjects in Khuzestan (1906–13)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>British and Colonial</i> | <i>British Indians</i> | <i>Bahrainis</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1906–7 ^a | 19 | 30 | — | 49 | (1) |
| 1907–8 ^b | 17 | 30 | — | 47 | |
| 1908 ^c | (na) | 30 | — | 30 | |
| 1909 ^c | (na) | 77 | — | 77 | |
| 1910 ^c | 76 ¹ | 368 | 6 | 450 | (2) |
| 1911 ^d | 78 ¹ | 614 | — | 692 | |
| 1913 ^{2, e} | 60 ¹ | 1,000 | — | 1,060 | |

Sources: (a) McDouall, 21 March 1907: A&P, 1907 xci. (b) McDouall, 21 March 1908: A&P, 1908, cxiv. (c) Administration Reports, 1910: Administration Reports Persian Gulf, 1909–13. (d) Administration Reports, 1911: *ibid.* (e) Administration Reports, 1913: *ibid.*

Notes

1 European British.

2 Muhammareh and Abadan.

Remarks

(1) The majority were employed by the Concession Syndicate, who were boring for petroleum;

(2) By this time Muhammareh possessed the largest European population in the Persian Gulf.

anywhere in Iran. In order to satisfy the needs of this ever-growing community, Khazal presented a plot of land at Ahvaz for a Christian cemetery.¹⁵⁷

Wages and prices

All these developments had a great impact on the economy of Khuzestan. The increase in the rate of rents, prices, and wages is but one indication of this. In 1882, for example, the price of an average house in Muhammareh was about 100–200 tumans and the rent for the entire bazar of the town, plus two adjacent *timchehs* (arcades) was only 250 tumans a month,¹⁵⁸ while the value of a single date tree in Khuzestan was about 20–40 tumans.¹⁵⁹ By contrast, and according to the same source, in Basra the price of a decent house was about 100 times more.¹⁶⁰ After the Karun opening, the agents of the Lynch Co. were charged ‘about £30 (almost 100 tumans) a month rent for a small mat hut’ by the Naseri Co. at Ahvaz.¹⁶¹ This example alone could be taken as an indication of the phenomenal rise in rents and prices. Already by 1892, it was reported that the price and rent of shops and houses at Muhammareh had gone up by as much as 50 per cent,¹⁶² and this was obviously due to the growth of its population. Considering that the rule of supply and demand which prevailed had forced up the rents and prices at Muhammareh and Ahvaz, it would be logical to conclude that

- 1 this process was not confined to these two towns, but was common in all economic centres of the area and

- 2 bearing in mind the oft-mentioned housing shortages at places like Muhammareh and Naseri,¹⁶³ it becomes quite clear that this process continued right through to the very end of the period under study.

The advent of the oil industry, if anything, accelerated and intensified it. The rise in the wages tends to bear this out. The wage of a labourer in about 25 years grew by 400 per cent. Between 1882–91, the wage of a labourer increased from half a *qeran* a day¹⁶⁴ to one *qeran* (8d).¹⁶⁵ By 1906, the rate of wages for labourers discharging cargo at Muhammareh was generally 2 *qerans* (9½d) for day work and double for night work.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, there were often complaints against the high rates of labour and rents.¹⁶⁷ We now know of at least one concession, although minor – i.e. the monopoly for the digging and export of liquorice growing in Khuzestan, granted by Khazal to a London-registered company for an annual rent of £400 – which had to be abandoned because the concessionaires were ‘unable to get the diggers at reasonable rates’.¹⁶⁸ The rise in wages was, in fact, so enormous that in 1909 it was remarked: ‘conditions of life and wages’ in Khuzestan had made it ‘difficult to produce oil so cheaply as elsewhere’; a fact which was made even worse by the lack of a local market for ‘the almost unexportable oils’.¹⁶⁹

Apart from the usual forces which were at work in the market, one important reason behind this steep rise in the wages is to be found in the most crucial cause of the province’s lack of development, namely the sparseness of Khuzestan’s population. For instance, immediately after the Karun opening it was reported that, as no Arab or other labourers were found at Muhammareh, the construction of the government house at Saheb Qaraniyeh had to be carried out by soldiers.¹⁷⁰ Around the same time, Gordon saw the men from the Fari-dan Regiment at Ahvaz with their donkeys (almost every Persian infantry soldier had a donkey) working ‘in the building work now going on’. They had also found ‘remunerative employment’ in transporting goods between the steamers’ landing place and above the Ahvaz rapids, which was done quickly and comparatively cheaply. The author also observed that the Arabs had come ‘readily to work (as labourers) at Ahvaz’ but ‘very few were so engaged’, as heavy rain having fallen, ‘all were busy with the winter sowing’.¹⁷¹ Hence the presence of the Persian soldiers on the scene as labourers. It is also an indication that, owing to the manpower shortage, any person who could offer his work on the labour market was needed. The following example further illustrates the degree of inelasticity which at this time existed in the labour market of Khuzestan, a phenomenon which must have contributed to the quadrupling of wages. In the summer of 1906, Razoki, an Armenian agent of a Basra company, came to Ahvaz. He had been entrusted with £20,000 capital, which the British Vice-Consul claimed, he threw about ‘in the most reckless way’. His operations ‘at once sent up the rates of labour and rents, already too high and he entirely ruined the wheat trade which in view of an excellent harvest should have been very profitable’.¹⁷² This example shows the existing situation with regard to labour and housing and indicates the existence of an almost rigid

supply in both areas. It also illustrates the limitations of the Naseri market, where the spending of the above sum, over a period of time, had such abrupt and drastic effects on the market.

The general increase in wages and prices in Khuzestan must be studied against the background of the *qeran's* fluctuations against other currencies, especially sterling. As regards the 'general rise in prices, throughout southern Persia',¹⁷³ which occurred just before the First World War, two sets of different but interrelated factors could be discerned. First, there were the local or regional causes, such as the failure of the rains which usually resulted in scarcity in foodstuffs,¹⁷⁴ that sometimes would send the prices '40 per cent above normal'.¹⁷⁵ This type of temporary price rise was not, however, abnormal since it was fairly common throughout Iran. Experience had shown that it would be a short-term problem and a good year would compensate for the bad one, in consequence of which prices would normally fall back to the pre-famine levels or thereabouts. Second, during the few years preceding the War, there were price rises in cereals at an international level. For example it was reported that the prices of cereals had risen 'considerably' on the London market, which was a factor that had contributed to this rise in Khuzestan, since by the end of the period the prices in south Persia generally responded 'sympathetically' to the London prices.¹⁷⁶ This was a long-term phenomenon which was not affected by local factors, but affected the local prices. It was also the culmination of a process which in the south had begun in the late 1880s.¹⁷⁷ Over the period, it resulted in the partial integration of the province's market and economy into the international system.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is established that during the period under study significant social and economic developments occurred which changed the face, as well as the social fabric of the province. These developments also affected the life of the region as a whole. One of the main social effects was the immigration of population from areas within and without Iran into the province, as a result of which the total population increased steadily. The other social phenomenon of note was the emergence of new urban and commercial centres. These were large settled communities, which were created by the growth of agricultural and commercial activities. Thus, Khuzestan, which on the eve of the Karun opening was predominantly nomadic – 67 per cent of the total population – by 1924 was described as 'essentially an agricultural country'.¹⁷⁸ As a result of this, there was a greater degree of prosperity in the region, and a large number of people found employment. Prices and rents went up, so did wages which rose four and sometimes eight times in a relatively short time. The reason for this, apart from the fact that a large segment of the population took to agriculture, was an expansion in the trade of the province. Coupled with other economic activities such as the works connected with the oil industry, these developments created new opportunities and more income for the populace. At the same time, better means of

communication, such as the telegraph line and the Lynch road, put the province within easy reach of other commercial centres of Iran. These were some of the developments which came about in connection with the exploitation of the Karun concession. The process of development was further augmented by the discovery of oil. Again, like the Karun navigation which in effect was only beneficial to Britain, its total control of the Oil Company meant further enhancement of the political and economic position of Britain in this region. It also ensured a very prominent role in the subsequent developments of the region. Enterprises connected with the oil industry, such as the bank, also assisted this process of opening-up of the region. Perhaps a good indication of this was the presence of a relatively large number of Britons in South-West Persia.

8 Consolidation of Britain's influence in Khuzestan

Political: Britain and the emergence of large estates in Khuzestan

This obstructive policy (of Persia over the Karun navigation) must be attributed to the suspicion the Persians have always been labouring under against foreigners, especially the British and Russians, of their having in view making political capital out of their commercial enterprises.¹

It is frequently difficult to separate politics and commerce . . . since each reacts on the other . . . More often . . . our political intervention follows on our commercial necessities, indeed our very interest may be due to our commercial undertakings.²

. . . in the future our commercial position in the (Persian) Gulf, upon which our political position depends, will be regulated largely by the position which we occupy in Mohammareh and Arabistan (i.e. Khuzestan) where our chief interests are now centred.³

The British penetration of South-West Persia has been discussed in the previous chapters. In this chapter we study the mechanisms through which that power managed to consolidate and expand its influence in this region. This penetration was achieved through various methods and means, at two different but interrelated and complementary levels, viz., political and economic. Although at the time of the Karun opening Britain's influence in the region was quite considerable, this event gave an exaggerated pace and extra momentum to this dual opening-up. Obviously, any furtherance of Britain's economic role in the area would also result in the enhancement of its political position and vice versa. It is usually difficult to distinguish between the two. Nevertheless, such a distinction, even if somewhat arbitrary like the case under review here, would render the study of the question easier. The British themselves seem to have been fully aware of the intimate nature of this dual goal of achieving a politico-economic supremacy in Khuzestan and South-West Iran. This, thanks to their shrewd policies and also their unassailable position in the Persian Gulf, they gradually achieved. Thus, the present chapter will be divided into two sections. First, an attempt will be made to show the enhancement of Britain's political

role by studying the emergence of large estates in Khuzestan. Then, through the study of the navigation on the Karun and related events, the furtherance of Britain's economic interests will be discussed. Both of these, it should be remembered, were direct results of the Karun opening and the ensuing socio-political developments. Through careful cultivation of the friendship of local notables, like Khazal and the Khans; by sheer political opportunism, as in the case of Nezam; and finally through plain intimidation, as was the case with Moin, Britain succeeded in achieving its aims. However, as was the pattern elsewhere in the world, towards the close of the period under study, i.e. in 1913, Germany began to seriously challenge Britain's supremacy in South-West Persian and the Persian Gulf. The War though changed the course of these developments.

General

The emergence of large estates in Khuzestan was another development of paramount importance, which could be directly attributed to the Karun opening. Up to the late 1880s, almost the entire land of Khuzestan was the property of the state or *khaleseh*. Later on, however, the grant or sale on easy terms of the *khaleseh* lands became the official policy. It seems that this process, which continued during the feeble reign of Mozaffar-ud-Din Shah, eventually resulted in the sale of 'a large portion of the Crown Lands' to influential persons 'at nominal prices'.⁴ The chief beneficiary, no doubt, was none other than Khazal to whom almost all the *khaleseh* lands of southern Khuzestan were given, and later he became 'the most powerful person in Khuzestan with some sympathizers at the Imperial Court'.⁵ The Sheykh's influence and wealth on the other side of the frontier, too, were immense. Khazal's estates in Turkey were so extensive that his tenants on Turkish soil amounted 'to 30,000 (families or individuals?)'.⁶ After the murder of his brother, Mazal, the Ottoman government tried to seize all his landed property on grounds that he was a Turkish subject and Khazal, being a Persian subject, could not inherit it.⁷ It was to guard against such an eventuality that the latter reportedly registered his eldest son as a Turkish subject.⁸ To show the extent of Khazal's political power, which was obviously needed for the protection of his vast estates, it suffices to quote from the circular telegram addressed in 1910 by the government of Young Turks to their local officials. It read:

It has been ascertained . . . that . . . Khaz'al . . . keeps agents . . . under various names, for strengthening his influence . . . and has recourse to various means and intrigues in order to get persons attached to him as mukhtars . . . You are . . . definitely instructed to remove all mukhtars who may be dependent on . . . Khaz'al and replace them by honest, patriotic person, and to allow him no means or possibility of exercising his influence.⁹

Around this time the value of the 'personal property' which Khazal had inherited from his father on the Turkish bank of the Shatt was 'probably not less than

250,000L'.¹⁰ It is to be noted that, perhaps owing to his political influence, these estates were exempt from taxation. This conclusion is drawn from the text of the 1914 assurances in which Britain guaranteed that Khazal's gardens on the Turkish side 'shall remain in full possession of' Khazal and his heirs, 'and immune from taxation'.¹¹

His estates on the Persian side were even more extensive. By 1910, Khazal was described as 'the largest landowner' in Khuzestan owning 'the largest portion of the date groves in his territory', and the British officials rightly feared that it would be in this capacity that he was 'most likely to excite the dislike and disapprobation of his subjects'.¹² Khazal's Turkish business was managed by an Arab living in Basra, Mirza Hamzeh, while all his affairs in Iran were transacted by his so-called 'secretary', Haji Rais.¹³ Through the implementation of a shrewd policy, Khazal also managed to extend his control over the rest of Khuzestan. Here the crucial question must be: how was it possible for Khazal to amass so much power and wealth in such a relatively short period? The answer lies in the implementation of a distorted version of the government's land policy, which was contradictory to the principles of the original one. Other contributing factors in this process were the constant support and protection which Khazal received from Britain; his cunning; and finally the chaos, insecurity, and lack of control by central government prevalent after the Revolution.

The sale of *khaleseh* lands had long been advocated as the best means of developing Khuzestan. However, it was also stressed that such land should only be sold to cultivators of the soil who could pay for it in instalments. Instead, in most cases the government opted for a policy of selling land in large parcels. The purchase price was to be in cash and in one payment, a method which automatically precluded the actual cultivators from participating in the sale. Consequently, in general, those who had ready access to the government and the required capital bought the *khaleseh* lands. So, the purchasers were generally outsiders. The prime beneficiaries were Nezam, the Bakhtiyari Khans, and finally Moin who had extensive dealings in Khuzestan.¹⁴ Moin and his brother, Malek-ut-Tojjar 'instigated by foreigners', as Qaragozlu put it, even wanted to buy the entire island of Abadan but the Shah rejected the offer. Qaragozlu advised the government never to transfer the ownership of Abadan since, as he rightly foresaw, 'all the existence and (future) development of Muhammareh depends on this island'.¹⁵ This warning, however, went unheeded.

There were also other Persian 'outsiders', such as Nasr Ullah Khan, Moshir ud-Dowleh, who benefited from this policy. For instance, by the 1900s, in partnership with Nezam, Moshir owned Mashur and other tracts and lands in Jarrahi.¹⁶ Prior to the 1903 *farmans*, having himself been twice the province's governor-general (and his nephew once in the mid-1900s), Nezam was the largest single buyer of land in Khuzestan. By 1896, his holdings included Hoseyn Abad (near Dezful), Kut-e Nahr Hashem (in Hoveizeh), land on the east bank of the Karun, land in the Jarrahi district, and Shawbah (on the Dez river). The purchase price was said to be four times the annual income which the state derived from the lands.¹⁷ Thus, in 1913 it was reported that all the

lands covered by the projected Muhammareh-Khorram Abad railway from Muhammareh 'as far as Dizful, which do not actually belong to the Shaikh (Khazal) are the property of the (second) Nizam and his co-heirs though managed by the Shaikh'.¹⁸ By this time the 'Bin Moallah lands' (near Shush), which probably represented a typical fashion of landholding in northern Khuzestan, were owned in the proportions shown by the following persons: Nezam, one *dang*,¹⁹ Ali Mardan Khan-e-Feyli (of the Feyli Lor tribes), one *dang*, Seyyed Ahmad al-Musavi, two *dangs*, and Bakhtiyaris (Sardar Jang), two *dangs*. The part owners other than Nezam and Sardar Jang were described as 'two local potentates and landowners living near Shush'.²⁰ These lands lay immediately to the north of Hoseyn Abad estate which was the property of Nezam, the approximate southern limits of whose estates started from Sabah (30 miles north of Muhammareh). So, apart from Musavi, the other part-owners were a former governor-general of the province and two tribal chiefs. This indicates two different yet parallel developments which changed the nature of land tenure in Khuzestan. First, it shows the extent to which large landowners, instead of small-holders, had been allowed to emerge. Second, it indicates the fast expansion of Khazal's political and economic power. Both developments were the result of the Karun opening.

Khazal's ascendancy

Khazal became the Sheykh of Muhammareh in June 1897, after his brother Mazal was assassinated while landing from his boat at Feyliyah. The actual murderers were reportedly 'three negroes'²¹ but there was little doubt that there had been 'a conspiracy in which all the heads of the Mohaysin and most of his (i.e. Mazal's) own relatives' were engaged. Khazal was 'generally suspected of having been in the conspiracy' though McDouall thought it unlikely.²² Hardinge, however, referred to Khazal as the main instigator,²³ and later in a memo, it was clearly mentioned that he had 'murdered his brother'.²⁴ Mazal had lived in fear 'day and night', and always had a steamer ready outside his residence on the Shatt, just in case.²⁵ Mazal's fear would seem more understandable when it is considered that he was the second son of Jabir. The eldest, Mohammad, never accepted this. Mazal had also deprived his brothers, Mohammad and Khazal, from their shares in the vast fortunes – estates and cash money – of their father. This was one of the reasons for Mohammad's complaint to Tehran. In addition to these, Mazal was also described as 'a sincere servant' of the Persian state,²⁶ and this would not have endeared him either to the rest of the Arab chiefs or Britain, whose acquiescence in the assassination cannot be entirely ruled out.

For obvious reasons there is no accessible evidence to substantiate Britain's direct involvement in this affair. It is, however, known that in an interview with McDouall two years before Mazal's assassination, Khazal had promised 'to assist British trade, should he ever be in a position to do so'.²⁷ Only a few days after his brother's murder, Khazal reminded McDouall, in 'a confidential interview', that he was 'now prepared to make good his words', and that he wished

to inform the British government that he was 'secretly their friend'. He also said that it was his desire to serve Britain, and even if he were not 'accepted as their servant', he would still render them service in the hope of one day profiting thereby. McDouall, accordingly, advised that he should be supported especially as the Consul understood that the fierce 'opposition (of Mazal) to (Britain's) Karun trade will cease under his rule'. It is also interesting that the assassination of Mazal was effected a year after that of Naser-ud-Din Shah's, and almost coincided with the removal, under great pressure from Britain, of Nezam from the province. Under the deceased Shah, Khazal would not have dared to do such a thing.

Khazal duly sent his right-hand man, Haji Rais, to Tehran to elicit official recognition. In the meantime the British Chargé d' Affaires asked Khazal to tell Haji Rais 'to call at the (British) Legation as soon as possible'. The Legation, it was said, 'will do all they can to protect the Shaikh's interests, and the Shaikh should in return do all he can to further British interests now and in the future'.²⁸ The Sheykh, strangely enough, informed McDouall that he did not 'trust his secretary . . . sufficiently to write this to him'.²⁹ In addition to observance of secrecy, an explanation of Khazal's initial distrust of his secretary might lie in the fact that the latter had made himself 'indispensable' to Mazal and 'was implicated in the plot resulting in his murder'.³⁰ Nevertheless, Haji Rais was instructed to 'place himself in close relations' with the British Legation 'with a view to mutual advantage'.³¹ Khazal also withdrew, as promised before, a steamer which had been running on the lower Karun³² by his predecessor in opposition to the British firm of Lynch.³³ It is irrelevant whether Britain was actually involved in the plot or not. The fact is that as it turned out, it was that power which reaped immense benefits from the elimination of a man who had 'always opposed British interests',³⁴ and his replacement by another sheykh who had repeatedly expressed his desire to be Britain's sincere servant. As the subsequent developments showed, in Khazal Britain found a most trustworthy servant in the entire region of the Persian Gulf. For instance, less than a year after his 'tribal election' and its confirmation by the Persian government, the British officials praised Khazal for his able government and the fact that he had 'earned the good opinion of British firms' trading to Muhammareh, who said that their interests 'are better looked after now' than they were in the days of Mazal.³⁵

At the same time Khazal lost no time in fostering, by whatever means possible, these friendly feelings on the part of the British government. For example, when in 1899 the British Minister, Durand, toured the region, Khazal informed him that he was 'very anxious' for Britain's support and pressed him for 'some assurance' that Britain would uphold 'his independence' in case of a break up of Persia which Khazal regarded as imminent. However, the Sheykh was cautious enough, for fear of 'treachery on the part of the Persians', as Durand put it, and of 'exciting their suspicion', not to see the British Minister personally. But the irony was that Khazal's own representative, who was also his nephew was afraid of his uncle's treachery. 'It is characteristic of these people', Durand wrote scornfully, 'that his (i.e. the nephew's) one request to me was for a recommenda-

tion to his uncle'. As the natural heir to the chiefship he 'greatly feared' that he might be given 'a cup of (poisonous) coffee' unless Khazal knew that the nephew had the goodwill of the British government.³⁶

In the 1900s (December 1902, December 1903, and December 1908)³⁷ Khazal received written assurances, the first two from the Minister at Tehran, Hardinge, and the last one from the Resident in the Persian Gulf, Cox, that Britain would see that his rights were respected by the Persian government. In 1899 he had already received verbal assurances from the then Resident, Meade.³⁸ On 15 October 1910, along with the assurances,³⁹ Khazal was made an Honorary Knight Commander of the Indian Empire,⁴⁰ which 'greatly pleased' him and strengthened his position⁴¹ *vis-à-vis* the central government and other tribal chiefs. His esteem and notoriety grew even further by the presentation to him in June 1913 of a picture of King George V.⁴² He had already received the Royal Victoria Medal.⁴³ Furthermore, in yet another letter from the Resident the assurances were extended also to Khazal's successors,⁴⁴ and in December 1917 he received the title and insignia of K.C.I.E.⁴⁵ The heaping of all these titles and medals on Khazal was not confined to the British government alone. The meteoric rise of Khazal's star was so visible and impressive that in 1903 even the Russians thought it necessary to send their consul-general all the way from Bushehr to present the Sheykh with the Russian Order of St Stanislas.⁴⁶

At the same time, in August 1902, the Persian government gave him the 'exalted rank and title' of Sardar Arfa and a jewelled sword. His eldest son, Chasib, a boy of just 11 at the time, was also decorated and given the grand title of Nosrat-ul-Molk.⁴⁷ By 1913 Chasib, who at the age of 22 was described by a British official as 'weak, childish in character, broken in health by venereal disease (syphilis),⁴⁸ a spendthrift and incompetent', had become Khazal's successor,⁴⁹ indicating that the unfortunate nephew of Khazal had probably been forced to take his uncle's famous 'cup of coffee'. The policy pursued by Britain in regard to Khazal, as far as they themselves could judge, was 'proving eminently successful',⁵⁰ and the Sheykh showed himself 'as ever, willing to meet' all their wishes.⁵¹ The power of the Muhammareh sheykhdom, which had grown under Jabir and Mazal, greatly increased under Khazal,⁵² and the British support, honours, and decorations heaped upon him immensely assisted him in this. It should also be added that in its early assurances, Britain always stressed, at least superficially, Khazal's 'obligations towards the Persian government'.⁵³ This was deemed necessary in order to control Khazal's secessionist tendencies. However, in 1910, after the conferring upon him of the K.C.I.E., there appeared clear indications that Britain viewed him as more than a mere Persian subject. From that date on, in their assurances and communications they always referred to him as the 'Shaikh of Mohammareh and *Dependencies*', the word italicized having been added to the previous title.⁵⁴ Also, after this date, for the first time Haji Rais was referred to as Khazal's 'Prime Minister',⁵⁵ the implication being quite obvious. At this point the Persian government realized, rather belatedly, what was happening in Khuzestan. The Persian Minister for Foreign

Affairs, therefore, asked the British Minister, Barclay, 'decidedly' whether there was any truth in the information which had reached him that Khazal was under British protection. Barclay replied, deceptively that Khazal was 'not a British protected person, but that we had special relations with him, and would support him in the event of any encroachment on his rights'.⁵⁶

However, political power and influence *per se* was not what the Sheykh was after. Before the 1903 *farmans*,⁵⁷ Khazal felt that his tenure of the areas under his jurisdiction was precarious. This had been demonstrated by the fact that large tracts of land had been bought in the province by 'outsiders' like Nezam, Moin, Moshir and the Khans. So he was quite determined to arrest and, if possible, reverse this process. He eventually managed to achieve this goal through various methods which, depending on the occasion, ranged from outright intimidation to clever manoeuvring and manipulation, all planned and implemented with the direct assistance of the British officials and his astute secretary. In March 1902 the Russian Legation at Tehran protested to the Persian government against irregularities at the Muhammareh customs. Khazal immediately despatched Haji Rais who still continued 'to display his habitual marvelous mental and physical activity',⁵⁸ to Tehran to discuss the subject with the government. Haji Rais, who again 'consulted the British Legation freely during his negotiations', succeeded in obtaining a 'compromise not unfavourable to his master', besides concessions of 'greatest moment' in matters not connected with the customs.⁵⁹ In January 1903, as a result of the so-called 'compromise' and quite astonishingly, the Shah issued four *farmans* (Royal Decrees). Through the first of these he granted 'as perpetual property' to the Sheykh and his Arabs and tribes (the reference to the Sheykh's subjects, for instance, was inserted on a suggestion by the British Legation, while Haji Rais considered it unnecessary)⁶⁰ all Persian government lands in the Muhammareh, Abadan, Bahman Shir, and Karun districts on which 'the Arabs and the tribes and tribesmen' of Khazal had traditionally grown date palms, etc., and constructed buildings, only on condition of payment of the usual revenue. Moreover, on Khazal himself were conferred 'all the lands which are barren and without date palms and trees until now, as perpetual property, so that he may give them to his tribe and tribesmen'. It was also added that the Persian government should have no right to resume any of the lands conferred on the Sheykh, unless by way of expropriation at a reasonable price.⁶¹

The making of these concessions to Khazal must be regarded as one of the strangest measures ever taken by Mozaffar-ud-Din Shah. The 'naive Shah', surrounded by courtiers sympathetic to Khazal or having been bribed by him, was also confronted with the combined cunning of the British and the astuteness of Haji Rais. So he gave away almost the whole of southern Khuzestan in such a way that if anybody wanted to build even a house in Ahvaz he had to purchase the land from Khazal.⁶² Instead of using the grant of land as an inducement to small farmers to populate and develop the area, the Shah found it easier to issue a decree and leave the rest of the job to the greedy and ruthless Khazal, who was supposed to give the lands to his tribesmen to 'grow date palms and trees

thereon and do what is necessary for rendering the place populous'.⁶³ The only condition was that Khazal and his subjects should not be entitled to alienate those lands granted to them, or immoveable property situated thereon, to subjects of foreign powers. At first it was also the intention of the Persian government to reserve to itself the lands as yet unoccupied and unreclaimed but, like so many other points, they ultimately consented to waive that condition too. Indeed, in view of the extent of these concessions, it is rather surprising that even the limitation in regard to the ban on the sale of property by Khazal to foreigners was mentioned in the *farmans*. However, this becomes understandable in the light of the long-standing policy of Iran to prevent foreigners from purchasing immovable properties in the country. It also stemmed from the fact that, even before the Karun opening, there had been many offers by foreigners for the colonization and 'development' of the resources of Khuzestan. A serious proposal, for example, was put before the Persian government almost immediately after the advent of the Karun⁶⁴ and later a concession for this was actually granted to a Russian.⁶⁵

In the same manner, by separate *farmans* of the same date, 'the place of Fallahiyah', 'the whole of Hindi-Jan and Dohmulla . . . together with the lands on the east of Karun', and finally 'the port of Mashur', all regarded as being a 'part of the jurisdiction' of Khazal or 'the place of his cultivation' were bestowed on him also as 'perpetual property' subject to the payment of the usual annual revenue and no transfer to foreigners. Khazal was expressly permitted and empowered to exercise in those lands the possessory rights of ownership of every kind, so that he might, with the 'utmost hopefulness and extreme zeal', busy himself in augmenting the improvement of these places. One thing, however, which the Sheykh could never be accused of lacking was the 'zeal and hopefulness'⁶⁶ in acquiring land both within and without Khuzestan. The combined effect of these grants was to invest him, only five years after accession to chiefship, with a very secure title to all of the southern Khuzestan, with the exception of the Hoveizeh district, the position of which was anomalous, and parts of Mashur, in addition to other tracts owned by Nezam and Moshir.

The ownership of land in this area by anybody but Khazal was, however, a potentially explosive issue, since it underscored the totally differing perceptions of land tenure between tribesmen and the lawful proprietors and brought customary practice into sharp conflict with legal realities. Nezam and Moshir and other non-Arab large landowners could not exercise their legal rights without exciting tribal disorders and rebellions, as was the case, for instance, in 1896 over Nezam's lands in Nahr-e-Kut Hashem.⁶⁷ Another case was the Taraverd-iff concession (granted by Nezam in 1910) in regard to which British officials remarked that the grantor had 'adopted a by no means ingenuous attitude', and believed it to be 'inconceivable' and likely to give Khazal and Britain 'some trouble'. They predicted that in the event of the execution of the scheme, the tribesmen who would be displaced from their holdings would raise 'such difficulties . . . that the concessionaires will be obliged to retire from the project or

sell their interests' to Khazal, since the tribemen were 'not likely to submit to eviction or rackrenting by the lease holder'.⁶⁸

By contrast, when the concessionaires were the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, there was nothing wrong with an immediate eviction of the cultivators of the lands needed by the company. Furthermore, Khazal did not protest against this since British interests were involved. At the same time the Bakhtiyari Khans who had received the concession money, did not seem to be too anxious to provide the displaced peasants with other lands.⁶⁹ However, even if the Arab tenants of Nezam's lands raised no objections to the Taraverdieff concession, the Sheykh would always make sure that no proprietor but Khazal himself could exercise legal rights of ownership. In 1906, for example, no progress was made on the building of the British Vice Consulate at Ahvaz whose site was claimed by Moin. Therefore, Khazal obtained an agreement from Moin recognizing both the proposed site as the 'joint property of the Shaikh's son and his own son, and the full power of the Shaikh to act on behalf of both the partners'.⁷⁰ It was a simple but effective method by which other owners were forced to give or lease their land in Khuzestan to Khazal. This compromise apparently did not affect the customary rights of the cultivators of the soil, but changed the intermediary between them on the one hand, and the actual owner of the land on the other. Thus the real losers in the short-term were the lesser tribal chiefs, like the Bani Torof, who had traditionally fulfilled this intermediary role. However, in the long-run all other landowners whose control over their properties had gradually slipped away were the losers too. The real winner was, of course, none other than Khazal.

In 1906, the Bani Torof affairs, including the revenue collection, were made over to Khazal's charge by the governor-general, Salar Moazzam, who had earlier received the Hoveizeh district in fief.⁷¹ From then on there were constant rebellions by this tribe which refused 'to recognize the Shaikh's jurisdiction as apart from the question of paying their revenue to the Persian government'.⁷² In order to subjugate them, Khazal had to use force almost every year.⁷³ By 1911 it was reported that, while Khazal had been accepted in other areas of Khuzestan, with regard to the Bani Torof his power had been 'greatly increased', owing to the belief that, having received the K.C.I.E., he 'is now under British protection'. This belief was

'very common and indeed the recent troubled state of Persia has hardly affected the Arab mind for they say 'since the Shaikh is under British protection and we under the Shaikh's it makes but little difference for us whether there is a Shah in Persia or not or whether the Russians take it or leave it, we shall be safe'.⁷⁴

It was also reported that the conferring of this title had greatly strengthened Khazal's position and his control over the tribes of Khuzestan generally, as well as his reputation among the tribal chiefs of southern Persia who, the British reported, realized that his prosperity and strength 'is due to his close relations

with the British government and his friendly attitude to British commerce'.⁷⁵ Indeed the implication did not escape the attention of the writers of the Persian paper *Habl-ul-Matin*, which connected the action of the British government in conferring the title with other British acts of interference in the internal affairs of Iran.⁷⁶ By strengthening Khazal, Britain not only supported him *vis-à-vis* the central government, but also helped him to consolidate his political and economic hold over the rest of the people of South-West Persia, and Khazal used this support very effectively. It was also intended to make an example of Khazal, and induce other local notables to emulate him.

However, to achieve his goals Khazal had to resort to other methods as well. In order to prevent the intrusion of outsiders into Khuzestan, which by this time he regarded as his personal preserve, in 1903, Khazal concluded an important agreement with the Bakhtiyari Khans.⁷⁷ This was described by the British as 'a defensive alliance against aggression on the part of the Persian government'. It was also stipulated that should lands, the property of the Persian government, be offered for sale, both parties 'will buy in conjunction; one has no right to purchase alone'.⁷⁸ Neither party would farm the lands of Persian grandees, unless the latter agreed to bear the losses as well as to reap the profits. Should it be desired to purchase such lands, it said 'both parties will buy in partnership, excepting in the districts of Jarrahi, Hindian, Dih Molla, and the banks of the Karun', in which Khazal alone could purchase land.⁷⁹ At this time Khazal was also busy acquiring land on the Turkish side. In 1909, for instance, Haji Rais borrowed from the Germans in order to complete the purchase price of some date gardens for the Sheykh.⁸⁰ These new purchases were added to the extensive estates he had inherited, as private as well as tribal properties, and amassed in the previous years. Thus, in 1910 it was said that being 'such a large land-owner both in Basrah and on the Turkish bank of the river generally', it was 'absolutely necessary' for Khazal to maintain a *modus vivendi* with the Turkish authorities.⁸¹

It appears that this arrangement, which must have worked to Khazal's advantage, was not favourable to the Turkish officials who were alarmed by the Sheykh's insatiable appetite for land. Therefore, shortly after, in August 1910 the Council of State at Constantinople decreed that 'no more land should be registered in the name of the Shaikh or his representative, Mirza Hamzeh, or the latter's servant, Molla Mostafa',⁸² thereby implying that the *modus vivendi* was a ploy devised by Khazal to gain possession of more and more properties through registering them in the name of his servant, and that of his servant's servant. By contrast, despite the existence of the *Majles* (parliament) in Tehran, no such measures were taken by Iranian officials. The nearest the Persians came to this was when, as a result of the close links between Khazal and Sheykh Mobarak of Kuwait, and the rumoured formation of an alliance between them, the attention of the deputies was attracted to Khazal's ambitious plans. The question of Khazal's suspicious activities, therefore, was raised but no decision was taken. Upon this the British Vice-Consul at Ahvaz remarked: 'there is always an inherent readiness in the Persian mind to believe in Shaikh Khazal's

desire to emancipate himself from the sovereignty of Persia; though he has done nothing to justify such an inference'.⁸³

Now, with the benefit of hindsight, it is obvious that there was little truth in this statement. Indeed, as early as 1900 Khazal was comparing his position *vis-à-vis* Persia to 'that of Kedive of Egypt *vis-à-vis* Turkey'.⁸⁴ When, in 1902, the Khuzestan Customs was taken away from him, Khazal 'evinced great hostility to the transfer and again asked for British protection expressing a desire to have his position assimilated to the Sheikh of Koweit'.⁸⁵ In other words, the reluctance he showed at this time for total independence was tactical and out of necessity rather than loyalty. It was based on the knowledge that at that historical juncture an entity such as Khuzestan would not have been politically viable. Therefore, it had to be either under the protection of the local powers, or one of the great powers. Khazal dreaded and feared the Turks⁸⁶ as much as he distrusted and disliked the Persians. In those days the dominant outside power in the area was Britain, which was also anxious to provide the Sheykh with every possible assistance and support in return for the latter's loyal cooperation. But when Britain appeared to be somewhat lukewarm on the question of assurances, Khazal tried to exploit the two great powers' rivalries, which indicates Khazal's desperate need for foreign protection. In 1902, when the vexed question of Khuzestan Customs was under consideration, the Sheykh began to toy with the idea of flirting with Russia. This was a period at which, by establishing a Consulate at Muhammarch⁸⁷ and conferring a medal on Khazal, Russia was beginning to show new interest in the affairs of Khuzestan. It is very probable that this was merely a ploy by the Sheykh to scare Britain into giving him the desired assurances. If so, Khazal's policy met with complete success. This view is strengthened by the fact that later, having received the assurances from Britain, he completely abandoned the idea of establishing friendly links with Russia.

Khazal and the estates of the Khans in Khuzestan

In this connection the following episodes can be illuminating since they indicate the extent to which Khazal was ready to go to defend his position *vis-à-vis* outsiders. They also show the degree of commitment Britain felt towards him, and underline how fruitful and rewarding their mutual commitments turned out to be for both parties. Despite the conclusion of an agreement with the Bakhtiyaris, Khazal believed that they were intriguing in Khuzestan in order to undermine his authority. The real issue was, of course, the clash of interests between the Sheykh and the Khans, in the 'grey' areas over which both parties claimed jurisdiction and the right to collect taxes, etc.⁸⁸ Thus, in their contest for supremacy the question of the ownership of Jarrahi lands proved to be a turning point.

In 1912, the Bakhtiyaris bought Moshir's half share of these lands, and thus managed to get a footing in this area. Khazal refused to recognize this deal since he claimed that before this deal was made he had leased the lands from

the owners, i.e. Moshir and Nezam. By this time, as a consequence of Khazal's increasing power and wealth, these lands lay in the heart of his country, so he claimed the right of pre-emption.⁸⁹ In fact, the transaction had been completed before the Sheykh had even heard about it.⁹⁰ The Khans had bought the property as an asset in the political situation where Khazal was concerned. They had the knowledge, too, that if they did sell, it would be possible to obtain a handsome profit. The control of the Arab tenants of the lands by the Bakhtiyaris would also constitute a menace which the Sheykh could not face, in addition to the blow that it dealt to his prestige. He, therefore, told the British Consul that sooner than allow the Bakhtiyaris to occupy the lands he would fight the question out with them once and for all.⁹¹ Thus HMG was put in a very awkward position. They had carefully and gradually nurtured close and friendly ties with both parties. Any war between them would result in a loss of influence by Britain with detrimental effects on her trade. Britain believed that while, as a result of the Revolution, Persia was becoming unsettled, the conditions in Khuzestan had been steadily improving. The policy of Khazal had been to consolidate his power gradually over the detached and scattered Arab tribes within his borders or those who acknowledged him as their Lord and chief. 'This policy', the British Consul wrote 'is one which it is for us to encourage as it is greatly to our advantage'.⁹² Furthermore, the entry of the Bakhtiyaris into a portion of land populated by the Sheykh's tribes, they argued, would not only damage Khazal's prestige but, with the knowledge of the assurances given to him, would affect Britain's position both with the Arabs and the Bakhtiyaris. Hence, their energetic mediation in this matter and the direct involvement of the British Minister at Tehran, as well as the local British Consuls.

However, the *ilkhani* demanded large sums for the lands and threatened to use force, if necessary, for the occupation of the estates. The conflict had become even more complicated due to looting, by the Sheykh's Arabs, of the Bakhtiyari town of Aqili. Sardar Jang demanded further large sums in compensation for this. At this point Khazal began to make all necessary preparations for war⁹³ and by the spring of the following year he had massed some 10,000–15,000 men in various parts of Khuzestan.⁹⁴ As matters were approaching a crisis, the British Vice-Consul at Ahvaz was sent to Sardar Jang to warn him against any disturbance in Khuzestan. Later, the *ilkhani* told the British Consul that he had intended to send agents to take over the lands until he realized how grave a matter of concern it was to the British government. However, in May 1913, after a period of crisis, Sardar Jang met Khazal at Band-e-Qir, and the final terms of the agreement were signed. A copy of the agreement was, appropriately enough, sent to the British Vice-Consul at Ahvaz. The agreement required the sanction of other Khans in Tehran, which could not be obtained until the British Minister again intervened and brought his influence to bear. The original price the Khans had paid for the lands was 15,000 tumans which Khazal was willing to pay, but Sardar Jang wanted more. Here again the British officials intervened directly and induced both to accept a compromise

figure of 30,000 tumans for the lands and a 'present' of 5,000 tumans for the Aqili raid. Thus, the Bakhtiari gained 15,000 tumans but the crucial and most astonishing result of the whole episode was that, thanks to the 'political genius of Haji Rais', at the finish 'the Shaikh became the agent for the Bakhtiari in all matters' in Khuzestan, an outcome which even the British officials found 'difficult to realize'⁹⁵ and believe.

The Nezam family and their estates in south Persia

In this regard, the fate of the family of Hoseyn Qoli Khan, Nezam-us-Saltaneh (c.1836 to August 1908)⁹⁶ could be illuminating. Due to the death of his only son, Nezam groomed his nephew, Reza Qoli Khan, Sardar Mokarram (since February 1906),⁹⁷ to be his successor, and some time after Nezam's death he also assumed his title and became known as Nezam (around 1910).⁹⁸ The rise to power and wealth of this family and the way in which Britain managed to gain control of the family's vast estates in south Persia is noteworthy. It is also indicative not only of the means the two powers used to further their political and economic interests but also the process through which large landowners emerged in Iran. The case of this family is also of particular interest to us since the first Nezam twice became the governor-general of Khuzestan (1887–91 and 1895–6) and his nephew once. It was during Hoseyn Qoli Khan's tenure that the Karun was thrown open and it was also owing to his energetic and firm government that the first major steps for the development of the province were taken. Also the episode of Nezam's capitulation to the British was of vital importance to the position of that power in the area. In return for the security of his life and property in Iran, Nezam was forced to give Britain a guarantee which 'combined with the Shaikh's good will' offered Britain total control over 'the greater part of Arabistan (Khuzestan) and parts of Fars',⁹⁹ and Lorestan.

Before the Karun opening, Hoseyn Qoli Khan, who was of Kurdish stock (Mafi) of Fars,¹⁰⁰ was appointed to Khuzestan. It was also around this time that the reputation and prestige of Zol had suffered an eclipse. Nezam 'though neither of good family nor distinguished antecedents', even to a biased observer like Curzon, 'possessed the inimitable manners of a Persian Gentleman'.¹⁰¹ In 1891 he was sent to Bushehr, having been promoted to the governor-generalship of Fars, which was far more important than Khuzestan. In March 1895 he was reappointed to Khuzestan but, under pressure from Britain, in the course of 1896 he was removed from the post.¹⁰² His recall was connected with a case involving a British subject, Tanfield, who was an agent of Messrs Lynch. In June 1896 Tanfield was attacked by his Persian employee,¹⁰³ Sadeq, at Shushtar. In order to make an example of him and to demonstrate their power, the British wanted to have Sadeq executed, although Tanfield had only lost a hand. Otherwise, they said, 'an Englishman can no longer live in safety in Shushtar'.¹⁰⁴ This was despite the fact that even the Sadr-e-Azam had declared his 'inability to control the mob'. Captain Sykes thus suggested that the execution should take place at Ahvaz. This idea, however, became 'common talk' among Shushtaris,

who said 'they would not permit such an execution'.¹⁰⁵ The question became even more complicated when Sykes, too, sought redress for the 'great discourtesy' which Nezam's brother allegedly showed Sykes. Colonel Wilson even urged the dispatch of the inevitable gunboats in order to re-establish British influence on the Karun, and pointed out that the Sheykh would throw off his allegiance to Persia with a little encouragement.¹⁰⁶ However, thanks to Nezam's resistance, eventually Sadeq was not executed and was instead sent to Tehran to be imprisoned there. The British became very irritated and this time decided to make an example of Nezam and his brother, so that no other Persian official would ever dare to ignore their interests.

They very strongly pressed for, and obtained from the Persian government, an undertaking that Nezam and his brother should not be employed anywhere in Persia for a period of five years.¹⁰⁷ The opposition of the British government to this family at this time was so strong that even when, in 1898, Nezam's nephew received an appointment from the Shah, under direct instruction from Salisbury, Durand raised objection and caused it to be cancelled.¹⁰⁸ Though a case could be made with regard to the Tanfield affair, as the British themselves confessed, 'it might have occurred under any government'.¹⁰⁹ Thus, it is conceivable that the real reason for this vehement opposition to Nezam was that the latter was neither pro-British nor pro-Russian. But during this period this was something that neither the British nor the Russians were prepared to accept. Perhaps the best indication of Nezam's independence was the great animosity that both these powers showed towards him. For example, when in April 1906 the Vali Ahd came to Tehran to act as regent during the Shah's absence in Europe, Nezam was sent to Tabriz to act as governor-general of Azarbaijan. The Russians opposed his appointment but to no avail.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, despite all this opposition, the old man himself never capitulated to either of the powers. As governor-general Nezam had qualities which earned him respect from friend and foe alike. In earlier times, the British had described him as a 'protégé of Amin',¹¹¹ which does not seem to do justice to Nezam. Those Europeans who had seen Nezam or the results of his work appreciated his 'reputation for justice as well as energy of administration'¹¹² and called him 'an able ruler'¹¹³ or, later 'one of the most strenuous and enlightened men in Persia at the present time'.¹¹⁴ Perhaps, an indication of this 'enlightenment' was the fact that, at that time, Nezam had sent his only son to Europe in order to study at Harrow.¹¹⁵

Further proof of his ability was the energy he showed for the development of Khuzestan. For example, he rebuilt, often under his personal supervision,¹¹⁶ many ancient buildings and founded the ports of Ahvaz and Saheb Qaraniyeh. An indication of his farsightedness was his view that, instead of Dezful, or Shushtar, Ahvaz should become the seat of government.¹¹⁷ He also introduced new seed-rice into the agriculture of Dezful.¹¹⁸ Nezam's commitment to security was most impressive. He must have known that without the security of trade routes and economic centres, no real progress would be possible. Accordingly, he suppressed the *aghavat* of Shushtar and Dezful,¹¹⁹ and did his best to

do likewise with the recalcitrant tribes. He personally led an expedition force to Fallahiyeh, in the intense heat of Khuzestan's summer. Later, the deposed chief offered him a *pishkesh* of 5,000 tumans in order to regain his governorship but Nezam 'indeed, just considering the interests of the State', refused it.¹²⁰ Gordon noticed that his soldiers were well disciplined, neatly dressed, and well fed. This indicates that their wages and funds were not, as was customary elsewhere, misappropriated.¹²¹

Some of the Nezam's qualities were also shared by his nephew and eventual heir, Sardar Mokarram.¹²² Sardar was described as 'a man of force and ability, but avaricious, and more than cruel, and entirely selfish'.¹²³ Nonetheless, in his 'capable hands', the administration of northern Khuzestan was reported to be 'peculiarly successful'.¹²⁴ Thus, it is hardly surprising that his departure in 1907 from Khuzestan was 'hailed with truculent joy' by those elements in Shushtar and Dezful who desired to regain for the *aghavat* influence and power. Towards British interests Sardar did not show himself 'at all partial', but they benefited on the whole by the general security.¹²⁵ The British, therefore, regarded it as 'good policy' to support him.¹²⁶ This tacit support was also due to the fact that, perhaps out of necessity, Sardar too like his uncle was on good terms with Khazal.¹²⁷ Sardar even entrusted the Sheykh with the temporary government of northern Khuzestan when he himself left for Lorestan.¹²⁸ Sardar was also in the habit of personally leading various expeditionary forces against the rebellious Arabs and Lors.¹²⁹ It was during these expeditions that Sardar impressed the Arab chiefs who were under his command. Later, when he had serious troubles with the Bakhtiyari Khans who were prominent in the Persian cabinet, these same Arab chiefs forced Khazal to assist him. The Sheykh was informed 'to his face' by the chiefs that it was 'better far that they should have seen him dead' than that they should see him so dishonoured as to leave Sardar to be trampled upon by his enemies.¹³⁰ This was one of the reasons which induced Khazal to seek Britain's active support in this regard. Another crucial factor was, of course, the fact that most of Nezam's vast estates in Khuzestan were managed by the Sheykh. Naturally Khazal did not want to jeopardize this favourable position through either the confiscation of Nezam's properties by the state, or by their sale to the Bakhtiyaris. There can be no doubt that both Nezams had used their power to acquire properties in the south. We have already described how the Shah sold or granted the *khaleseh* lands to prominent individuals. In consequence, by the end of the period, the second Nezam owned vast estates in Khuzestan and elsewhere in the south-west.

In 1910 Sardar, who by now was called Nezam, was appointed governor-general of Fars. The chain of circumstances which finally led Khazal to intervene in order to ensure Nezam's safe arrival at Muhammareh illustrated the close interdependence of the affairs and personalities of Fars and those of the south-west generally. Early in 1911 Nezam passed through Muhammareh and met Khazal on his way to take up his post at Shiraz. The latter informed the British that Nezam had left with the intention of keeping on friendly terms with them. But in the opinion of the British officials, he 'did not maintain this

commendable frame of mind'.¹³¹ It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the details. There were certain developments in Fars which led the British minister in Tehran to warn the Qashqai *ilkhani*, Sowlat-ud-Dowleh, that unless he and Nezam left Shiraz immediately, he would recommend Britain to take prompt steps to protect Britain's interests, and to visit any damage that might befall those interests 'directly upon himself and the Nizam'. The British later confessed that 'grave as was the moral and material damage' inflicted on their interests in Fars by the 'failure of the Nizam's unscrupulous plans for the pacification of the province', the difficulties with which Nezam was confronted were 'due in a large measure to our action in giving sanctuary to the Kavam (ul-Molk), after the murder of his brother and his own narrow escape'.¹³²

Qavam belonged to the most prominent family of Fars, descended from Haji Ebrahim-e Kalantar,¹³³ with immense influence and wealth in that province. The power that this family wielded was so unusual that, for instance, in 1902, the Shah's own son was obliged to escape from Shiraz owing to the Qavam's unfriendliness.¹³⁴ They were also notoriously pro-British. For example, after Nezam's departure from Shiraz, Qavam who had become the acting governor-general of the province immediately asked for British protection.¹³⁵ Even before this episode, Qavam had been 'for some time' asking whether 'we should give him protection in case of need'. At this time, however, Britain did not think that it would be prudent to assume any responsibility for him. He was, accordingly, given a 'benevolent answer'.¹³⁶ Nezam had also allegedly extorted money from Qavam and collected taxes.¹³⁷

On 5 October 1911, Nezam left Shiraz for Khuzestan to which province he had been appointed governor-general.¹³⁸ The Prime Minister, however, subsequently denied this appointment and Nezam had hardly left Shiraz when orders were issued for the sequestration of his possessions and a reward was also placed on his head. Nezam took refuge meanwhile on his own property at Khesht and it was generally believed then that he would ultimately be caught or killed by his opponents, eager to secure his lands and the promised reward.¹³⁹ Apart from the British pressure, these orders were no doubt due to the prominence of Bakhtiyari influence in Tehran, an influence which was in favour of Qavam and the British, and consequently against Nezam. On 4 January 1912, Nezam eventually succeeded in reaching Muhammareh safely, where he stayed with the Sheykh.¹⁴⁰ The degree of enmity between the latter and the Bakhtiyaris has been referred to above. If Khazal had now left Nezam to find his own way out of his difficulties as best he could, the latter would have been obliged to make the best terms he could with the Bakhtiyaris. Any attempt on the Khan's part at the same time, to confiscate or get hold of Nezam's lands might have meant for Khazal the thrusting of a long wedge of Bakhtiyari influence right into his territories, and the defection of a large portion of it which Khazal had leased at an 'almost nominal rental' from Nezam. Ironically, it could also have resulted in further damage to Britain's interests and prolonged disorder on the Bushehr-Shiraz road which passed through Nezam's properties at Khesht and elsewhere.¹⁴¹

Khazal accordingly approached the British consul at Muhammareh to ascertain if Britain would assist Nezam to obtain safety, and also to prevent confiscation of his property. The Sheykh in return agreed to guarantee the future conduct of Nezam and also made himself responsible that 'Nizam will give land required for railway free, and will also upset the Russian (irrigation) concession' granted to Taraverdieff. In addition, he guaranteed that Nezam 'shall give all assistance possible' to the British, adding that he would consider as 'a personal favour' anything which Britain was able to do.¹⁴² To help Nezam, Khazal also stated that Nezam's actions had all been under orders from Tehran and that the latter could produce these telegrams and the Sheykh was ready to appeal to the *majles*.¹⁴³ Incidentally, this is a reminder that all these developments were taking place well after the Revolution and the establishment of the *majles* and a constitutional regime which supposedly existed to safeguard the rights of the people and give them protection. In other words, due to the peculiar nature of the political and social system in Iran, notwithstanding the constitutional changes, even the prominent personalities had to seek protection for their lives and properties from foreign embassies, particularly Russian and British; even though at times this meant forming an alliance with their old enemy, as in the case of Nezam and the British. Britain, no doubt seeing a golden opportunity, was ready to help. But it wanted to squeeze out as much concession from Nezam as possible. Another convincing argument that Khazal had used was that it was possible that if he remained inactive the Arab chiefs 'will become anti-English while they will go nevertheless' to help Nezam. Some of these chiefs still received allowances from the latter. The result of this would be a serious blow to Khazal's power and 'the British would lose doubly'. The Sheykh, therefore, stressed that there was no greater favour that he could ask Britain than this, and that Britain 'will have his lasting gratitude'.¹⁴⁴

Immediately upon his arrival in Muhammareh, Nezam went to see the British consul and asked for British government's good offices.¹⁴⁵ His case was accordingly taken up by the British minister at Tehran and, combined with a bribe of 10,000 tumans which the Bakhtiyari ministers received from Nezam, they allowed him to leave Persia safely.¹⁴⁶ Nezam was also informed that he was 'at liberty to come to Tehran or to go to Europe' and he proposed 'to proceed via Europe to Tehran'. The British Minister was also told that the sequestration of Nezam's properties had been removed.¹⁴⁷ In return, the British consul managed to obtain from Nezam an undertaking that in connection with the projected Muhammareh-Khorram Abad railway,

after the British company obtained a concession for the said railway from the Persian government, I will have no objection and use no pressure in regard to any terms that the British government authorities may arrange with the Co. for the right of passage in such portion of the territories of my Arabistan (Khuzestan) properties through which it may pass.¹⁴⁸

There are some interesting points with regard to this undertaking. First, the fact that the letter of undertaking was written only one day after Nezam's arrival in Muhammareh indicates the great pressure he was under and also his urgent and desperate need for protection. Second, the text of the undertaking is another sign of his astuteness. He stated that 'after' the grant of a concession by the 'Persian government', he would have no objection, etc., which meant that the British could not take it for granted that Nezam would give his lands to them.¹⁴⁹ At the request of the British Resident, a similar undertaking was also obtained in regard to the lands of the Daleki district (between Borazjan and Kazerun in Fars) belonging to Nezam which might be required for other projected railways.¹⁵⁰

In the meantime it transpired that Nezam was rather heavily in debt to the Russian Bank d'Escompte. He, therefore, asked Britain to assist him to obtain a loan of 70,000 tumans (about £12,500) from the Imperial Bank of Persia with a view to freeing himself from a mortgage of the Russian bank for a loan secured by his properties in Khuzestan and elsewhere. Again after the direct intervention of the British minister who approached the chief manager of the British bank in Tehran, the bank consented to make the loan. It was on the personal security of Khazal on condition that the title deeds of the lands in question, which were then in the hands of the Russian bank, should be deposited with them as collateral security. Before the necessary formalities could be conducted, however, Nezam left for Europe, having first secured the promise of a loan of 70,000 tumans from Khazal himself on the security of the said lands.¹⁵¹ Nezam's sudden departure was evidently on private information. A telegram, which arrived immediately after his departure in fact cancelled the permission he had received to go to Europe except via Tehran.¹⁵² With regard to the loan, no money actually changed hands but it was understood that should the Imperial Bank be unable to make the loan, Khazal would do so. The Muhammareh branch of the bank accordingly advanced this sum to Khazal, against his promissory note. However, in the absence of details as to the title deeds, etc., the question remained in suspense. Meanwhile, the British were in possession of Nezam's undertakings, and their protégé, Khazal, was in enjoyment of the revenues of the lands which had been hypothecated to him by Nezam, and thus had 'no reason to be dissatisfied with the outcome of his efforts on behalf of his friend'.¹⁵³ The transaction with the Russian bank was completed later.¹⁵⁴

However, Britain's moment in this regard was yet to come. Nezam could not remain in Europe for long and for his safe return to Iran he again needed British support. He was incurring heavy expenditure in Europe while, at the same time, due to his absence, his properties in Iran provided little income, or so claimed Khazal. Consequently, his further absence would either mean that he would bleed Khazal for further loans or would become involved in some deals undesirable to the British and Khazal. One such probability was Nezam's approach to the Russians in which case, Haworth reported, they would have 'no hesitation in giving him the benefit of their good offices seeing what he is in a position to offer in return',¹⁵⁵ such as the granting of a railway concession to

them in Lorestan, which was in the 'neutral zone', or the advance by Russia of 70,000 tumans. On the other hand, if Nezam turned to Russia his 'undertakings' to Britain would be rendered 'worthless' and the British line would 'probably be blocked by Russian concessionaires'.¹⁵⁶ In view of such a possibility Khazal, too, was in an awkward position. If, owing to disappointment at Khazal's attitude, Nezam were to sell land to the Bakhtiyaris, in spite of the friendship existing between them, a very grave position would be created. Perhaps the most important consideration in this regard was that Nezam was under some kind of engagement with Khazal to let him have 'a half share in his lands' in Khuzestan. But these engagements, the Sheykh told Haworth, could not be put through until Nezam returned to Iran. Having in mind the latter's astuteness, Haworth believed that 'it would be more accurate to say that the Nezam refuses to put them through until his return'.¹⁵⁷ Nezam's desire was to obtain a guarantee of safety for his life and property from the Persian government through the British Legation, which would enable him to return safely to south Persia.¹⁵⁸ Cox, with his typical shrewdness, pointed out that if Britain could keep Nezam

in the pocket of the Shaikh . . . and keep them both under obligation in regard to the former, the Nezam need be a source of no anxiety to us; on the other hand if we disoblige Shaikh and incidentally drive Nizam to seek another patron, he may prove a most inconvenient factor in Arabistan (Khuzestan) both for the Shaikh and ourselves.¹⁵⁹

On these grounds he argued that the British should support him if possible as a friend of Khazal; and recommended that the British minister in Tehran reply to the effect that

provided that Nizam will undertake in writing, firstly, not to sell or mortgage his landed property to anyone but the Shaikh without consulting the latter and ourselves, and second, not to shape his conduct in any way opposed to the interests of the Shaikh or ourselves, then you will endeavour to obtain the assurances of immunity which he desires.

These conditions were accepted by Nezam¹⁶⁰ but in his letter he gave undertakings for his sons as well as for himself, assuming that a guarantee to himself would also cover his sons who at that time were schoolboys.¹⁶¹ The text of Nezam's assurance, enclosed in a letter to Khazal, was as follows:

On account of the support and the protection which the British Government will give to my life, property and honour, and that of my sons, I agree to the following conditions:

1. At no time will I take steps opposed to the officials of the British Government.

2. Should we ever wish to sell or lease my properties in Fars, Arabistan

(Khuzestan) or Luristan, I and my sons will not sell them or lease them to anyone without the knowledge of or consulting the British representatives.

3. Should I wish to change the tenants or factors of the above properties and wish to get Foreign tenants and agents I and my sons bind ourselves to do so with the information, consultation and approval from the British representatives.¹⁶²

A few days later, the Persian minister of the interior requested Nezam's brother, in the presence of Churchill, to telegraph to Nezam that he could return to Persia in perfect safety, and that he need have no fear of the Persian government or of any other hostile influence. He was, moreover, offered the post of governor-general of Lorestan and the interior minister laid special emphasis to the brother on the interest shown by the British Legation on Nezam's behalf. The minister also telegraphed to Khazal in the above sense.¹⁶³ These guarantees were strengthened by the personal assurance of the British minister in Tehran.¹⁶⁴ Nezam returned to Iran but, officially due to ill health¹⁶⁵ and most probably for other reasons, declined to take up the charge of Lorestan, notwithstanding Britain's desire to see him accept it.

Thus, Britain managed to gain control over most parts of Khuzestan, parts of Fars and Lorestan. Their protégé, Khazal, at the same time, gained full and direct control of all southern Khuzestan plus those vast areas in the north which belonged to Nezam. Khazal had already asked Britain to give him assurances of protection of his private properties in Iran.¹⁶⁶ He had received these guarantees, along with others, through the secret assurances of 1910.¹⁶⁷ With his agreements with the Bakhtiyaris and others, combined with Nezam's undertakings and Britain's guarantees, there seemed to be no obstacles to check the rapid expansion of Khazal's political and economic power in Khuzestan. His penetration of the northern part of the province had started in earnest as early as 1907 when Sardar had put him in charge of its administration.¹⁶⁸ In the south he had established his power as early as 1904, when it was reported that 'there are now few signs of Persian authority south of Band-i-Kir to the border of Fars'. The governor of Khuzestan did not appear at Ahvaz, 'nor is there a *kargozar* there, as was the case in 1897'.¹⁶⁹ Khuzestan's next governor-general, Haji Seyf-ud-Dowleh, who happened also to be the grandfather of Khazal's wife, reportedly spent almost all his time as the Sheykh's guest at Muhammareh and showed 'not the slightest sign of life, let alone activity'.¹⁷⁰ Thus, by 1911, it was reported that the governorship of Khuzestan 'does not confer very great powers, most of the country being under the rule of the Shaikh'. Ram Hormoz district was administered by the Bakhtiyaris. Thus only Shushtar and Dizful were left 'to the nominal Governor of the province'.¹⁷¹ These two cities later became the battleground of the Bakhtiyaris and Khazal. For the consolidation of his power and influence the Sheykh also entered into alliances, against the Bakhtiyaris, with the *vali* of Posht-e-Kuh and the *ilkhani* of Qashqai, Sowlat-ud-Dowleh.¹⁷²

However, it goes without saying that it was mainly due to the wholehearted British support that Khazal could amass political power and wealth, and resist

attempts on the part of the central government to establish its authority in the region. In May 1914 the British government acquired a predominant interest in the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. In the previous December, Khazal had asked for further assurances from Britain for the strengthening of his position *vis-à-vis* the Persian government and the Bakhtiyaris.¹⁷³ Further guarantees which extended Britain's assurances to Khazal's successors as well were accordingly granted on 21 November 1914.¹⁷⁴ Barely a fortnight later an agreement was signed between Khazal and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for the lease of land that the company required,¹⁷⁵ and another one was concluded in 1918 in which in return for a lump sum of £50,000 as rent, Khazal leased large plots of land in Khuzestan to the oil company until September 1983.¹⁷⁶ A detailed analysis of these developments would not be within the scope of the present study. The brief reference to them, however, would no doubt help us to understand the motives and designs of the British government in the pursuit of its policies and the methods it employed in order to achieve its goals.

Commercial: enterprises connected with the Karun navigation

Merchants do not like (Lynch's Agent) Taylor and his attitude. Once every two or three months he makes arrangements with them regarding the freight (rate) but soon raises the rate. Merchants find this very annoying since their own vessels are lying idle. The use of any other boats but that of the Lynch Co. has been prohibited.¹⁷⁷

Messrs Lynch Brothers have signally failed to take advantage of the opportunities afforded them . . . for promoting their own and British interests . . . Persian merchants dislike their careless, irregular methods of running the 'Malamir' and 'Shushan' as much as His Majesty's representatives and European firms, while their maladministration of the forwarding business from Ahwaz to Ispahan . . . has been so far a byword.¹⁷⁸

Our experience of Messrs Lynch has not been altogether satisfactory . . . Their fault is that they . . . are cantankerous and grasping . . . there is no end to Mr Lynch's demands.¹⁷⁹

Navigation on the Karun: general

The earliest practical suggestion for steam navigation on the Karun seems to have emanated from the British firm of Gray, Paul, and Co. at Bushehr in 1871.¹⁸⁰ In 1874, a small steamer owned by the Sheykh of Muhammareh was plying on the lower Karun and carrying a small local traffic reportedly at a loss. In 1875 the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Co.¹⁸¹ proposed another plan. In 1882, however, Gray, Paul and Co. did not consider that they could safely engage in the Karun navigation unless they were granted exclusive rights for 50 years.¹⁸² This may account for the fact that they did not place a steamer on the river when it was opened. Discussions related to these schemes continued

until in October 1888 the Shah eventually decided to accede to the requests of the British government in this regard on condition of receiving two steamers as a gift¹⁸³ for service on the upper Karun. On 30 October 1888, immediately on the receipt of telegraphic information that the lower Karun had been thrown open, the steam launch *Arab* belonging to Messrs Grey, Mackenzie and Co. was despatched from Basra as a pioneer to establish the right of way on the Karun. It was soon followed by the *Blosse Lynch*, a large (300 tons)¹⁸⁴ side paddle steamer owned by the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Co., on which the draught was 3 feet.¹⁸⁵ Fortnightly runs were made for some months until it was replaced by the smaller *Shushan* (about 30 tons, 100 feet in length and 2½ feet draught). In 1890 the latter was taken to the upper river and the *Blosse Lynch* resumed its runs on the lower Karun. In 1892 it was replaced by the *Malamir* which was smaller. The Bombay and Persian Steam Navigation Co.¹⁸⁶ experimented on the Karun for a while but the returns obtained were inadequate and they shortly withdrew leaving Messrs Lynch Brothers the only firm in the field. The latter company gradually established a monopoly on the lower Karun, and between 1897 and 1906 had no competitors on this part of the river.

Messrs Lynch Brothers, navigation on the Karun, and related enterprises

Without the establishment of a regular steamer service on the upper river, the Karun navigation would not have been complete, particularly as at this time the Lynch road was not constructed. Thus, immediately after the Karun Proclamation, serious negotiations began in this regard. In 1889, with a view to realizing some profits, the Persian government placed the *Susa* (or *Shusha*), a river steamer of 36 tons, on the upper Karun. It had been obtained from Germany in 1885 to carry guns. It drew too much water and thus was not very suitable for trade and there was little attempt to draw traffic down the river which could be towed in barges.¹⁸⁷ So Messrs Lynch had to obtain facilities from the Persian authorities for the transfer of the cargoes on the upper river.¹⁸⁸ The concession for the monopoly of traffic on the upper Karun was granted to the Naseri Co. in 1889,¹⁸⁹ the only exception being the Shah's own steamer.

To fulfil the conditions for the Karun opening, in November 1888, Britain arranged that the Shah should be presented with a pair of steamers worth about £10,000 each, of which one should be paid for by Messrs Lynch and the other by the British and Indian governments in equal shares.¹⁹⁰ This was a device to get around the problems that the Lynch Co. foresaw if they were forced to despatch their goods by a rival Persian company, i.e. Naseri. The solution was found in the above scheme in which the Lynch Co. was to operate as the Shah's agents.¹⁹¹ It seems, however, that two considerations prevented the Shah from accepting this scheme. First, he rightly feared that the Karun Valley might be absorbed by the Lynch Co., just as India had been by the East India Co.¹⁹² Second, he knew that the efforts of the British to obtain for Messrs Lynch Bros a permanent control over the steamer on the upper Karun would mean a

monopoly of the entire Karun trade for that firm. Thus, the Shah said that he would, at Messrs Lynch's choice, accept or purchase the steamer, but he would not enter into any 'formal Agreement' which would give them rights on the upper river 'inconsistent with those reserved to himself in the note of October 1888'. Wolff, too, did not think that the Shah was much to be blamed for refusing to Messrs Lynch 'privileges which might form awkward precedents when quoted by other powers'.¹⁹³ Finally, on 14 February 1890, without any formal commitment, the Shah accepted the steamer *Shushan* for the above purpose.¹⁹⁴ Even then Qaragozlu believed that it was as if the steamer belonged to the British firm since it was totally under their control.¹⁹⁵

The Lynch Company, who were the 'pioneers in the opening up of the Karun',¹⁹⁶ were also engaged in various enterprises in this region, which were as follows:

- 1 navigation on the Karun,
- 2 general importing and exporting, and
- 3 from the late 1890s their Ahvaz office dealt with the forwarding of merchandise arriving at the town in transit to Esfahan.

By the end of the period they handled nearly half of this transit trade.¹⁹⁷ The British firm also engaged in some other transactions. For example, in 1900, Khazal mortgaged some of his estates in Khuzestan and in Turkey to the firm in return for 5,000 golden Turkish liras.¹⁹⁸ The Lynch Company carried out these enterprises in Khuzestan from 1889 till March 1914 when a new company, Messrs Mackay, Lynch and Co., took over Messrs Lynch Bros' business on the Karun.¹⁹⁹ The river trade, especially by steamer, consisted largely of shipments on through bills of lading on account of the export and import trade of Ahvaz and Shushtar with India and Europe transhipped at Muhammareh.²⁰⁰ By the early 1890s the *Gar Gar* and *Shateyt* were navigated by steamers to within 6 and 12 miles of Shushtar: the *Susa* plying on the former and the *Shushan* on the latter. Both ran regularly with cargo and passengers. On the lower Karun, the *Blosse Lynch*²⁰¹ (later *Malamir*) regularly ran fortnightly services in connection with the *Shushan*. The governor of Muhammareh, Mazal, also ran a fortnightly service on the lower river in connection with the Naseri Company on the upper Karun. According to the figures supplied by the Lynch Company, in 1890 they carried 1,327 tons of cargo and 1,872 passengers (and earned £1,018). In 1893 the figures were 1,851 tons cargo, 2,644 passengers (with earnings of £1,517).²⁰² The following year the steamer did slightly better, but the firm still maintained that they were working at a loss.²⁰³ Apart from the fact that in the early days of the enterprise the river trade was generally small, the British company also suffered from somewhat stiff competition from Persians. But from the accession of Khazal to chiefship of Muhammareh in June 1897, until the beginning of the Naseri Company's service on the lower Karun in 1906, Messrs Lynch Bros had a virtual monopoly of this trade. However, later the German firm of Wonckhaus entered the scene.

Throughout its two and a half decades of activity in Khuzestan the Lynch Company enjoyed the direct political and financial support of the British government. This dual assistance proved very valuable to the firm, especially as far as the competition of Persian firms, e.g. Naseri and Shahanshahi, were concerned. For example, when in early 1895 the latter firm began a very successful competition with Messrs Lynch Bros on the lower Karun, the British company tried to drive them out of the market by undercutting them. Thus, their freight rates from Muhammareh to Shushtar dropped from 17s 5½d per ton to 11s 7d, and the rate on the upper river decreased by almost 50 per cent (from 9s to 5s).²⁰⁴ It is obvious that, had it not been for the subsidy the Lynch Company received from the British government, it would have been more difficult for them to adopt such drastic measures. In the following year, the British firm also began to make arrangements for insurance of cargo in transit between Europe and Esfahan via the Bakhtiyari hills. This was a further move to induce merchants to use their steamers rather than that of the Shahanshahi. However, before the opening of the steel bridge to traffic (December 1899), the transit trade of this road was insignificant. Therefore, such a move did not adversely affect the activities of the Persian company. It was at this juncture that the timely assassination of Mazal brought this competition to an abrupt end.²⁰⁵ Later, not surprisingly, the rates were doubled again. For example, by 1900, when the Lynch Company had managed to monopolize the lower Karun trade, freight to London ranged from 27s 6d to 30s (and sometimes as low as 15s),²⁰⁶ and to India from 10s to 18s per ton. While, thanks to the absence of competitors, for the 80-mile journey between Muhammareh and Naseri, Messrs Lynch charged 8s, 12s, and 15s per ton according to the description of the goods.²⁰⁷ Identical conditions had been created by them on the Mesopotamian rivers.²⁰⁸ After the Naseri Co. placed a steamer (*Nosrat*) on the lower Karun, the rates dropped again.²⁰⁹

Apart from the political backing which the firm could draw upon, almost for the entire 25-year period of its activities the Lynch Co. was the recipient of a fairly generous subsidy from the governments of India and Britain. In May 1890, Messrs Lynch represented that they were working their steamer service on the lower Karun at a loss and therefore solicited a 'postal subsidy of £3,000 a year for 5 years'.²¹⁰ However, this 'liberal subsidy', which was intended to 'encourage' them to persevere,²¹¹ was cut after two years to £2,000 pa which continued until the end of the decade.²¹² Later it was further reduced to £1,000, and which only ceased in 1910–11.²¹³ One of the conditions attached to this financial assistance was that the firm should maintain a regular British steamer service on the Karun.²¹⁴ In 1896, for instance, the Lynch Co. pressed the British government for the renewal of the subsidy, or else threatened to give up their service. Messrs Lynch Bros even bluffed the Foreign Office that their rival, Mazal desired to buy their steamer, *Malamir*. The Sheykh was allegedly willing to spend 'a considerable sum' in order to get rid of the Persian officials whose presence was needed on account of the foreign enterprise.²¹⁵ The Foreign Office acceded to the company's demand. The firm also claimed that it paid an annual bribe of 4,000 *qerans* to Haji Rais. Thus, the latter with his

'great influence' had 'an interest in the English carrying trade on the Karun'.²¹⁶ This agreement was renewed in 1906. The Haji accordingly, it was reported, 'binds himself to protect the interest of the firm on the river',²¹⁷ obviously against the imminent competition of the Naseri Company.

In the course of time, the Lynch Company became very unpopular with the Persians as well as the British. A British local official, for instance, observed that the company's 'general reputation' was bad, and the wages it paid were about half those paid by other English companies or Messrs Wonckhaus for similar work. Furthermore, he continued, they 'always appear to regard' the British government 'as a rival commercial firm from whom they should obtain as much as possible, but to whom they should give as little information as they can . . . I have never met an (English) official with a good word for the Company'.²¹⁸ The rapid success of the Germans is a good indication of Messrs Lynch's total failure. As to the reason for easy victory, Messrs Wonckhaus' agent at Muhammareh, Randall, confided to the British consul that the Persians 'so disliked the firm of Lynch that he (i.e. Randall) had no need to undercut their rates', but on one occasion. He said that Messrs Lynch's employees had no idea how to treat Persians with any decency, and were far too 'rough and abrupt' with them. More importantly, by this time even the notorious Haji Rais had turned against them. When the British consul asked the Haji to lower their rent, he retorted 'where the firm of Messrs Lynch were concerned' he had seen 'too much of the company to have any spirit of conciliation in matters dealing with them'.²¹⁹ According to the British, the Bakhtiyari chiefs, too, 'hated' them. Even the British officials themselves had become so obviously impatient with the firm that Mr Lynch had to ask 'whether the Foreign Office had any prejudice against him'.²²⁰

A number of reasons could be given for this universal unpopularity of Messrs Lynch. Lorimer, for example, with his customary bias against the non-British, has blamed it on 'other circumstances for which they were not responsible'. The Sheykh looked on them with disfavour, he stated, 'the native merchants . . . dislike them as competitors and their obduracy in the principle of not paying bribes was bitterly resented by the Persian authorities'.²²¹ With regard to the last point, while it might be true that some Persian officials were corrupt, it is by no means certain that this applied to all of them. At the same time, we have already alluded to the fact that the British firm was more than willing to buy Haji Rais' protection. Therefore, it appears that this lack of popularity stemmed from many factors. One evident cause seems to have been their excessive greed. It has already been mentioned that at the beginning of their enterprise they raised their rates unilaterally, while Persian merchants were banned from using any boat but the *Blosse Lynch*.²²² The company blamed this steady rate increases on the 'unsatisfactory state of the Arab customs levied in Muhammareh on cargo belonging to Persian subjects'. Thus, the Shushtari merchants who were not satisfied with the explanation, appointed an Iranian 'captain' to pay all customs dues, freight, and other charges en route. The captain's first step predictably was to demand a reduction of one-third of the freight and threat-

ened that otherwise he would use Iranian sailing boats. This the company reckoned to be distinctly to his advantage. They felt powerless. So instead of lowering their rates, they reverted to the British official support in order to get rid of the captain altogether.²²³

Their claims over the Bakhtiyari road is another good case in hand. Apart from the smaller differences with the Khans, the Lynch Company maintained a claim for £8,500 for construction of the bridge and road. According to the contract, they had undertaken to execute the work for a sum 'not exceeding £5,500', a figure agreed to by them and then communicated to the Khans. The Bakhtiyaris had also accepted to pay interest of 6 per cent per annum on the original outlay. Now the Lynch Company demanded not only £3,000 extra, but also the rate of interest they wanted to charge was 12 per cent on the arrears. Under these circumstances the British government found the 'refusal of the chiefs to pay . . . intelligible'.²²⁴ They 'fairly loathe Messrs Lynch', Hardinge believed, as a result of 'their exorbitant demands.'²²⁵ In 1907 he wrote, 'when I was in Tehran in 1896-8 the Bakhtiyari chiefs were in very close relations with the British Legation and Haji Ali Qoli Khan was a firm believer in everything that was English. Thanks to Messrs Lynch all this has been changed and the Legation is now no longer in touch with the Chiefs'. And in 1908 a Foreign Office official commented 'we know that the Khans hate Mr Lynch'.²²⁶

Another series of differences arose from the company's claims that since 1890 the firm had run the steamer *Shushan* on the upper Karun at a loss and demanded that the Persian government should meet the deficit. This was despite the fact that from the start the management of the *Shushan* was handled by Messrs Lynch themselves and even all the crew had been appointed by them.²²⁷ From the start, too, the Persian government had considered the salaries of the European crew too high,²²⁸ and later this view was endorsed by the British too.²²⁹ Thus, it was agreed to let the company manage the affairs for three months on trial.²³⁰ 'In justice to the Persian government', Sykes reported, 'it must be stated that in June 1890 Nizam informed Amin that the steamer could not pay as worked by Messrs Lynch Bros'.²³¹ The arrangement continued nevertheless. When the accumulated claims of the deficit were presented in 1894, the Shah declared that he was not prepared to discharge them but was willing to take over the steamer and operate it himself. According to Messrs Lynch Bros, by 1906 this debt amounted to £21,700.²³² Apparently in consideration of other benefits the British gained by the enterprise, they decided not to press the matter. For them the situation was very delicate; if the Persian government requested that the *Shushan* should be taken off the river and sold in order to discharge the liabilities, they would destroy 'the line of communication that Messrs Lynch Bros have so carefully fostered', but would nevertheless be 'acting within their rights'.²³³ Thus, the question never came to a conclusion.

The relations between the firm and the Persian officials, too, were often less than cordial. The company, and the British in general, accused Iran of having recourse to a series of obstructive tactics and evasive methods. A good example in this regard was the relationship between the local agents of the company and

the local officials in Khuzestan. In January 1889²³⁴ a *kargozar* (agent of the Persian Foreign Office), Kazem Khan, was sent to Muhammareh to enforce the Karun Navigation Regulations. Another, Yusef Khan, was also appointed at Ahvaz. The differences which arose between these officials and the Lynch agents in Khuzestan were manifold, and cannot be discussed here.²³⁵ Nevertheless, and no doubt as a result of the British pressure, Kazem Khan, who was 'very active and serious in pursuit of his official duties', was removed from Muhammareh.²³⁶ The British also believed that the then governor-general, Nezam, 'secretly' was in 'full accord with the obstructive tactics of his subordinates',²³⁷ and that Moin enjoyed Nezam's, as well as Mazal's backing.²³⁸ Whereas, in 1896 Sykes reported that the latter had sworn to kill Moin 'should he dare to show his face', and that Moin was 'on the worst possible terms' with Nezam, whom he remembered as 'an inferior menial at Bushire'.²³⁹ In fact, Amin and other Persian officials very often went out of their way to accommodate the desires of Britain and its subjects in the province. The declaration of the prohibition on the use of any boat which did not belong to the Lynch Company is a good indication of this cooperative spirit on the part of the Persians. Even Wolff believed that the Persian government could not be 'accused of any want of zeal in the execution of their management'²⁴⁰ with regard to the Karun tramway, etc. Another point was the mistreatment of Iranian merchants by the company's agents. The situation became so intolerable that the Persian minister in London had to complain 'greatly' to Salisbury of this.²⁴¹

It appears that a combination of all the above factors contributed to the company's unpopularity. The consequences were predictable. The firm's first representative at Shushtar found difficulty in finding the commonest necessities of life and 'a boycott of British trade, as well as an interdict on personal intercourse with the agent, seemed at this centre to have been declared'.²⁴² It also led, in July 1893, to 'fanatical'²⁴³ demonstrations by some 3,000 people before Messrs Lynch's house at Shushtar. It was surrounded by the mob who had 'some sort of complaint' against them.²⁴⁴ In 1895 the soldiers felt aggrieved enough to assault the Lynch agent,²⁴⁵ and the more serious case of Tanfield has already been referred to.²⁴⁶ In 1908 the Shushtari merchants boycotted the *Shushan* for a while since the company refused to compensate them for their lost goods.²⁴⁷ Thus, it is hardly surprising that Messrs Wonckhaus found it so easy to successfully compete with the Lynch firm in Khuzestan and on the Karun.

Persian enterprises on the Karun

There was also at this time (1888-9) a great boom for commercial enterprises among the Persians, and the air was full of schemes of Persian companies for working steamship, road, tramway and railway projects. The Persians were anxious to allow no foreigners a share in these projects and were extremely jealous of foreign enterprises within their country.²⁴⁸

Muin gives us infinite trouble whenever we have any dealings with him in respect to our general interests in the (Persian) Gulf region.²⁴⁹

Muin is a tricky old gentleman who has an iron in most Persian fires, but I think he could be made to run straight.²⁵⁰

His Majesty's Minister reminded Muin that . . . if he had been in the past the strong man of the (Persian) Gulf . . . he must understand now that such a state of affairs would no longer be tolerated by His Majesty's Government, who were now the real masters in that region.²⁵¹

Throughout their quarter-of-a-century of activities in Khuzestan, Messrs Lynch faced competition, sometimes fierce, from the Persian nationals. The most visible aspect of this rivalry could be seen on the Karun. Here, it should be remembered that even before the Karun opening some representatives of the Iranian *tojjar* (merchants) had tried their hands in shipping. Aqa Abd-ul-Hoseyn, the son of Haj Zeyn-ul-Abedin-e Shirazi, was one such individual who, in partnership with some other Persian merchants of Bombay, set up a shipping company at that place in the late 1870s to early 1880s.²⁵² The company, which was styled Bombay Persia Steam Co.,²⁵³ had 'three large merchant ships' and, thanks to its nationality, soon monopolized the carrying trade of goods owned by Persian merchants between Bombay and Basra. At this time, only the steamers of the Lynch Co. had the right to navigate between the latter place and Baghdad, and this impeded, to a great extent, the activities of other companies including the Persian one.²⁵⁴ In the early 1910s, however, apparently due to serious competition from British and German steam lines, the Persian company sold its steamers and wound up. After that, this carrying trade was monopolized by 'the English' who, 'having seen no obstacles in their way and no rivals' began to exercise 'every sort of highhandedness on the merchants', and increased the passage by 30 per cent. They also used 'every form of . . . pressure, delayed merchandise and gave no answer for shortages'. The author of this 'Notice', Haji Soltan Ali Shushtari, believed that these matters involved loss and detriment to 'all Mosalmans, especially my Persian brethren, and more particularly to the respected merchants'. Thus, in 1913 he resolved to form an Eslami Shipping Co. which was, strangely enough, under the 'patronage' of the 'exalted British Government'.²⁵⁵

Here the interesting point is that, together with another important Persian merchant, namely Kazeruni, Shushtari was resident merchant at Bombay and worked, *inter alia*, as a middleman in purchase and forwarding of German goods at that place.²⁵⁶ The shipping company's capital was fixed at 1,000,000 rupees, viz. 4,000 shares of Rs 250 each. The principal object of its formation was said to be 'to remove foreign highhandedness and conduce ease to my compatriots . . . and checking foreign aggression'. The 'Notice' then concluded that 'the multiple wealth and the high progress of the Franks have been . . . due to the blessings of forming companies, and we hope that we, the Persians, will also realize the benefits of company-promoting . . . we shall thus rise to high degrees and be saved the disgrace of humiliation by foreigners'.²⁵⁷ The fate of this company would be beyond the scope of the present study. Reference to it has been made in order to indicate that foreign enterprises in the

area were not always unchallenged. The case of the Naseri Co. is another illuminating example.

As far as the economic development of Khuzestan was concerned, particularly in the private sector, the role of Aqa Mohammad Moin-ut-Tojjar-e Bushehri (also known as Dehdashti) was pivotal. Moin who was himself from the south (i.e. Fars) was one of the wealthiest merchants in Iran. His brother, Malek-ut-Tojjar-e Bushehri,²⁵⁸ too, qualified for this definition. Moin who was reputed to be the private banker of the Shah,²⁵⁹ also owned extensive estates in the country and especially in the south. He was said to have invested half of his vast savings to buy land.²⁶⁰ Thus, apart from his properties in Fars and Khuzestan, for example, he had the fief of large districts, such as the populous districts of Minab and Khamir, near Bandar Abbas.²⁶¹ His wealth could be gauged by the fact that his profits from the Hormoz oxide concession alone were estimated between £10,000 and £20,000 a year.²⁶² It also indicates the vastness of Moin's interests in the southern half of the country, which covered the entire length of the Persian coastline, from Ahvaz and Muhammareh at the head of the Persian Gulf to the islands of Larak and Qeshm, at its very mouth. As such, Moin's interests were obviously bound to clash with those of the British who were at this time endeavouring to consolidate their commercial as well as political hold over the entire extent of the Persian Gulf. Moin proved to be a thorn in their side.

In addition to his commercial activities, or perhaps because of them, Moin was involved in politics too. It also appears that he was, like Nezam, a patriot. His views were progressive and very nationalistic. A clear indication of this was the prominent role he played in the first *majles* (October 1906–June 1908) which was set up after the Revolution. In this *majles* the representatives of *bazaris* constituted no less than one-third, or 57 of the deputies (28 merchants and 29 craftsmen) which was the largest bloc. The *bazaris*, however, lost their pivotal position in the next *majles*. Together with Hoseyn Aqa Amin-uz-Zarb, Vakil-ut-Tojjar-e Yazdi, and some others, Moin, who was one of the most active deputies, represented the progressive faction of the *tojjar* in the assembly.²⁶³ His crucial speech on the question of 10,000,000 tumans loan from Russia and Britain illustrates his political inclinations, which were independent and against both powers. In opposition to the loan, Moin said that it would be detrimental both to the country and the nation to submit Iran to foreigners in return for a few million tumans. Instead, he suggested the money should be raised through internal sources. He said a bank should be established 'in the name of the nation and sell its shares to the people', and volunteered to give assistance in this regard. As a consequence, the Loan Bill was overwhelmingly rejected and, again at the instigation of the *tojjar*, the Proclamation for the establishment of a national bank was approved by the *majles*.²⁶⁴

This brief introduction on Moin and his views should enable us to understand the fierce animosity of the British towards him. The quotation from P. Cox, which has come at the beginning of this section bears this out. The British and Indian governments believed, perhaps rightly so, that Moin had systematically and consistently antagonized them whenever he had the opportunity

to do so. His past conduct had been, in the view of the Foreign Office, 'so unsatisfactory that the prospect of his renewing his concession for these islands (i.e. Larak, Qeshm, and Hengam) can not but be regarded as inimical to the British interests'.²⁶⁵ To further articulate these charges against Moin, Wilson prepared a 'Memo.' which was in fact an indictment of the man, containing 16 different cases in which Moin had somehow or other opposed the British. Predictably, most of the charges were connected with Moin's activities in competition with Messrs Lynch in Khuzestan, and his opposition as 'the moving spirit and now . . . the sole shareholder' of the Naseri Co. which was 'a source of perpetual trouble to us'.²⁶⁶

Naseri Co.

In 1887, it was proposed with the countenance of Amin to form a Persian syndicate headed by a wealthy merchant, Haji Mohammad Mehdi Motamed-us-Soltan, also known as Malek-ut-Tojjar who was Moin's brother, for the exploitation of a monopoly of trade on the Karun which the Persian government would grant them. Malek, though a Persian, was born in British India. He also professed willingness to admit British capital to the enterprise. At the end of 1888²⁶⁷ a special concession and monopoly were given to a Persian syndicate, styled the Naseri Co. of which the most prominent members were Malek and Moin. The company was invested with exclusive rights of navigation of the Karun and its branches above Ahvaz, an exception being made in favour of the Shah's steamer presented to him by the Lynch Co. The Persian company was also given the privilege of providing accommodation for the Lynch firm at Muhammareh, Ahvaz and Shushtar; to construct a quay, *caravansarais*, and shops at Naseri, where they were permitted to levy landing dues except from pilgrims. A tramway service at Ahvaz was to be constructed by them too. Various other advantages were conferred and duties imposed on them by the terms of the concession, which was declared untransferable to foreigners.²⁶⁸ Lorimer claims that both Amin and Nezam were behind the Naseri Co. and that the great influence of Mazal was also 'utilised – though secretly – to obstruct Messrs Lynch'. This was allegedly done by deflecting business from them by order, by manipulating the Customs of Muhammareh, by deterring labourers from working for Messrs Lynch, and by penalizing any relations with them.²⁶⁹ While Mazal told Robertson that he, on the contrary, had used his influence to encourage merchants to ship cargo by the Lynch's steamer, 'but they decline to do so', since Lynch's agent did not enjoy general confidence, etc.²⁷⁰

In November 1890 the Naseri Co. placed a steamer, the *Naseri* (63 feet long and 25 tons), which was principally used as a tug, taking two lighters (about 27 tons each) alongside, on the lower Karun.²⁷¹ The *Naseri* ran in competition with the Lynch steamer and in connection with the *Susa* on the upper Karun which also belonged to the Persian firm. In 1891 the *Naseri* was taken up the rapids to ply on the upper river and its place was taken by the 60-ton steamer, *Karun* which belonged to Mazal.²⁷² It ran a fortnightly service to Ahvaz in connection

with the Naseri Co. The Persian steamers reportedly carried about four-fifths of the cargo,²⁷³ but the majority of passengers travelled by the British steamer.²⁷⁴ By this time the Naseri Co. owned, in all, a small fleet of three steamers.²⁷⁵ In May 1893 the company announced that they had opened the Dez to traffic and placed the *Susa* on it. The enterprise, however, had to be abandoned on account of difficulty of navigation and problems regarding passes for cargo.²⁷⁶ The *Karun* ceased running at the end of April 1893 and the British firm monopolized the lower river.²⁷⁷ In February of the same year the British had placed a new steamer, *Malamir*, which was especially made for this job on the lower Karun.

Early in 1895 a new company, the Shahanshahi, was established under the auspices of Mazal and 'certain Shushtar merchants' for carrying trade on the lower Karun.²⁷⁸ The company hired a steamer which ran fortnightly between Muhammareh and Naseri. Almost at once (after 13 April 1895) they recaptured from Messrs Lynch all the local cargo and after July of the same year, nearly all the through cargo from Bombay to Shushtar.²⁷⁹ The Lynch Co. tried to undercut them and thanks to the subsidy they received, they halved their rates²⁸⁰ but this measure does not seem to have succeeded. It was with reference to this successful competition from Persian merchants *vis-à-vis* the Lynch Co. that the British held Moin responsible. He was accused of having 'hampered the early steps of our commerce on the Karun so seriously as almost to strangle it'.²⁸¹ In this regard, Mazal's motives seem to have been twofold. First, as long as the enterprise benefited him financially he was prepared to continue it. But in addition to economic factors, it appears that at the start of the Karun enterprise his position was ambivalent. Namely, he halfheartedly supported the British firm but was mindful of the Persian government and Nezam's reaction. In fact, in one of his interviews with Robertson which took place immediately after the Karun Proclamation, he told the Basra consul that if the British were prepared to promise him 'support and immunity from consequences he would do our bidding in everything but that, if not he must obey secret orders of the (first) Nizam'. He also told Robertson that his position between the Persians and the English 'was getting intolerable'.²⁸² So, after a while, when he was not reassured by the British, he began his fierce competition with the Lynch Co. and in 1895 resumed it with more vigour and energy than before.

However, Mazal's timely assassination and his replacement by the notoriously pro-British Khazal put an immediate end to the competition and thus saved the Lynch Co. from certain strangulation, and the British from loss of face and influence. It must have been more than just a coincidence that Khazal became the Shyakh of Muhammareh in June 1897, and in the same month the steamer of Shahanshahi Co. 'ceased to run'.²⁸³ It has already been mentioned that in 1895 Khazal had informed McDouall that if he came to power the fierce opposition of Mazal to Britain's Karun trade would cease.²⁸⁴ This gave the Lynch Co. a decade of uninterrupted monopoly on the lower river. Furthermore, when in July 1906 Moin placed a steamer, the *Nosrat* (80 tons) on the Karun 'it did well at first'²⁸⁵ and 'took away much cargo from the "Malamir"'²⁸⁶

which belonged to the British firm, but later the British consul reported that the *Nosrat* was not 'now very popular'. As the reason for this unpopularity, the same source observed 'the working of the ship is at times interfered with by the Shaikh, who considers that he has a prescriptive right to requisition it for his own use when he feels so disposed'.²⁸⁷ It is quite obvious that by thwarting Moin's efforts, Khazal wanted to make a show of his friendship to the British. It has also been mentioned that Haji Rais, the Sheykh's 'man of business' was 'under agreement' with the Lynch Co. 'to promote none but their interests, in return for which he has been in receipt of payment for many years'. Nevertheless, the Haji was accused by the firm of secretly supporting Moin's enterprise.²⁸⁸ If true, this could be explained by the fact that, in 1906, the 'agreement' between him and the British company was due for renewal. As the latter appeared to be dragging their feet, Haji Rais decided to show them his influence and its value for the Lynch Co. Here it should also be mentioned that at least on two occasions (1889–90 and 1906),²⁸⁹ mergers between the two companies, the Lynch and the Naseri, were attempted. But as the British company desired to control the other one, it did not materialize.

In any event, during the following year due to good crops there was enough cargo for both companies. In April 1908 the Naseri Company placed another steamer, the *Moaven* (35 tons) on the upper Karun.²⁹⁰ These steamers cleared their running expenses and left a small margin.²⁹¹ Moin had an engineer, stationed at Ahvaz, who attended to the requirements of the fleet. There were also complaints from the British firm that, by this time, Haji Rais favoured the Naseri Company.²⁹² Moin was rumoured to be negotiating with the German firm of Wonckhaus in order to enlist their support against the Lynch Company.²⁹³ At the same time, Moin was engaged in other enterprises in connection with the development of Khuzestan. In addition to public buildings at Ahvaz, the company laid a tramway there in 1890,²⁹⁴ and in 1906 improved rolling stock was added to it. The concern paid well and in ten months had made a net profit of 1,200 tumans.²⁹⁵ Moin was accused by the British of having used his monopoly of the tramway in order to impede the activities of the Lynch firm and the Oil Co.²⁹⁶ Moin also contemplated the introduction of a tramway or automobile service between Shushtar and Shalili or Band-e-Qir. To this end he hired a Scottish engineer who came to Khuzestan in the mid-1900s and examined the projects.²⁹⁷ Moin tried to encourage the Persian Transport Co. (Messrs Lynch Bros) to transfer the concession for the Dezful–Korram Abad road to the Naseri Company. The offer, however, was not entertained.²⁹⁸ But it was with regard to the question of the Hormoz oxide concession that the British tried to penalize Moin for his unfriendliness and lack of cooperation.

Moin and the Hormoz Oxide concession

On 9 September 1913 it was announced in Tehran that 'in accordance with the *farman* of September 1904, the concession of the mines of red oxide, salt and sulphur in the islands of Hormoz, Qeshm, Larak and Hengam and the ports of

Bostaneh and Khamir was given to Moin'.²⁹⁹ The British tried very hard to prevent this since, in Cox's words, from the point of view of 'our general interests here, to allow the Moin to get back his farm would . . . be an everlasting pity'.³⁰⁰ Confronted with this immense pressure, Moin, somewhat like Nezam, eventually had to come to terms with the British and accede to some of their demands. In this case too, Moin was forced to give them a written undertaking regarding his future good conduct, but his was not as strong as Nezam's since Moin's position was not as weak as that of the former. Although geographically this concession seems to be beyond the scope of our concern, its brief study can be illuminating in the following ways. First, as suggested above, there were strong similarities between Moin's problems with Britain and the case of Nezam. Second, it was Moin's activities in Khuzestan as the principal representative of the Persian *tojjar*, which had caused so much irritation to the British. At this period Britain's position was on the ascent in the Persian Gulf and it would not tolerate any opposition under any guise or from anyone be it Mazal, Nezam, or Moin.

By the 1904 *farman*, Moin received the above concession in return for 16,000 tumans down and 10,000 in rent and taxes.³⁰¹ It should be pointed out that in the late 1890s both Moin and Messrs A. and T.J. Malcolm (British subjects) had endeavoured to obtain the Hormoz concession. However, it was eventually given to Moin who had to pay 98,000 *qerans* to the latter as compensation.³⁰² Moin interpreted the 1904 concession as covering all the Persian Gulf, and in the following year tried to exploit the mines on the islands of Serri and Tonb which were Iranian territory. The British, on the other hand, wanted to give the mines on Serri to the British firm of Strick. It appears that Moin's ceaseless claims over these mines made it very difficult for Britain to implement this plan.³⁰³ In any event, in 1909 the Persian government declared the 1904 *farman* to be expired while the concessionaire maintained that it was in perpetuity. The result of Moin's efforts was that in 1910 he obtained a concession for ten years for mining rights on Hormoz, which was also confirmed by the *majles* in November 1911. Moin meanwhile continued his efforts to recover the rest of his original concession. The British opposed this plan on two grounds. First, they believed that these islands were the strategic key to the Persian Gulf. Thus Britain desired to exert control over them by means of 'a friendly understanding' with Iran 'as to our rights there', or by obtaining a concession for 'a reliable British firm'.³⁰⁴ Cox even went as far as suggesting that in order to prevent Moin's resumption of activities, Iran should be given a hint to the effect that conditions had altered and that unless there was a direct control from the central government 'it will be incumbent on us, for the protection of our interests, to adopt such measures as may seem called for'.³⁰⁵ The meaning of this language was of course quite plain. Britain was looking for an excuse to directly control or even occupy these islands.

The other reason for Britain's opposition with regard to the above concession was that Moin was believed to be too dangerous an individual to have such rights. Therefore, for them it was

of the highest importance to prevent his getting any further foothold in the (Persian) Gulf and to prevent the spread of an influence which has been uniformly hostile to us for the past twenty years or more, which has never benefited Persia, and is exercised by a man who lives permanently in the Russian zone and is consciously or unconsciously under Russian influence.³⁰⁶

This quotation indicates the extent to which the British officials were prepared to go to justify their views even if it meant a total misrepresentation of the realities. It goes without saying that foreign officials like Wilson were in no position to judge whether Moin's activities benefited Iran or not. It is also very dubious that such people were sincerely concerned about Iran's interests. But one thing is clear. Moin's interests continually conflicted with 'those of the British subjects, e.g. Messrs Lynch',³⁰⁷ Strick, and Malcolm in the region. It would be equally absurd to think that these British nationals desired to promote the interests of Iran rather than their own and their government's. Perhaps the more significant, as well as misleading point was Wilson's assertion that Moin was somehow under Russian influence. The latter's position *vis-à-vis* both powers has already been referred to and the British officials, too, must have been aware of it. Nevertheless, this accusation is not surprising. At this time all those who somehow or other opposed Britain or Russia were labelled as corrupt, under the influence of the other power, or a combination of both. Apparently, in Britain's view, Moin qualified for the third category.³⁰⁸

However, it was not so easy for the British to oppose Moin without unpleasant consequences. For one thing he was too powerful in Iran, and the British minister was aware of the risks of Moin's enmity. He advised the Foreign Office that 'if opposed' Moin might prove 'a tiresome enemy, against whom we shall stumble continually as he has great influence',³⁰⁹ and 'may make himself objectionable in many ways'.³¹⁰ The second consideration was the emergence of Germany at this period as a world power, and the immense influence it was beginning to wield in the Persian Gulf region. Moin, with his typical astuteness could always play the German card and thus make things even more difficult for Britain. For instance, in October 1913, when the British were still endeavouring to get a cancellation of his September concession, he went to the British Legation in Tehran and showed the minister a telegram from the principal German rival of the British in the Persian Gulf, namely the Hamburg–America Line,³¹¹ in which they had applied for the lease of the wharf in the south. Moin told Townley that he would instruct his agent to follow the advice of the local British consul in the matter, but Townley received the real message. 'His visit', he wrote, 'was intended to serve two purposes: to make a show of friendship, and to warn us that he can make himself disagreeable by encouraging German enterprise . . . if we thwart him'.³¹² Thus, he suggested that an agreement should be arrived at. The condition was that, in return for Britain's withdrawal of the opposition, Moin should give Townley 'a written undertaking that he will in future take into consideration the desires and interests of His Majesty's Government in the (Persian) Gulf and take their advice'.³¹³ Moin was

also advised that he should try to conform to the altered circumstances and 'unless he could assure us that he would loyally cooperate in the work in hand', Britain would use 'all the influence it possessed' to prevent him from regaining his position. He was urged to try to work 'in unison' with the British Legation and the Resident at Bushehr.³¹⁴ At the same time, the British minister advised the Foreign Office that now was the time to come to this agreement with Moin since 'we have him on his knees now and could make our own conditions'.³¹⁵

In view of the vehemence of the British opposition to his schemes, Moin saw no alternative but to accede to the 'desires' of the British. He thus declared that he was prepared to give the undertaking, and said that his object had been and would continue to be, solely 'the furtherance of his own commercial interests', and he would see that the clash with Britain's interests did not occur in the future.³¹⁶ Thus, on 9 September 1913 Moin's concession was renewed,³¹⁷ but Britain was kept in the dark until after the settlement.³¹⁸ Townley, believing that many of the cabinet ministers had received bribes, reported that 'it was clear . . . that we shall only secure cancellation of Moin's Concession by the exercise of very strong pressure such as may seriously affect our relations with Persia, and create no small animus in the Mossolman world. Moin is very powerful'.³¹⁹ Prior to this, however, the Legation had already secured from Moin 'the assurance that I would let no any other but British subjects to participate in my concession, which I promised'. He also informed his trading partner in England that the British were angry that they had not been informed about the renewal of the concession in advance: 'I was under the impression' he wrote

that, owing to the assurances that Sir E. Grey gave to me . . . that he would protect my rights, he would be now glad that I succeeded, and would help me. But, unfortunately, I see the contrary. I gave the assurance to the legation not to give any share in the concession to non-English subjects, and to serve to their aims in the measure if possible. I think that the British minister has got the assurance, as I see that he is inclined to make an arrangement to give me the assurance that he will help me in the future. Now I can not foresee if after this all London will help me also, or whether the politics will judge otherwise.³²⁰

German competition

By the end of December quarter (1913), i.e. after six months' working only, Messrs Wonckhaus and Company's two launches were carrying as much cargo upwards as Messrs Lynch Brothers' 'Malamir', and the position threatened to be worse in June (1914).³²¹

The question of this German competition has overshadowed all other subjects in political importance in Arabistan (Khuzestan) . . . It is undeniable that the German firm is carrying out its attack very well . . . Their name consequently stands well and brings them in much trade.³²²

German competition in Khuzestan was the extension of the serious politico-commercial challenge it posed to the British power in the Persian Gulf just before the War. The focus of our study here will be the German competition on the Karun, and other enterprises connected with it. However, before discussing this competition, it would be helpful to make a short review of the general position of the Germans in the Gulf in this period. Statistics show that German exports to Persia rose considerably after 1908, which was chiefly a result of the inauguration of the Hamburg–America Line to the Persian Gulf. In the early 1900s, the shipping trade in the Gulf was ‘practically exclusively in British hands’, the sugar export trade to the region was then ‘almost entirely from Marseilles’ and was served by British lines.³²³ Generally, the backbone of German trade outwards consisted of railway material and sugar.³²⁴ In the Gulf, the advent of the Hamburg–America Line brought the German sugar manufacturers into competition with the French refineries, and the former gradually began to monopolize the trade. Belgian sugar was too expensive to compete with German.³²⁵

Steamers of the Hamburg–America Line began to call at Muhammareh from August 1906 and took cargo for London with transshipment at Hamburg. As a result of their appearance, the freight rate from Muhammareh to London, which averaged about £1. 2s. 6d. per ton fell to 10s. during the date season.³²⁶ The Wonckhaus company, who were the agents of the Hamburg–America Line in Basra, very cleverly appointed Haji Rais (or his son, Moshir-ut-Tojjar) as the company’s agent in Khuzestan.³²⁷ Messrs R. Wonckhaus and Co. themselves were also represented at Muhammareh. At the beginning, the German steamers brought a good deal of cargo, mostly of British origin, for British firms.³²⁸ But in the period 1909–13 German exports to Iran alone rose from an annual value of about £125,000 to £542,000, representing a miscellaneous trade in which the largest elements were sugar, chemicals, etc.³²⁹ For example, by 1912 more than three quarters of the cargo for Persian ports of the Gulf was reportedly sugar, and about 35 per cent of all the sugar imported up the Gulf – about 40,000 tons – was already coming in German vessels.³³⁰ Between 1908–9 and 1910–11 the imports of sugar (loaf and crystal) to Muhammareh by Germans grew from 6,550 packages to 20,700.³³¹

Generally, the reason behind this quick success of the Germans in the Persian Gulf was reportedly their ability to offer lower freight rates and thus to undercut their rivals. Thus, the British local officials firmly believed that it was the ‘intimate co-operation’ between the German government and the German companies which gave them the strength to do this.³³² They had no doubt that the Hamburg–America Line had entered the Gulf trade under government auspices with a view to ‘establishing a footing’ for the Germans in the Persian Gulf ‘in connection with the Baghdad railway’. So, the British argued, it was ‘an impossibility’ for British shipowners to compete with the Hamburg–America Line ‘subsidised as that company is either directly or indirectly by the German government’.³³³ The study of the activities of the Wonckhaus Company, however, will prove that apart from the alleged subsidy, the Germans

used more efficient and effective methods of business than the British firms. This was behind their great success.

It was after July 1913 that the German 'politico-commercial combination' focused their chief attention on Khuzestan, and for British interests the situation 'suddenly became acute'. British experts believed the following to be the 'eventual results of the German attack:

- 1 capture of nearly all the Karun transport,
- 2 capture, again from Messrs Lynch Bros, of much of their forwarding business on the Lynch road
- 3 extension of German trade in all commercial centres of Khuzestan and acquisition of a definite commercial interest in its trade.³³⁴

The main vehicle of the German penetration of Khuzestan, and the Persian Gulf generally, was the firm of Messrs R.W. Wonckhaus and Company. It had been established at 'Lingah or Bahrain' in the late 1880s. For many years Wonckhaus did little or no business and according to the British sources, for about ten years after Wonckhaus first went to the Gulf 'he could not have made more than paid his house rents and living expenses'.³³⁵ But later it began to flourish. In 1907-8 the firm, which was then based at Basra, engaged a piece of ground adjoining the river bank at Muhammareh for a grain wharf at 10,000 *qerans* per annum. It was leased from Khazal, and Haji Rais was the mediator.³³⁶ Still by 1910 they seemed to do 'very little business' and this was 'not of a remunerative kind'.³³⁷ Then in July 1913 the firm placed its first steamer, the *Pioneer* (130 tons), on the lower Karun. This was immediately followed by the tug *Samara* (75 tons), which though under the control of Wonckhaus, flew the Turkish flag. Up to the close of the year these two ships towing two barges (110 and 85 tons) had each made 12 trips on the Karun and had disposed of 1,423 tons of cargo.³³⁸

In addition to threatening the position of Messrs Lynch on the Karun, the German firm also made large purchases of cereals reportedly 'regardless of prices ruling at home'. For instance, in 1912 it had succeeded in shipping 'nearly twice as much barley as, and more wheat than, all the British firms in Bushire combined', and 'very similar results' attended their operations at Muhammareh. In this season they 'practically controlled the export trade in grain'.³³⁹ The Germans usually outbid the British firms and the Persian sellers naturally sold to them. The result was that the British firms were kept out of the local market. It was through the cheaper freight for Wonckhaus in the Hamburg-America Line steamers (about 15s. per ton as against 20s. to 22s 6d. for the British) that the Germans could constantly overbid the British companies.³⁴⁰ Another reason for this was that the barley often fetched a higher price (ex duty) at Hamburg than at the United Kingdom ports. However, the British firms could not get their barley to Hamburg since the British steamers would not go there and Messrs Wonckhaus secured all space on the Hamburg-America Line boats. Thus, the situation became so difficult for the British firms that some of them, like the Basra Trading Co. which had been established in

the Persian Gulf for many years, had to cease operations owing to 'their inability to cope with Messrs Wonckhaus' competition'.³⁴¹

Obviously, apart from the alleged political and economic support that the German firm received from its government (the British firms, too, enjoyed this kind of backing), its quick success appears to have been due to the efficiency and energy of its staff as well as their scrupulous treatment of Persian merchants. As a consequence, by the early 1910s Messrs Wonckhaus had established agencies at virtually all principal commercial centres of the Persian Gulf, i.e. Bushehr, Lengeh, Muhammareh, Bandar Abbas, Bahrain, Basra, and Baghdad.³⁴² In the course of 1913 the firm went from strength to strength. It made an agreement with a resident merchant of Ahvaz, Haj Fath Ullah Fathi, to handle their transit trade on the Lynch road.³⁴³ The firm also secured the support of the inevitable Haji Rais who, by this time, reportedly received 'presents' from the German company too, and had an interest in their business to the extent of (Turkish) £3,000.³⁴⁴ Messrs Wonckhaus had also eventually obtained a five-year lease from Moin of a wharf at 600 tumans per annum.³⁴⁵ The Germans even wanted to place a steamer on the upper Karun.³⁴⁶ Despite the political pressures of the British to stop a further extension of the German company's enterprises in Khuzestan, the firm continued its successful competition. For instance, the British consul, Haworth, received a written undertaking from Khazal that no more facilities would be extended to Messrs Wonckhaus at Ahvaz.³⁴⁷ The British feared that the Germans were throwing 'a fairly extensive net' over Khuzestan.³⁴⁸ In preparation for the 1914 grain season, which promised a bumper harvest, the Germans showed much activity and the company's agent, Randall, was making 'very large advances on very favourable terms' to grain dealers.³⁴⁹ The British concern was that the arrival of the Germans in strength would not only adversely affect their position in the province, but would also undermine Khazal, 'inasmuch as it will be the policy of the Germans to refer matters of interest for arrangement between their Legation in Tehran and the Persian government'.³⁵⁰

It seems that the business methods of the German firm were the crucial element in its easy and rapid success. For instance, in 1913 the company began by cutting the price charged by Messrs Lynch as freight, and their tugs went from wharf to wharf at Muhammareh collecting cargo, and thus saving merchants hire for small lighters. 'Regular running, accessibility, and attention to business' were given as the reasons for their initial success. Messrs Wonckhaus were running their steamers at a profit and with such greater economy than in the case of *Malamir* (British) that, even in Chick's opinion, 'they could afford to reduce their freight by nearly 50 per cent without actually losing money'.³⁵¹ This evaluation indicates that even without the financial and political supports of their government, a point which was always exaggerated by other British officials and traders, the German firm could easily continue its successful competition. This also enabled them to outbid their rivals in the trade of cereals. But the way Germans treated their clients must have aided them to a great extent. The firm, it was reported, 'consider their clients, their convenience and foibles'. 'They paid

the customs dues at port of entry or where bulk was broken, and recovered on delivery'; similarly with other charges. Any shortage in consignment they paid up 'liberally and without question or delay'. Their rates were favourable and lastly, but by no means least among reasons, they treated their clients 'with politeness and even go out of their way to suit their convenience'.³⁵² This was exactly the opposite of Messrs Lynch's attitude. It is not surprising, then, that the German firm had no need to undercut them except once. Randall found that Persian merchants would always deal with him by choice.³⁵³

To counter the German competition several propositions, such as the grant of subsidy to British exporters of grain from southern Iran and subsidized shipping, were put forward. However, with regard to the Karun enterprise, the crucial suggestion by experts was that the Lynch Company should be abandoned since it was 'not one upon whom reliance can be placed'.³⁵⁴ Early in 1914 the Karun trade of Messrs Lynch Bros was taken over by a new company³⁵⁵ behind which was the British India Steam Navigation Company. This measure to some extent effected an improvement in the general commercial position of Britain in the area.³⁵⁶ But it seems that it was the War and the developments that followed which finally assisted Britain in this region.

Conclusion

The quotations at the beginning of this chapter neatly summarize the process by which Britain could open up Khuzestan, expand her interests, and finally consolidate her dual, namely political and commercial, position there. It is indeed difficult to separate these two from each other; more so when the role of a mercantile world power is analysed in an area, which by the close of the period had become almost a semi-colony of Britain. But this somewhat arbitrary distinction helped us to gain some insight into the above process. Now, it might again be useful to look at the question in its entirety. Britain's interests in this region, and indeed in the entire Persian Gulf area, were both political and commercial. These were also inseparable since they complemented each other and reacted on one another. Through the Karun Britain gained a major foothold in the region, and by the implementation of a well-planned policy exploited this opportunity to the full. It gradually managed to expand its position until by 1910 it was 'recognised' that Britain's 'most valuable' interests in Persia lay 'in, or adjacent' to Khazal's territory.³⁵⁷ The latter became the chief medium through whom that power achieved its dual goal of economic and political domination of the region. This position had been tenuous and shaky until the accession to power of Khazal. An indication of this was the danger which, until Mazal's assassination, the Persian companies posed to Britain's most valuable asset and representative in Khuzestan, i.e. the Lynch Company. Khazal not only saved it from strangulation but also gave it a breathing space of ten years. But even after this, when the Persian company resumed its challenge on the lower Karun, Khazal's constant interference impeded its growth and weakened it.

From the start of his career, Khazal demonstrated his sincerity and subservience to Britain. His services were duly rewarded and his 'friendship' reciprocated by a series of assurances which guaranteed the future of Khazal, his successors and their extensive properties. These assurances also strengthened the Sheykh's position *vis-à-vis* the central government as well as other sheykhs and chiefs. This mutual friendship worked very well to the advantage of both parties and to the detriment of the Iranian nation. British officials believed that any strengthening of the Sheykh's political position and his prosperity would be beneficial to them since Khazal's interests were 'bound up with ours', they maintained.³⁵⁸ Thanks to the 1903 *farmans*, the Sheykh's 'agreements' with Moin and the Bakhtiyari Khans, and finally Nezam's undertakings, in all of which Britain had a major hand, Khazal achieved a predominant position in Khuzestan. And this benefited Britain greatly. Finally, Moin's capitulation to its pressures with regard to yet another 'undertaking' for future good conduct, ensured that there would be no internal hindrance to Britain's designs for the region. The external threat of German competition, which for Britain was a problem at an international level, was to be dealt with through the war.

9 Conclusions

کانال سرزمین تاریخ

<https://t.me/AmirNematiLimaee>

When of two parties one is bent on a certain object, and the other is averse to it, the first is likely, sooner or later, to gain the day . . . the aggressive party is the most active, and is always working for and furthering its object, while the quiescent party can do little more but bide its time.¹

The purpose of this book has not been to study British imperialism through an analysis of its diplomacy towards Iran. On the contrary, a deliberate attempt has been made to avoid this approach for several reasons. First, as the existing literature on this period shows, this is the approach which has been adopted all too often by contemporary scholars of Iranian history. The works of Greaves and Kazemzadeh are two better-known examples. Second, imperialism is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon whose nature and mechanisms cannot be studied from one angle alone. For this purpose, the study of diplomatic history which is either based on the compilation of diplomatic data, or is sometimes reduced to an abstract 'Study of the Foreign Policy of the Third Marquis of . . .', irrespective of the wider economic and political determinants, is not sufficient. This approach, which is preoccupied with diplomatic problems fails to provide satisfactory answers to important questions since it tends to ignore the fact that usually political decisions and events are mere manifestations of deeper undercurrents. In other words, it concentrates on the effects at the cost of ignoring the causes. A history written from this perspective is at best incomplete, and at worst a distorted version of actual historical processes. As an instrument of foreign policy of different countries, the study of diplomatic history can be important in its own right, but only inasmuch as it can contribute to the understanding of wider political problems.

It is only within a more broadly conceived theoretical framework that the study of Wolff's policies and his mission to Iran can have any meaning. The quotation cited at the beginning of this part is symbolic of Wolff's personal philosophy and his views on the great power rivalry in this period, which proved to be so destructive for Iran. He arrived in 1888 with the mission to 'revitalise' Iran, or in plainer language to 'open up' the country to British commerce and

influence. Obviously, Britain's foreign policy in any period of its modern history has been the outcome of conflicting forces, interests, and views in British society as reflected in the centres of decision-making. It would be simplistic to interpret this policy in terms of a consistent, uni-dimensional process. In this period, the adoption by Britain of a fairly adventurous policy in Iran, coupled with other factors, enabled it to gain a number of quick diplomatic victories over its Russian rival. Wolff's own perseverance and energetic representations played a part in this process. However, the exploitation of the concessions thus obtained posed a serious threat to the integrity of Iran as a sovereign state and greatly diminished its freedom of action and independence. This policy brought about an intensification of Anglo-Russian rivalry, whose logical outcome could only be the partition in 1907 of an unprepared and unprotected Iran into spheres of influence.

The major concern of this work has been to study the manner in which the most important of these concessions – that involving the Karun – was obtained, how it was exploited, and what impact it had on the course of subsequent developments. Most attention has been devoted to the third aspect, namely the consequences of the concession, which have been studied at three different but interrelated levels: international, national, and regional. The focus has been largely on economic consequences, while the diplomatic aspects have been discussed briefly.

At the international level, contrary to the claims of Greaves, *et al.*, at this time the 'revitalization' of Iran did not mean strengthening the country in order to enable it to play the role of a buffer zone between Russia and India. This policy, if implemented, logically would have entailed a total or at least partial exclusion of Russia from Iran and its affairs. Whereas in reality Wolff, no doubt acting on behalf of the British government, proposed to Russia that it, too, should join Britain in the exploitation of Iran's resources. If Russia was not ready to accept this invitation, Britain would go it alone. Wolff's idea, which was a reflection of the views of British capitalists at this time, was to open up Iran and put Britain's economic position in the country on a sound and secure footing. If, owing to the predominance of Russia in the north, it was not possible to achieve this goal at a national level, Britain could strive to dominate the south.

The Karun concession proved to be a turning point in the process of the monopolization of the southern trade by Britain while the north was under Russian influence. It is true that this process had already begun in the 1870s, but it was reinforced by the Russo-Turkish War and then consolidated by the opening of the Karun. As far as the economy and foreign trade of the south were concerned, the region became dependent on Britain, while a parallel development occurred in the north in relationship to Russia. This was facilitated through the concessions that the latter power obtained in compensation for the Karun. The network of communications that Russia could thus establish in the north further strengthened its already powerful position, while further developments in the south, such as the oil discovery, enhanced the importance of the region to the British.

Thus, while Russia predominated in the north, by the end of the period and just before the First World War, Khuzestan was not only under the total economic domination of Britain but also, thanks to Khazal, it had virtually become a semi-colony. During the War there were, of course, the oil-fields over which Britain had gained control, to be protected. The British were thus provided with an excuse to occupy Khuzestan and complete their designs for the region. As a natural outcome of this process the economy of the south, particularly that of Khuzestan, gradually became an appendage of the international capitalist system. For instance, while in the mid-1880s it was reported that price fluctuations in European markets did not influence, to a corresponding extent, local prices in south Persia,² by the end of the period this process of integration had reached the stage where any price-changes on the European markets were almost immediately felt in Khuzestan and south Persia.

At the regional level we endeavoured to show the social and economic transformation of Khuzestan after the Karun opening. With this event, the groundwork for the systematic opening up of South-West Persia in general and Khuzestan in particular was laid, and the Karun became Britain's bridgehead for expanding the scope of its influence in the south. This event also had far-reaching consequences for the social and economic structure of the region itself. In the 1880s the socio-economic matrix of Khuzestan could be best described as pre-modern. The transformation of this system consequent upon the Karun concession was significant. Some of the main social and demographic changes were an increase in the total population of the province, greater sedentarization, and its corollary – more urbanization. On the economic front the Karun opening led to a redistribution of existing trade in the south, brought about new habits of consumption and, at the same time by virtue of affecting and tapping the communities which had hitherto been largely subsistent, created a new dynamism which could be regarded as one of the hallmarks of the cash-economy. There was a boost in the export trade. So more people were recruited for agricultural production. This in turn created a greater demand for consumer goods, which were almost entirely Indian and British. Cash was offered to growers and labourers whose work was needed in an expanding economy in which money, with the far-reaching changes that it wrought, played an increasing role. As a consequence, the social fabric of the province and the salient features of its economic life gradually underwent a qualitative transformation.

Until the rise of Khazal to absolute supremacy, the introduction of money into the somewhat closed economy of the region, especially in the tribal areas, had tended to weaken the grip of the sheykhs over their Arab subjects. The sheykhs who had previously enjoyed a full command of tribal labour in return for little more than 'the simplest food' were now faced with a rapidly changing situation as so many of the very poor who had depended on them had set themselves up as farmers.³ The partial destruction of this archaic social system resulted in the somewhat temporary emancipation of some segments of the Arab population, later to fall under Khazal's oppressive economic and political domination. For it enabled them to offer their labour on the still-limited urban,

or the relatively larger rural labour markets in return for a wage which was usually paid in cash. In the rural areas this process had begun as a consequence of the central government's land policy, which was initially based on the grant of land to cultivators. It was, however, severely hampered by the subsequent implementation of a distorted version of this land policy, which gradually gave rise to the emergence of large estates owned by local potentates or state grantees. The emancipation could not be sustained if the cultivators were once again put under a system similar to the previous one, but now reinforced through legal recognition by the authorities. Obviously, in a sparsely populated area like Khuzestan, without the manpower, even the best land was valueless. The sheykhs knew that as long as the cultivators had the option to work on their own land, their continual exploitation by large landowners would not be possible. Hence the land-grabbing policy of Khazal, designed to regain command of cheap labour through the control and monopoly of all arable lands.

An interesting point here is that in some cases the introduction of money into the pre-capitalist economic system of South-West Persia had almost the opposite effects of that witnessed elsewhere in Iran. Namely, it strengthened rather than weakened the ties between the population and the land. This anomaly can be explained by the fact that the population of the area was predominantly nomadic, and sedentarization was in its early stages. However, this was only one aspect of rural change in Khuzestan. The other development was the emergence of large estates in the area, which by the end of the period transformed its socio-economic structure from a system of tribal nomadism into one of semi-feudalism. In Khuzestan money had played a role which was historically opposite to that observed elsewhere.

With respect to the third dimension of the analysis, namely the effects of the Karun opening at a national level, the following observation can be made. The history of the Karun enterprise epitomizes many of the important features of Western imperialist policies, which obstructed the growth of an independent bourgeoisie in the countries of the Third World. Marx predicted, rather optimistically, that the country which is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed 'the image of its own future'.⁴ Unfortunately, reality proved him wrong. Western Europe left the rest of the world far behind and this was not a matter of fortuitous accident, or of the hypothetical social or racial peculiarities of different peoples. It was determined by the nature of the western European development itself.

At a certain stage of its development Europe's feudalistic economic system went through a period of disintegration and decay, the salient features of which appear to have been:

- 1 an increase in agricultural output accompanied by massive displacement of peasants and consequently the emergence of a potential industrial labour force;
- 2 a general division of labour and with it the evolution of a class of merchants and artisans accompanied by the growth of the towns;

- 3 a spectacular accumulation of capital in the hands of the expanding and rising class of merchants and wealthy peasants. It is the confluence of these processes (and a number of other secondary developments) that forms the 'indispensible precondition'⁵ for the emergence of capitalism as a mode of production.

By comparison and assuming that the above theories are universally applicable, in the less-developed parts of the world, including Iran, this process was impeded and later distorted for two major reasons. First, having acquired a head start, Europe began to exploit, in the form of commercial links or outright occupation and colonization, the natural resources of these regions, and to dominate their national markets. This not only severely hampered the process of capital accumulation but also, through the transfer of the capital already generated from the dependent country to the imperial metropolis, changed the natural course of economic development in these areas, and made them economically dependent. In the case of Iran, however, this took a more complex and subtle form since officially the country never lost its independence. Thus, Iran's exploitation had to be effected solely through a lengthy process of commercial penetration. The situation was all the more delicate since there existed a fine balance between Russia, which dominated the northern trade, and Britain, which prevailed in the south.

A second factor, which prevented the emergence of an independent bourgeoisie in Iran stemmed from the nature of the state and its role. Significantly, in Europe the states were progressively subjected to the control of capitalist interests and became increasingly active in aiding and advancing budding entrepreneurs. They all employed the power of the state, 'the concentrated and organized force of the society' to hasten 'hothouse fashion', the transformation of the feudal mode of production into a capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition.⁶ In Iran, however, the role of the state, personified by the Shah, was exactly the opposite of its counterpart in Europe. Historically, the essential prerequisite for the development of a bourgeoisie, namely the right to the private ownership of property and its sanctity, was in practice not recognized by the state in Iran. This is illustrated by the numerous cases of confiscation of the properties of the Shah's subjects including his *vezirs*. Even the 1888 Life and Property Proclamation did not effect any practical change in the prevailing social conditions. Considering the consequences of the Proclamation, it is more likely that here the real intention was not to create conditions favourable to the emergence of an Iranian national bourgeoisie as an independent class, but to reassure British capitalists whose participation in the 'development' of Iran was considered essential. A by-product of this process, which eventually resulted in the economic dependence of Iran and the domination of her national market by foreigners, was the emergence of a dependent bourgeoisie which owed the continuation of its existence to the perpetuation of the country's economic dependence.

Some of the policies of Britain with regard to the aspirations of the tradi-

tional Iranian merchant class, which in addition to internal social obstacles at this time also confronted fierce competition from foreigners, bear this out. The case of Moin-ut-Tojjar has already been discussed in the text and can be paralleled by many other instances such as the episode of the Bushehr Trading Company and the issue of its *bijaks* in 1897, thwarted by the strong economic and political pressure of the Imperial Bank.⁷ This was only one of the many attempts made by the Iranian bourgeoisie to utilize its national market which, as in other cases, was successfully blocked by the foreign concerns that dominated it. These foreign enterprises usually enjoyed the political support of their governments in their efforts to ward off the economic challenges of Persian entrepreneurs. The cases of Messrs Lynch's Karun enterprise and the Imperial Bank of Persia illustrated this point. On the other hand, some of these firms, such as the Lynch Company, also had the economic backing and financial assistance of their governments, which enabled them to meet these challenges more effectively.

Thus, the task of the Iranian bourgeoisie, compared with its counterpart in Europe, had become doubly difficult. On the one hand this class had to struggle against the state, and on the other, it was being crushed by an unequal foreign competition. Through the Constitutional Revolution the nascent bourgeoisie, together with the intelligentsia and segments of the *olam*, tried to rid itself of an oppressive regime and the foreign domination. But since it still lacked a strong economic base in the country, this class could not fully exploit the more favourable social conditions of the mid-1900s and, after a brief period, it lost the important political position it had acquired. Instead, the large landowners, who in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries had managed to establish for themselves a solid economic base, usurped the political power as soon as the opportunity arose. Their strong economic base provided them with the necessary muscle to do this and, in league with the still-insignificant dependent bourgeoisie, they managed to hold on to political power and rule the country for the next 50 years.

Appendices

Tables

Table I Value of all imports to and exports from the Persian ports of the Persian Gulf, 1873–89 (rupees × 1,000)

| | <i>Port</i> | <i>Bushehr</i> | <i>Lengeh</i> | <i>Bandar Abbas</i> |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1873 | Exports | 3,921 | 6,585 | na |
| | Imports | 4,603 | 8,879 | na |
| 1874 | Exports | 3,902 | na | 1,766 |
| | Imports | 3,598 | 9,124 | 1,738 |
| 1875 | Exports | 1,862 | 6,233 | na |
| | Imports | 5,159 | 21,304 | na |
| 1876 | Exports | 6,006 | 3,673 | 1,473 |
| | Imports | 4,597 | 4,231 | 1,531 |
| 1877 | Exports | 7,736 | 4,837 | 2,415 |
| | Imports | 3,367 | 4,968 | 2,729 |
| 1878 | Exports | 13,741 | 6,612 | 1,399 |
| | Imports | 7,396 | 8,266 | 1,325 |
| 1879 | Exports | 8,095 | 5,737 | na |
| | Imports | 18,777 | 6,766 | na |
| 1880 | Exports | 10,018 | 5,986 | na |
| | Imports | 16,866 | 6,829 | na |
| 1881 | Exports | 7,984 | 7,324 | 4,632 |
| | Imports | 7,934 | 8,182 | 7,030 |
| 1882 | Exports | 6,566 | 5,940 | na |
| | Imports | 10,189 | 6,922 | na |
| 1883 | Exports | 7,372 | 7,335 | 3,101 |
| | Imports | 13,739 | 8,132 | 5,071 |
| Yearly average 1874–83 | Exports | 7,247 | 5,964 | 2,464 |
| | Imports | 9,072 | 7,723 | 3,237 |
| 1884 | Exports | 6,735 | 7,631 | 2,654 |
| | Imports | 10,098 | 8,826 | 3,779 |
| 1885 | Exports | 7,445 | 8,649 | 3,876 |
| | Imports | 9,962 | 9,388 | 3,897 |
| 1886 | Exports | 6,929 | 6,523 | 3,288 |
| | Imports | 8,000 | 7,224 | 4,394 |
| 1887 | Exports | 6,008 | 7,319 | 3,886 |
| | Imports | 8,579 | 7,361 | 4,516 |
| 1888 | Exports | 5,761 | 8,714 | 4,384 |
| | Imports | 8,068 | 10,712 | 4,255 |
| 1889 | Exports | 7,825 | 8,572 | 4,916 |
| | Imports | 11,566 | 8,628 | 5,170 |
| Yearly average 1884–93 | Exports | 7,729 | 8,345 | 3,860 |
| | Imports | 12,182 | 9,087 | 4,848 |

Sources: J.A. Saldana, 'Précis on Commerce and Communication in the Persian Gulf (1801–1905)', 1906, Appendix F, Tables 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17: IOR/L/P&S/20/C.248A.

Note

The first Trade Report for Muhammareh is dated 18 June 1891 (IOR/V/23/60).

Table II Bushehr: Exports and imports, 1873–1904 (rupees × 1,000)

| | Country | United Kingdom | India | Turkey (Turkish Arabia) | Dutch East India (Java) | China | France | Germany | Russia | Other European countries | Total |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------|--------|---------|--------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1873 | Exports | 318 | 1,303 | 143 | 60 | 976 | | | | | 3,921 |
| | Imports | 758 | 2,358 | 505 | 689 | | | | | | 4,603 |
| Annual average 1874–83 | Exports | 1,491 | 2,968 | 281 | 155 | 3,300 | | | | | 8,315 |
| | Imports | 3,321 | 4,098 | 208 | 626 | 228 | | | | | 9,072 |
| Annual average 1884–93 | Exports | 1,179 | 2,167 | 519 | | 3,324 | | | | 42 | 7,729 |
| | Imports | 6,505 | 4,726 | 73 | 208 | 99 | | | | 610 | 12,182 |
| Annual average 1894–1903 | Exports | 1,707 | 1,427 | 406 | | 3,302 | 34 | 52 | 1 | | 7,910 |
| | Imports | 9,356 | 4,338 | 480 | | 216 | 1,201 | 242 | 60 | | 17,071 |
| 1904 | Exports ¹ | 1,088 | 1,844 | 417 | | 2,771 | 52 | 70 | 99 | | 6,825 (£454,000) |
| | Imports ¹ | 5,840 | 3,060 | 294 | 118 | 304 | 1,047 | 602 | 505 | | 13,347 (£890,000) |

Source: Saldana, 'Précis on Commerce and Communication in the Persian Gulf', 1906, Part III, Chapter XIV, p. 45; (IOR) L/P&S/20/C.248A.

Note

¹ Calculated as £1 = 15 rupees.

Table III Importation of piecegoods into Bushehr, 1873–84 (rupees \times 1,000)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>From England</i> | <i>From India</i> |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1873–4 | 668 | 1,090 |
| 1874–5 | 435 | 1,050 |
| 1875–6 | 1,220 | 676 |
| 1876–7 | 1,300 | 770 |
| 1877–8 | 300 | 120 |
| 1878–9 | 1,400 | 1,500 |
| 1879–80 | 6,500 | 2,200 |
| 1880–1 | 4,701 | 1,953 |
| 1881–2 | 1,200 | 800 |
| 1882–3 | 3,100 | 1,730 |
| 1883–4 | 4,000 | 2,000 |

Source: Col. Ross to A. Arnold (MP), Bushire, 2 April 1885; FO 60/475.

Table IV Export of opium from the Persian Gulf ports, 1859–1903*Table IV(a)* Estimates of the quantity of opium produced annually in Iran, 1859–75

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Chests</i> ¹ |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1859 ^a | 300 |
| 1861 ^a | 1,000 |
| 1868–9 ^b | 1,560 |
| 1869–70 ^b | 2,610 |
| 1870–1 ^{b, 2} | 1,230 |
| 1871–2 ^{b, 2} | 870 |
| 1872–3 ^b | 1,400 |
| 1873–4 ^b | 2,060 |
| 1874–5 ^b | 2,060 |

Sources: (a) Ross, 'Memo. on the Opium of Persia', Report on Trade and Commerce of the Persian Gulf for 1878, Bushire, 20 August 1879: (IOR) V/23/36; W. Baring (Secretary of Legation at Tehran), 'Report on Trade and Cultivation of Opium in Persia', Tehran, 23 September 1881: FO 60/440 and FO 60/449. (b) G. Lucas, 'Memo. on the Cultivation and Exportation of Opium in Persia', Persian Gulf, 25 January 1875; in Ross, Report on Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1874–5.

Notes

1 Each chest contained 135–140 lbs.

2 Decline consequent on drought and famine.

Table IV (b) Quantity and value of opium exported from Bushehr and Bandar Abbas, 1871–81 (rupees × 1,000)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Chests</i> | <i>Value</i> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1871–2 | 870 | 696 |
| 1872–3 | 1,400 | 1,120 |
| 1873–4 | 2,000 | 1,600 |
| 1874–5 | 2,030 | 1,624 |
| 1875–6 | 1,890 | 1,701 |
| 1876–7 | 2,570 | 2,313 |
| 1877–8 | 4,730 | 4,730 |
| 1878–9 | 5,900 | 5,900 |
| 1879–80 | 6,100 | 6,100 |
| 1880–1 | 7,700 | 8,470 |

Source: W. Baring, 'Report on Trade and Cultivation of Opium in Persia', Tehran, 23 September 1881: op. cit.

Table IV (c) Opium exported from Bushehr and Bandar Abbas, 1878–1903 (chests)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Bushehr</i> | <i>Bandar Abbas</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 1878 | 5,100 | 800 | 5,900 |
| 1879 | 4,971 | 950 | 5,921 |
| 1880 | 5,122 | 1,000 | 6,122 |
| 1881 | 5,745 | 2,000 | 7,745 |
| 1882 | 4,512 | 2,160 | 6,672 |
| 1883 | 3,657 | 1,409 | 5,066 |
| 1884 | 3,306 | 702 | 4,008 |
| 1885 | 4,253 | 740 | 4,993 |
| 1886 | 4,243 | 1,838 | 6,081 |
| 1887 | 2,939 | 1,605 | 4,544 |
| 1888 | 2,200 | 1,887 | 4,087 |
| 1889 | 3,386 | 1,800 | 5,186 |
| 1890 | 4,817 | 1,383 | 6,200 |
| 1891 | 4,722 | 1,398 | 6,120 |
| 1892 | 5,417 | 746 | 6,163 |
| 1893 | 3,346 | 743 | 4,089 |
| 1894 | 3,367 | 875 | 4,242 |
| 1895 | 2,440 | 728 | 3,168 |
| 1896 | 2,988 | 474 | 3,462 |
| 1897 | 3,381 | 1,286 | 4,667 |
| 1898 | 3,681 | 567 | 4,248 |
| 1899 | 4,584 | 725 | 5,312 |
| 1900 | 4,689 | 226 | 4,916 |
| 1901 | 4,380 ¹ | 449 | 4,829 |
| 1902 | 4,115 | 324 | 4,439 |
| 1903 | 4,859 | 988 | 5,847 |

Source: Saldana, 'Précis on Commerce and Communication in the Persian Gulf (1801–1905)', 1906, Chapter XV, pp. 64–5: (IOR) L/P&S/20/C.248A.

Note

1 Given as 613,220 lbs.

Table IV (d) Exports of opium to several countries from Bushehr, 1887–1901 (chests)

| <i>Country</i> | <i>1887</i> | <i>1896</i> | <i>1899</i> | <i>1900</i> | <i>1901</i> ¹ |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| China | 1,772 | 2,127 | 4,339 | 4,275 | 3,786 |
| UK | 1,141 | 837 | 234 | 351 | 556 |
| Egypt | | 22 | 14 | 56 | 38 |
| India | | | | 7 | |
| Constantinople | 15 | | | | |
| Suez | 10 | | | | |
| Maskat | 1 | 2 | | | |

Source: Saldana, 'Précis on Commerce and Communication in the Persian Gulf (1801–1905)', 1906, Chapter XV, pp. 64–5: (IOR) L/P&S/20/C.248A.

Note

1 For 1901 the statistics are given in lbs which are converted here.

Table V Return of principal articles of export from Bushehr, 1878–88

| Year | Value/qty | Animals (living) | Cotton (raw) | Dates | Grain and pulses | Opium | Seeds | Silk (raw) | Tobacco | Wool and woollen goods (carpets) | Total (excepting specie) |
|----------|----------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1878 (a) | Rs | 79,250 | 620,000 | 41,000 | 9,200 | 5,152,200 | 64,900 | 230,000 | 13,000 | 61,000 | 6,444,900 |
| 1879 (a) | Rs | 611,000 | 1,700,000 | 30,000 | 3,230,000 | 5,100,000 | 1,397,000 | 150,000 | | 41,000 | 12,661,300 |
| 1881 (b) | Rs | 16,000 | 283,000 | 26,000 | 611,900 | 5,745,000 | 106,700 | 328,500 | 111,500 | 105,700 | 7,718,800 |
| 1882 (b) | Rs | 60,000 | 292,500 | 28,000 | 418,450 | 3,655,000 | 89,800 | 276,000 | 157,000 | 129,700 | 5,504,220 |
| 1884 (c) | Quantity Value Rs | 361 ¹ 48,620 ⁴ | 51,700 ² 707,146 | 12,617 ² 59,565 | 138,317 ² 383,746 | 4,250 ⁶ 2,968,647 | 5,943 ² 43,527 | 419 ² 128,315 | 31,268 ² 418,451 | 803 ² + 450 ³ 190,047 | 5,540,215 |
| 1885 (c) | Quantity Value Rs | 602 ¹ 88,688 ⁵ | 58,636 ² 858,199 | 15,040 ² 69,460 | 74,496 ² 215,464 | 5,468 ⁶ 3,912,760 | 4,504 ² 35,006 | 249 ² 79,925 | 32,215 ² 486,312 | 795 ² + 362 ³ 142,197 | 6,492,350 |
| 1887 (d) | Quantity Value Rs | 3,866 69,900 | 48,660 ² 1,009,200 | 8,617 ² 28,180 | 6,574 ² 28,820 | 2,939 ⁶ 2,939,500 | 6,617 ² 39,940 | 304 ² 170,200 | 24,212 ² 451,300 | 2,610 ² + 501 ³ 242,160 | 5,819,690 |
| 1888 (d) | Quantity Value Rs | 3,402 ⁷ 66,300 | 35,078 ² 614,340 | 18,183 ² 62,160 | 152,222 ² 674,550 | 2,200 ⁶ 2,200,000 | 7,447 ² 53,030 | 191 ² 107,010 | 31,034 ² 571,820 | 7,958 + 555 ³ 384,120 | 5,601,360 |

Sources: (a) 'Contrasted Statement Showing the Value and Description of Goods Imported into Bushire', 1878–9, Ross, 'Report on the Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1879', Bushire, 26 May 1880: (IOR) V/23/37. (b) Table no. VI, 'Report on the Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1882', Ross: op. cit. (c) 'Return of Principal Articles of Export from Bushire for 1885', Acting Consul-General Miles, 'Report on the Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1885': FO 60/483. (d) Table no. 1, 'Return of Principal Articles of Export from Bushire for 1886', Part III, 'Report on the Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1888': FO 60/505 and (IOR) V/23/56.

Notes

- 1 Horses only.
- 2 Cwt.
- 3 Quantity + bales.
- 4 Calculated as £1 = 11 rupees.
- 5 Calculated as £1 = 11 ½ rupees.
- 6 Chests.
- 7 Horses and cattle.

Table VI Total value of imports and exports of Persia, 1879–85

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Govt. customs revenue (£)</i> | <i>Rate of exchange (qerans to £)</i> | <i>Imports, £</i> | <i>Exports (£)</i> | <i>Total value of exports and imports (£¹)</i> |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1879–80 | 219,500 | 27% | 4,146,000 | 2,439,000 | 6,585,000 |
| 1880–1 | 257,700 | 27½ | 4,868,000 | 2,863,000 | 7,731,000 |
| 1881–2 | 281,600 | 27⅞ | 5,319,000 | 3,129,000 | 8,448,000 |
| 1882–3 | 281,400 | 28% | 5,316,000 | 3,126,000 | 8,442,000 |
| 1883–4 | 280,700 | 29 | 5,302,000 | 3,119,000 | 8,421,000 |
| 1884–5 | 260,000 | 31 | 5,012,000 | 2,888,000 | 7,800,000 |

Source: Statistics given to Herbert by A. Houtum-Schindler, 'Report on Present State of Persia and her Mineral Resources', by A. Herbert, Tehran, 7 May 1886: FO 60/482.

Note

- 1 For places such as Muhammareh, Kermanshah, etc., it was reported that there was 'nothing available, but the imports and exports of these places may be calculated at about a quarter of the whole of the above figures', which were supplied by Houtum-Schindler to Herbert (see 'Source' above).

Table VII Exports from and imports to Muhammareh and Karun ports (exclusive of specie), 1890–1910 (£ sterling)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Exports/ Imports</i> | <i>UK</i> | <i>India</i> | <i>Aden</i> | <i>Turkey, Turkish Arabia, Egypt</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|--|
| 1890 ^a | Exports | 3,427 | 49,538 | | |
| | Imports | | 144,615 | | |
| 1891 ^b | Exports | 7,802 | 33,572 | | |
| | Imports | 944 | 137,628 | | |
| 1892 ^c | Exports | 1,006 | 26,712 | | 5,587 |
| | Imports | 350 | 130,339 | | |
| 1893 ^d | Exports | 864 | 39,411 | | 1,785 |
| | Imports | 439 | 93,487 | | |
| 1894 ^e | Exports | 4,053 | 21,367 | | 2,268 |
| | Imports | 5,112 | 113,257 | 1,259 | 907 |
| 1895 ^{e, f} | Exports | 14,758 | 20,178 | | |
| | Imports | 13,796 | 85,316 | 3,324 ¹ | ¹ |
| 1896 ^{e, f} | Exports | 21,608 | 20,257 | | 19,699 |
| | Imports | 5,153 | 133,020 | 750 | 275 |
| 1897 ^{e, g} | Exports | 19,443 | 13,884 | | 4,250 |
| | Imports | 29,616 | 63,607 | | 16,535 |
| 1898 ^{e, h} | Exports | 8,394 | 14,970 | | 7,400 |
| | Imports | 53,869 | 79,844 | 13,074 | 1,666 |
| 1899 ^{e, h} | Exports | 11,073 | 30,584 | | 16,064 |
| | Imports | 74,189 | 87,032 | 20,181 | 6,151 |
| 1900 ^{e, h} | Exports | 12,544 | 69,001 | | 20,848 |
| | Imports | 118,820 | 132,494 | 43,640 | 11,086 |
| 1901 ⁱ | Exports | 23,642 | 79,747 | | 3,325 |
| | Imports | 81,263 | 80,940 | 45,998 | 3,041 |
| 1902 ^{i, 5} | Exports | 34,879 | 63,437 ⁶ | ⁶ | 3,091 |
| | Imports | 40,787 | 56,193 ⁶ | ⁶ | 2,106 |
| 1903 ^j | Exports | 34,139 | 19,937 ⁶ | ⁶ | 4,537 |
| | Imports | 89,636 | 62,975 ⁶ | ⁶ | 1,720 |
| Average | Exports | 23,255 | 52,578 ⁶ | ⁶ | 3,920 |
| 1899–1903 ^j | Imports | 80,939 | 91,966 ⁶ | ⁶ | 4,441 |
| 1904 ^j | Exports | 18,197 | 25,591 ⁶ | ⁶ | 3,677 |
| | Imports | 149,795 | 88,427 ⁶ | ⁶ | 1,081 |
| Exports ^k | Av. 5 yrs | 25,292 | 48,851 ⁶ | ⁶ | |
| | 1905–6 | 15,603 | 49,560 ⁶ | ⁶ | 13,886 |
| | 1906–7 | 34,954 | 31,320 ⁶ | ⁶ | 23,076 |
| | Variance: to av. | +9,662 | –14,541 ⁶ | ⁶ | |
| | to 1905–6 | +19,351 | –9,240 ⁶ | ⁶ | +9,190 |
| Imports ^k | Av. 5 yrs | 92,173 | 84,309 | | 2,736 |
| | 1905–6 | 99,382 | 87,023 | | 8,974 |
| | 1906–7 | 115,860 | 117,110 | | 6,079 |
| | Variance: to av. | +23,687 | +32,801 | | +3,343 |
| | to 1905–6 | +16,478 | +30,087 | | –2,895 |
| Exports ^l | 1907–8 | 97,749 | 39,966 | | 23,371 |
| | Variance: to av. | +70,195 | +850 | | +9,485 |
| | to 1906–7 | +62,795 | +5,646 | | +295 |
| Imports ^l | 1907–8 | 135,793 | 107,374 | | 4,926 |
| | Variance: to av. | +36,703 | +24,829 | | +936 |
| | to 1906–7 | +19,933 | –9,736 | | –1,153 |

Table VII (continued)

| <i>Persian Gulf</i> | <i>France</i> | <i>Austria, Germany, Russia</i> | <i>Hong Kong</i> | <i>Others</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|----------------------|---------------|---|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | 131 | | | | 53,096 |
| | | | | | 144,615 |
| 458 | | | | | 41,832 |
| 225 | | | | | 138,797 |
| 235 | 1,080 | | | | 34,620 |
| 449 | | | | | 131,138 |
| 1,195 | 216 | | | | 43,471 |
| 295 | | | | | 94,225 |
| 323 | | | 240 | | 28,251 |
| 1,737 | 2,527 | 316 | | | 125,115 |
| 104 | | 862 | | | 35,902 |
| 4,179 | 3,856 | 160 | | | 110,631 |
| 3,002 | 1,942 | | 400 | | 66,908 |
| 4,395 | 313 | | | | 143,906 |
| 4,031 | | | | | 41,608 |
| 2,445 | 4,955 | 4,249 | | | 121,407 |
| 1,780 | 337 | | | 80 | 32,961 |
| 1,974 | 5,691 | 311 | | | 200,835 ² |
| 1,458 | 90 | | | 15 | 59,284 |
| 2,156 | 9,362 | 7,845 | | | 247,951 ³ |
| 3,530 | 385 | | 10,200 | 78 | 116,586 |
| 2,605 | 28,272 | 5,727 | | 20 | 342,664 ⁴ |
| 1,111 | 1,020 | | 17,840 | 8 | 136,697 |
| 1,986 | 16,280 | 1,050 | | 1,890 | 232,448 |
| 2,258 | 1,036 | | 41,947 | | 146,638 |
| 3,550 | 10,583 | 4,618 | | 5,612 | 123,449 |
| 5,701 | 358 | | 15,871 | 543 | 81,086 |
| 2,597 | 6,298 | 1,033 | | | 164,259 |
| 2,811 | 578 | | 19,361 | 129 ⁷ | 102,632 |
| 2,599 | 15,413 | 5,416 | | 1,643 | 202,410 |
| 4,977 | 174 | | 25,044 | 1,745 | 79,405 |
| 1,866 | 16,392 | 4,649 | | 1,492 | 263,902 |
| | 720 | | 21,493 | 187 | |
| 15,228 ⁹ | 1,015 | | 6,766 | 387 | 102,445 ¹⁰ |
| 14,437 ⁹ | 5,186 | | 4,607 | 1,345 | 114,925 ¹⁰ |
| | +4,466 | | -16,886 | +1,158 | |
| -791 ⁹ | +4,171 | | -2,159 | +958 | +21,480 |
| | 12,843 | 385 ^{8, 11} | | 7,572 | 200,018 |
| 2,936 ¹² | 14,462 | 632 ¹¹ | | 10,500 | 223,909 ¹⁰ |
| 3,496 ¹² | 30,634 | 3,513 ¹¹ | | 9,932 | 286,624 |
| +3,496 ¹² | +17,791 | +3,128 ¹¹ | | +2,630 | +86,606 |
| +560 ¹² | +16,172 | +2,881 ¹¹ | | -568 | +62,715 |
| 20,414 ⁹ | 824 | 23,289 ¹¹ | 4,194 | 22 | 206,829 ¹⁰ |
| +5,186 ⁹ | -729 | +22,950 ¹¹ | -14,653 | -26 | |
| +5,977 ⁹ | -4,362 | +21,989 ¹¹ | -413 | -23 | +91,904 |
| 3,886 ¹² | 10,263 | 8,091 ¹¹ | | 14,414 | 284,747 |
| +670 ¹² | -5,249 | +6,581 ¹¹ | | -295 | |
| 17,902 ¹² | -20,371 | +4,578 ¹¹ | | +6,171 | -877 |

Table VII (continued)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Exports/ Imports</i> | <i>UK</i> | <i>India</i> | <i>Aden</i> | <i>Turkey, Turkish Arabia, Egypt</i> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|--|
| Exports ^m | 1908–9 | 26,414 | 46,201 | | 14,664 |
| | 1909–10 | 67,775 | 76,866 | | 21,937 |
| Imports ^m | 1908–9 | 81,625 | 104,481 | | 7,798 |
| | 1909–10 | 641,391 | 169,152 | | 9,005 |

Sources: (a) W. McDouall (Vice-Consul at Muhammareh), 'Trade Report (on Muhammareh) for the Year 1890', Muhammareh, 18 June 1891, Part V in 'Administration Report of the Persian Gulf, Political Residency, etc. for 1890–91': (IOR) V/23/60. (b) W. McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1891'; Part V, in 'Administration Report of the Persian Gulf . . . for 1891–92': (IOR) V/23/61. (c) W. McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1892'; Appendix A to Part V, in 'Administration Report of the Persian Gulf for 1892–3': (IOR) V/23/63. (d) McDouall, 'Mohammerah Trade, 1893', Appendix A to Part V, in 'Administration Report of the Persian Gulf 1893–4': (IOR) V/23/65. (e) J.A. Saldana, 'Précis on Commerce and Communication in the Persian Gulf (1801–1905), Appendices F (19) and (20), pp. 168–9: (IOR) L/P&S/20/C.248A. (f) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for 1896', Appendix A to Part V, Administration Report for 1896–7: (IOR) V/23/71. (g) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for 1897', Appendix A to Part V, Administration Report for 1897–8: (IOR) V/23/73. (h) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for 1900', Appendix A to Part V, Administration Report for 1900–1: (IOR) V/23/79. (i) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for 1902', Table no. 5, App. A, Part V, Administration Report for 1902–3: (IOR) V/23/81. (j) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for 1904', Tables 1, 5, App. A to Part V, Administration Report for 1904–5: (IOR) Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1900–5. (k) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade and Commerce of Arabistan (Khuzestan) for the year ending March 21, 1907': A&P, 1907, xci. (l) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade and Commerce of Arabistan (Khuzestan) for the year ending March 20, 1908': A&P, 1908, cxiv. (m) A.T. Wilson (Acting Consul), 'Report on the Trade and Commerce of the Province of Arabistan (Khuzestan) for the Year ending March 22, 1910': A&P, 1910, ci.

Table VII (continued)

| <i>Persian Gulf</i> | <i>France</i> | <i>Austria, Germany, Russia</i> | <i>Hong Kōng</i> | <i>Others</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|----------------------|---------------|---|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 17,902 ¹² | | 411 ¹¹ | 14,085 | 2,410 | 122,087 |
| 13,711 ¹² | | | 31,919 | 5,768 | 217,976 ¹⁰ |
| 3,234 ¹² | 50,764 | 6,358 ¹¹ | | 7,599 | 261,859 |
| 3,560 ¹² | 60,166 | 23,834 ¹¹ | | 9,702 | 916,810 ¹³ |

Notes

- 1 Aden, Turkey, Turkish Arabia and Egypt together.
- 2 Including £44,406 for the transhipment to Karun ports (see source h).
- 3 Including £41,035 for the transhipment to Karun ports (see source h).
- 4 Including £59,194 for the transhipment to Karun ports (see source h).
- 5 It should be borne in mind that until 1902, when the new Customs Regulations came into operation in Khuzestan, Muhammarch was used for transhipment of goods to Kuwait, as well as Karun ports. Therefore, the figures for the years prior to this date are a bit misleading.
- 6 India and Aden together.
- 7 Four years.
- 8 In 1904.
- 9 Kuwait, Bahrain and Muscat.
- 10 Including specie.
- 11 Germany.
- 12 Kuwait.
- 13 Increase due to large imports, machinery, etc. for Anglo-Persian Oil Co.; increased import of goods destined for Esfahan diverted from Bushehr.

Table VIII Trade in three Persian Gulf ports, 1890–1913 (£ sterling × 1,000)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Bushehr</i> | | | <i>Lengeh</i> | | | <i>Muhammareh</i> | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | <i>Imports</i> | <i>Exports</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Imports</i> | <i>Exports</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Imports</i> | <i>Exports</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| 1890 ^a | 1,273 | 734 | 2,007 | 864 | 712 | 1,576 | 144 | 53 | 197 |
| 1895 ^b | 1,017 | 529 | 1,546 | 587 | 511 | 1,098 | 138 | 98 | 236 |
| 1900 ^c | 1,323 | 710 | 2,033 | 501 | 470 | 971 | 282 ^d | 115 ^d | 397 |
| 1901 ^e | 1,631 | 574 | 2,205 | 675 | 603 | 1,260 | 232 | 152 | 384 |
| 1902 ^e | 1,180 | 384 | 1,528 | 828 | 824 | 1,652 | 123 | 147 | 270 |
| 1903 ^f | 880 | 367 | 1,247 | | | | 168 ^g | 81 ^h | 249 |
| 1904 ⁱ | 890 | 455 | 1,345 | 70 | 65 | 135 | 264 ^g | 79 ^h | 343 ¹ |
| 1905 ⁱ | 762 | 470 | 1,232 | 100 | 65 | 165 | 185 ^g | 77 ^h | 282 ¹ |
| 1906–7 ⁱ | 864 | 598 | 1,462 | 176 | 74 | 250 | 287 ^g | 101 ^h | 388 |
| 1907–8 ^j | 1,052 | 498 | 1,550 | 194 | 81 | 275 | 285 ^g | 197 ^h | 482 |
| 1908–9 ^j | 793 | 432 | 1,225 | 134 | 92 | 226 | 262 ^g | 122 ^h | 384 |
| 1909–10 ^c | 676 | 349 | 1,025 | 132 | 67 | 170 | 917 ^{1, g} | 207 ^h | 1,124 |
| 1913–14 ^c | 826 | 602 | 1,428 | 180 | 126 | 306 | 812 ¹ | 313 | 1,125 |

Sources: (a) A.C. Talbot, Consul-General, Bushire, 'Report on the Trade of South Persia for 1890', Administration Report of Political Residency, etc. for 1890–1: (IOR) V/23/60. (b) F.A. Wilson, Consul-General, Bushire, 'Report on the Trade of South Persia for 1895', Administration Report of Political Residency, etc. for 1895–6: (IOR) V/23/69. (c) Great Britain, FO, Historical Section Handbook 'Persia', June 1919, pp. 82–6. (d) McDouall, 'Trade of Mohammerah for 1900', Administration Report for the Persian Gulf for 1901, Part V, Appendix A: (IOR) V/23/79. (e) Lt Col. C.A. Kemhall, Consul-General, 'Report on the Trade of South Persia for 1902–3', Administration Report: (IOR) V/23/81. (f) Richards, Vice-Consul, Bushire, 'Report on the Trade and Commerce of the Persian Gulf for the year 1904': A&P, 1905, xci. (g) Table IX below (Appendices to this book). (h) Table X below (Appendices to this book). (i) H.G. Chick, Vice-Consul, Bushire, 'Report on the Trade and Commerce of Bushire for the year 1906–7': A&P, 1908, cxiv. (j) H.G. Chick, Vice-Consul, Bushire, 'Report on the Trade of the Consular District of Bushire for the Persian Fiscal Year 22 March 1908 to 21 March 1909': A&P, 1910, ci.

Note

1 Including imports by Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

Table IX Return of principal articles of import into Muhammareh and Karun ports, 1890–1910 (values in £ sterling)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Quantity/ value</i> | <i>Coffee</i> | <i>Cotton goods</i> | <i>Gunny bags</i> | <i>Matches</i> | <i>Rice</i> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1890 ^a | Qty | 1,616 ¹ | 5,054 ² | 112 ³ | | |
| | Value | 10,045 | 94,500 | 848 | | |
| 1891 ^a | Qty | 1,942 ¹ | 3,690 ² | 413 ³ | | |
| | Value | 13,468 | 65,060 | 2,891 | | |
| 1892 ^b | Qty | 2,227 ¹ | 5,722 ³ | 110 ⁶ | | |
| | Value | 13,920 | 89,246 | 660 | | |
| 1893 ^b | Qty | 1,970 ¹ | 3,090 ³ | 195 ⁶ | | |
| | Value | 11,820 | 49,600 | 1,110 | | |
| 1894 ^c | Qty | 1,741 ⁸ | 4,759 ^{9, 10} | 2,485 ⁸ | | |
| | Value | 7,919 | 65,542 | 1,177 | | |
| 1895 ^c | Qty | 3,482 ⁸ | 5,773 ⁹ | 398 ⁸ | | |
| | Value | 15,196 | 68,221 | 1,522 | | |
| 1896 ^c | Qty | 3,039 ⁸ | 3,931 ⁹ | 1,919 | | |
| | Value | 30,390 | 77,289 | 3,010 | | |
| 1897 ^d | Qty | 2,559 ⁸ | 4,323 ⁹ | | 60 ⁴ | |
| | Value | 11,942 | 60,594 | 660 | 240 | |
| 1898 ^d | Qty | 1,293 ⁸ | 4,919 ⁹ | | 116 ⁴ | |
| | Value | 6,034 | 112,315 | 789 | 464 | |
| 1899 ^{12, d} | Qty | 1,323 ⁸ | 5,633 ⁹ | | 409 ⁴ | |
| | Value | 6,349 | 145,155 | 1,170 | 1,636 | |
| 1900 ^e | Qty | 1,959 ⁸ | 6,516 ³ | | 189 ⁴ | 4,635 ⁸ |
| | Value | 9,680 | 218,629 | 1,233 | 756 | 1,212 |
| Av. 5 yrs | Qty or value | 2,065 ⁸ | £144,476 | £1,537 | 164 ⁴ | 7,456 ⁸ |
| 1901 ^e | Qty | 3,192 ⁸ | 5,127 ³ | | 82 ⁴ | 8,710 ⁸ |
| | Value | 15,960 | 134,401 | 3,832 | 328 | 3,025 |
| 1902 ^f | Qty or value | 410 ⁸ | £60,246 | £970 | 159 ⁴ | 5,634 ⁸ |
| Variance to av. | Qty or value | -1,655 ⁸ | £-84,230 | £-567 | -7 ⁴ | -1,825 ⁸ |
| Variance to 1901 | Qty or value | -2,782 ⁸ | -74,155 ⁸ | £-3,272 | +77 ⁴ | -3,076 ⁸ |
| 1903 ^g | Qty or value | 318 ⁸ | £108,081 | £1,350 | 483 ⁴ | 5,191 ⁸ |
| Av. 5 yrs ^h | Qty or value | 1,108 ⁸ | £139,118 | £1,767 | 238 ⁴ | 5,568 ⁸ |
| 1904 ^g | Qty or value | 4½ ⁸ | £174,271 | £1,443 | 286 ⁴ | 3,670 |
| 1905 ^g | Qty or value | 16 ⁸ | £94,292 | £1,380 | 399 ⁴ | 7,394 |
| Variance to av. | Qty or value | -1,092 | £-44,824 | £-387 | +161 ⁴ | +1,826 |
| Variance to 1904 | Qty or value | +11½ ⁸ | £-79,977 | £-63 | +113 ⁴ | +3,724 |
| 1906–7 ⁱ | Qty ⁸ | 926 ^{16, 8} | 22,882 ⁸ | 4,530 ⁸ | 708 ⁸ | 1,019 ⁸ |
| | Value | 555 ¹⁶ | 137,188 | 5,974 | 1,558 | 568 |
| 1907–8 ⁱ | Qty ⁸ | 882 ^{16, 8} | 21,863 ⁸ | 4,727 ⁸ | 1,039 ⁸ | 3,146 ⁸ |
| | Value | 5,486 ¹⁶ | 162,754 | 6,678 | 2,266 | 2,131 |
| 1908–9 ⁱ | Qty ⁸ | 819 ^{16, 8} | 16,245 ⁸ | 1,082 ⁸ | 466 ⁸ | 4,309 ⁸ |
| | Value | 4,991 ¹⁶ | 119,525 | 1,409 | 961 | 2,167 |
| 1909–10 ^j | Qty ⁸ | 2,206 ¹⁶ | 18,934 ⁸ | 313 ⁸ | 2,466 ⁸ | 7,438 ⁸ |
| | Value | 12,468 ¹⁶ | 123,534 | 1,210 | 5,603 | 4,415 |

Sources: (a) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammereh for the Year 1891', Part V, Admin. Report for 1891–2: V/23/61. (b) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammereh for the Year 1893', Part V, Admin. Report for 1893–4: V/23/65. (c) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammereh for the Year 1896', Part V, Admin. Report for 1896–7: V/23/71. (d) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammereh for the year 1899', Part V, Admin. Report for 1899: V/23/77. (e) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammereh for the Year 1901', Part V, Admin. Report for 1901–2:

Table IX (continued)

| <i>Metals, iron and others</i> | <i>Metals, manu- factured</i> | <i>Sugar, crushed</i> | <i>Sugar, loaf</i> | <i>Kerosene oil</i> | <i>Total value of imports</i> | <i>From India</i> | <i>From UK</i> |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | | 2,730 ¹ | 2,976 ⁴ | | | | |
| 5,680 ⁵ | 5 | 4,330 | 5,411 | | 144,615 | 144,615 | |
| | | 1,886 ¹ | 1,469 ⁴ | | | | |
| 36,389 ⁵ | 5 | 2,364 | 2,271 | | 138,797 | 137,628 | 944 |
| | | 1,132 ⁷ | 1,781 ⁴ | | | | |
| 4,579 ⁵ | 5 | 1,596 | 3,339 | | 131,138 | 130,339 | 350 |
| | | 5,524 ⁷ | 2,198 ⁴ | | | | |
| 399 ⁵ | 5 | 6,168 | 3,484 | | 94,221 | 93,487 | 439 |
| 1,939 ⁵ | 5 | 3,708 | 6,014 | | | | |
| 4,430 ⁵ | 5 | 2,418 | 5,159 | | 98,060 | 89,174 | 4,890 |
| 2,394 ⁵ | 5 | 3,202 | 8,785 | | | | |
| 7,182 ⁵ | 5 | 3,808 | 6,262 | | 110,631 | 85,315 | 13,796 |
| 2,295 ⁵ | 5 | 7,338 | 6,602 | | | | |
| 3,072 ⁵ | 5 | 4,127 | 5,918 | | 143,906 | 133,020 | 5,153 |
| | | 4,760 ⁸ | 11,953 | | | | |
| 1,550 ⁵ | 5 | 3,564 | 9,961 | | 121,407 | 63,607 | 29,616 |
| 198 ^{8, 5} | 5 | 5,198 ⁸ | 7,017 | | | | |
| 1,065 ⁵ | 5 | 3,977 | 5,845 | | 156,429 ¹¹ | 79,844 | 53,869 |
| 408 ⁵ | 5 | 6,697 ⁸ | 11,070 | | | | |
| 2,100 ⁵ | 5 | 5,114 | 9,748 | | 247,951 ¹³ | 87,032 | 74,189 |
| 5,878 ⁸ | | 13,249 ⁸ | 44,951 ⁸ | | | | |
| 8,115 | 4,432 | 11,050 | 39,475 | | 342,664 ¹⁴ | 176,334 ¹⁵ | 118,820 |
| 3,538 ⁸ | £2,177 | 9,929 ⁸ | 23,764 ⁸ | 2,027 ⁴ | £230,979 | 129,237 ¹⁵ | 91,647 |
| 2,770 ⁸ | | 10,893 ⁸ | 27,717 ⁸ | 4,637 ⁴ | | | |
| 3,900 | 2,500 | 9,197 | 21,984 | | 232,448 | 126,938 ¹⁵ | 81,263 |
| 2,774 ⁸ | £1,959 | 9,697 ⁸ | 27,432 ⁸ | 4,430 ⁴ | £123,449 | £56,193 ¹⁵ | £40,787 |
| -2,338 ⁸ | £-218 | -232 ⁸ | 3,668 | +2,403 ⁴ | £-117,530 | £-73,044 ¹⁵ | £-30,860 |
| -1,570 ⁸ | £-541 | -1,196 ⁸ | +2,715 ⁸ | -207 ⁴ | £-118,999 | £-70,745 ¹⁵ | £-40,476 |
| 2,562 | £1,509 | 10,486 ⁸ | 15,765 ⁸ | 2,900 ⁸ | £168,173 | £62,975 ¹⁵ | £89,636 |
| 7,174 | £3,060 | 11,879 ⁸ | 28,063 ⁸ | 2,407 ⁸ | £225,848 | £102,213 ¹⁵ | £96,060 |
| 8,149 ⁸ | £4,902 | 14,973 ⁸ | 27,460 ⁸ | 2,015 ⁸ | £263,902 | £88,427 ¹⁵ | £149,795 |
| 4,649 ⁸ | £3,310 | 15,878 ⁸ | 19,774 ⁸ | 4,437 ⁸ | £184,606 | £76,095 ¹⁵ | £71,551 |
| +585 ⁸ | £+250 | +3,999 ⁸ | -8,289 ⁸ | +2,030 ⁸ | £-41,242 | £-26,118 ¹⁵ | £-24,509 |
| 3,500 ⁸ | £-1,592 | +905 ⁸ | -7,686 ⁸ | +2,422 ⁸ | £-79,296 | £-12,332 ¹⁵ | £-78,244 |
| 8,639 ⁸ | | 29,923 ⁸ | 40,037 | 5,263 ⁸ | | | |
| 8,312 | 13,704 | 23,167 | 43,037 | 2,620 | 286,624 | 117,110 | 115,860 |
| 5,468 ⁸ | | 24,245 ⁸ | 28,404 ⁸ | 8,592 | | | |
| 12,151 | 5,758 | 17,927 | 30,556 | 2,190 | 284,747 | 107,374 | 135,793 |
| 7,646 ⁸ | 6,134 ⁸ | 23,245 ⁸ | 49,525 ⁸ | 9,162 | | | |
| 11,849 | 7,757 | 17,911 | 50,475 | 3,547 | 261,859 | 104,481 | 31,625 |
| 4,228 ⁸ | 217,345 ⁸ | 25,843 ⁸ | 59,021 ⁸ | 1,944 ⁸ | | | |
| 10,442 | 599,700 | 22,187 | 57,068 | 1,260 | 916,810 | 169,152 | 641,391 |

V/23/80. (f) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1902', Part V, Admin. Report for 1902-3: V/23/81. (g) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1904', Part V, Admin. Report for 1904-5: Administration Reports, Persian Gulf, 1900-5. (h) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1905', A&P, 1906, cxxvii. (i) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1908-9', A&P, 1909, xcvi. (j) Lt A.T. Wilson (Acting Consul), 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1909-10': A&P, 1910, ci.

Table IX (continued)

Notes

- 1 Bags.
- 2 Bale/bundle.
- 3 Bale.
- 4 Case.
- 5 All metals together.
- 6 Bundle.
- 7 Bag/bundle.
- 8 Cwt.
- 9 Packages.
- 10 In addition, 3,000 pieces of Syrian silk goods, about 10,000 pieces of Syrian cotton goods, probably partly of Manchester origin, and 1,000 pieces of Manchester chintz brought from Basra.
- 11 Transshipments to Karun ports not included.
- 12 In addition to 6,994 packages (value £5,025) 'Materials for date cases' in 1899 (d).
- 13 Including £41,035 for transshipment to Karun ports.
- 14 Including £59,194 for transshipment to Karun ports.
- 15 From India and Aden.
- 16 Tea.

Table X Return of principal articles of export from Muhammareh and Karun ports (excluding specie), 1890–1910 (all values in £ sterling)

| | <i>Articles</i> | <i>Animals: mules and horses</i> | <i>Cotton: raw</i> | <i>Cotton: local piecgoods</i> | <i>Dates</i> | <i>Ghee</i> | <i>Gums: tragacanth and insoluble</i> | <i>Kerosene oil</i> | <i>Oil seeds</i> |
|------------------------|------------------|--|------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1890 ^a | Qty | 661 ¹ | 90 ^{2, 3} | ³ | 5,347 ⁴ | | | | 2,174 ² |
| | Value | 5,680 | 138 ³ | ³ | 27,757 | | | | 5,203 |
| 1891 ^a | Qty | 236 ¹ | | ³ | 1,130 ⁴ | | | | 195 ² |
| | Value | 1,898 | | | 4,479 | | | | 480 |
| 1892 ^b | Qty | 210 ¹ | | | 1,217 ⁴ | 210 ² | | | 2,563/246 ⁷ |
| | Value | 3,880 | | | 4,939 | 3,880 | | | 1,203 |
| 1893 ^b | Qty | 160 | 108 ^{10, 3} | ³ | 2,642 ⁴ | 160 ² | | | 648/1,573 ⁷ |
| | Value | 2,500 | 432 ³ | ³ | 8,120 | 2,500 | | | 4,273 |
| 1894 ^c | Qty | 142 ¹ | 14 ^{2, 3} | ³ | 2,194 ^{4, 11} | | 491 ² | | 4,988 ² |
| | Value | 2,288 | 12 ³ | ³ | 3,085 | | 197 | | 1,864 |
| 1895 ^c | Qty | 118 ¹ | 401 ^{2, 3} | ³ | 1,462 ⁴ | 336 ² | 2,856 ² | | 6,270 ² |
| | Value | 3,200 | 338 ³ | ³ | 4,265 | 634 | 747 | | 1,347 |
| 1896 ^c | Qty | 73 ¹ | | | 6,060 ² | 2,434 ² | 1,860 ² | | 10,363 ² |
| | Value | 1,300 | | | 1,968 | 3,811 | 1,093 | | 3,793 |
| 1897 ^d | Qty | 65 ¹ | | | 29,060 ² | 1,731 ² | 1,327 ² | | 8,618 ² |
| | Value | 1,300 | | | 6,562 | 3,562 | 534 | | 4,253 |
| 1898 ^d | Qty | 54 ¹ | | | 20,583 ² | 255 ² | 1,532 ² | | 5,906 ² |
| | Value | 1,080 | | | 7,767 | 510 | 610 | | 2,668 |
| 1899 ^d | Qty | 1,324 ¹ | 116 ^{14, 3} | ³ | 49,471 ^{2, 15} | 151 ² | 5,587 ² | | 11,168 ² |
| | Value | 16,480 | 1,160 ³ | ³ | 3,338 | 302 | 3,162 | | 5,568 |
| 1900 ^e | Qty | 2,519 ¹ | 547 ² | 162 ¹⁴ | 52,675 ² | 15 ² | 4,112 ² | | 1,375 ² |
| | Value | 47,407 | 608 | 2,268 | 13,157 | 30 | 4,369 | | 568 |
| Av. 5 yrs ^f | Q or V | 1,268 ¹ | 698 ² | 1,258 | 44,944 ² | | 3,563 ² | | 7,025 ² |
| 1901 ^e | Qty | 2,614 ¹ | 502 ² | 68 ¹⁶ | 73,819 ² | 108 ² | 5,607 ² | | 8,060 ² |
| | Value | 50,480 | 572 | 832 | 18,179 | 216 | 4,864 | | 5,039 |
| 1902 ^f | | 1,892 ¹ | 1,243 | £2,505 | 93,489 ² | | 4,703 ² | | 7,299 ² |
| ± to | Av. | +627 ¹ | +545 | £+1,247 | +50,545 ² | | +944 ² | | +274 |
| | 1901 | -719 ¹ | +741 | £+1,673 | +20,703 ² | | -904 ² | | -761 |
| Av. 5 yrs ^g | | 1,676 ¹ | 1,866 ² | £1,781 | 79,311 ² | 135 ² | 5,390 ² | | 6,571 ² |
| 1903 ^g | Qty | 28 ¹ | 1,397 ² | £2,139 | 39,047 ² | 445 ² | 8,393 ² | | 4,954 ² |
| 1904 ^h | Value | 99 ¹ | 977 ² | £2,736 | 45,081 ² | 52 ² | 9,501 ² | | 7,266 ² |
| ± to | Av. | -1,577 | -889 ² | £+955 | -34,227 ² | -82½ ² | +3,329 ² | | +695 ² |
| | 1903 | +71 | -420 ² | £+597 | +6,037 ² | -192½ ² | -174 ² | | +2,312 ² |
| Av. 5 yrs ^h | Q or V | 1,431 ¹ | 933 ² | £2,096 | 60,411 ² | 128 ² | 6,660 ² | | 5,791 ² |
| 1905 ^h | Q or V | 5 ¹ | 956 ² | £2,491 | 47,267 ² | 8 ² | 9,666 ² | | 9,260 ² |
| ± to | av. | -1,426 ¹ | +24 ² | £+395 | -13,144 ² | -117 ² | +3,006 ² | | +3,469 ² |
| | 1904 | -94 ¹ | -20 ² | £-245 | +2,186 ² | -45 ² | +165 ² | | +1,994 ² |
| 1906–7 ⁱ | Qty ² | | 641 ² | | 32,65 | | 10,129 ² | | 18,379 ² |
| | Value | | 1,259 | 2,217 | 7,117 | | 10,078 | | 8,582 |
| 1907–8 ^j | Qty | | 926 ³ | ³ | 36,025 | | 5,200 | | 23,214 |
| | Value | | 6,411 ³ | ³ | 8,381 | | 3,761 | | 10,621 |
| ± to | 1905–6 | | £+2,106 ³ | ³ | -16,844 ² | | -4,139 ² | 2,175 | +2,240 ² |
| | 1906–7 | | £+2,420 ³ | ³ | +3,372 ² | | -4,929 ² | | -3,822 ² |
| 1908–9 ^j | Qty ² | | 3,534 ³ | ³ | 86,536 | | 8,213 | 3,211 | 18,039 |
| | Value | | 7,271 ³ | ³ | 25,024 | | 5,856 | 1,518 | 7,372 |
| 1909–10 ^j | Qty ² | | 6,120 ^{2, 3} | ³ | 78,390 | | 9,012 | 3,236 | 8,456 |
| | Value | | 12,183 ³ | ³ | 21,000 | | 10,979 | 1,562 | 4,478 |

Table X (continued)

| <i>Opium</i> | <i>Provisions: wheat and barley</i> | <i>Rice</i> | <i>Silk manu- factures</i> | <i>Tobacco</i> | <i>Wool, raw and carpet</i> | <i>Total value of exports</i> | <i>To UK</i> | <i>To India</i> |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | 311 ⁴ | | | | 2,080 ⁵ | | | |
| | 1,274 | | | | 15,757 | 53,096 | 3,427 | 49,538 |
| | 1,230/24,158 ⁶ | 75½ ⁴ | | | 1,219 ⁵ | | | |
| | 14,617 | 500 | | | 4,985 | 41,832 | 7,802 | 33,572 |
| 53 ⁸ | 100/1,296 ⁶ | 174 ⁹ | | | 2,506 ¹⁰ | | | |
| 3,710 | 1,556 | 87 | | | 14,536 | 34,620 | 1,006 | 26,712 |
| 270 ⁸ | 460 ⁴ | | | | 2,018 ¹⁰ | | | |
| 16,200 | 2,064 | | | | 9,858 | 43,471 | 864 | 39,411 |
| 4 ¹² | 77,906 ^{2,13} | | | | 9,694 ² | | | |
| 240 | 7,723 | | | | 8,516 | 28,251 | 4,053 | 21,367 |
| 4 ¹² | 129,143 ² | | | | 7,267 ² | | | |
| 83 | 15,662 | | | | 7,748 | 35,902 | 14,758 | 20,178 |
| 13 ¹² | 109,909 ² | | | | 8,082 ² | | | |
| 900 | 34,952 | | | | 15,847 | 66,908 | 21,608 | 20,257 |
| 3 ¹² | 19,694 ² | | | | 4,856 ² | | | |
| 174 | 7,145 | | | | 9,714 | 41,608 | 19,443 | 13,884 |
| 1 ¹² | 1,692 ² | | | | 5,001 ² | | | |
| 58 | 391 | | | | 10,002 | 32,961 | 8,394 | 14,970 |
| | 2,477 ² | | | | 4,712 ² | | | |
| | 640 | | | | 9,660 | 59,284 | 11,073 | 30,584 |
| 183 ⁸ | 3,723 ² | | | | 5,895 ² | | | |
| 10,980 | 1,707 | | | | 11,890 | 116,586 | 12,544 | 69,001 |
| | 8,967 | | | | 5,815 ² | £71,837 | 15,019 | 41,653 |
| 323 ⁸ | 60 ² | | | | 8,391 ² | | | |
| 25,840 | 26 | | | | 16,782 | £151,725 | 23,642 | 79,747 |
| 920 ⁸ | | | | | 4,029 ² | £146,633 | 34,879 | 63,472 |
| | £-8,967 | | | | -1,786 ² | £+74,846 | £+19,860 | +38,094 |
| +597 ⁸ | £-26 | | | | -4,362 ² | £+19,900 | £+11,237 | -16,274 |
| 451 ^{2, 17} | | | | | 5,393 ¹⁰ | £102,576 | £23,255 | 52,522 ¹⁸ |
| 472 ² | 74,703 ² | | | | 3,916 | £81,086 | £34,139 | 19,937 ¹⁸ |
| 400 ² | 566 ² | | | | 6,037/38 ¹⁹ | £79,455 | £18,179 | 25,591 ¹⁸ |
| -51 ² | | | | | +682 | £-23,171 | £-5,058 | 26,931 ¹⁸ |
| -72 ² | -74,137 ² | | | | +2,169 | £-1,681 | £-15,942 | +5,654 ¹⁸ |
| 523 ² | 74,703 ² | | | | 5,643/22 ¹⁹ | £106,701 | £24,680 | 51,523 ¹⁸ |
| 106 ² | 44,084 ² | 531 ² | | | 9,230/340 ¹⁹ | £77,254 | £15,816 | 35,638 ¹⁸ |
| -417 ² | -30,619 ^{2, 20} | | | | +3,587/+318 ¹⁹ | £-29,447 | £-8,864 | -15,885 ¹⁸ |
| -294 ² | +43,518 ² | | | | +3,193/+302 ¹⁹ | £-2,151 | £-2,381 | +10,047 ¹⁸ |
| 74 | 165,730 ² | 7,582 | | | 6,076 | | | |
| 5,202 | 30,779 | | | | 19,949 | 114,925 | 34,954 | 31,320 |
| 120 | 471,497 | 23,357 | | 1,613 | 5,098 | | | |
| 5,735 | 114,301 | 2,858 | 2,780 | 2,063 | 16,656 | 197,061 | 97,749 | 36,966 |
| +20 ² | +387,213 ² | +22,826 ² | £+856 | +397 ² | -4,184 ² | +119,807 | +81,933 | +1,328 |
| +48 ² | +321,486 ² | +19,772 ² | £-329 | +151 ² | -978 ² | +95,839 | +62,795 | +5,646 |
| 389 | 22,890 | 13,088 | 151 | 3,693 | 11,285 | | | |
| 18,357 | 7,336 | 3,833 | 4,702 | 3,891 | 19,215 | 122,086 | 26,414 | 46,201 |
| 1,929 | 13,489 | 2,304 | 159 | 9,021 | 6,521 | | | |
| 89,899 | 8,084 | 782 | 3,559 | 12,338 | 12,411 | 206,638 | 67,775 | 76,866 |

Table X (continued)

Sources: (a) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1891', Part V, Administration Report for 1891-2: V/23/61. (b) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1893', Part V, Administration Report for 1893-4: V/23/65. (c) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the year 1896', Part V, Administration Report for 1896-7: V/23/71. (d) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1899', Part V, Administration Report for 1899: V/23/77. (e) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1901', Part V, Administration Report for 1901-2: V/23/80. (f) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1902', Part V, Administration Report for 1902-3: V/23/81. (g) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1904': Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1900-5. (h) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1905': A&P, 1906, cxxvii. (i) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1907': A&P, 1907, xci; McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1909': A&P, 1909, cxvii. (j) Lt A.T. Wilson, Acting Consul, 'Report on the Trade etc. of Arabistan (Khuzestan) for the Year ended 22 March 1910': A&P, 1910, ci.

Notes

- 1 Head.
- 2 Cwt.
- 3 All cotton goods together.
- 4 Ton.
- 5 Bale/bundle.
- 6 Ton, bags.
- 7 Cwt, bags.
- 8 Chest.
- 9 Bags.
- 10 Bundle.
- 11 In addition to a quantity which was shipped by foreign coasting vessels.
- 12 Case.
- 13 In addition to about 7,500 tons of wheat which went to Basra in river boats.
- 14 Package.
- 15 In addition to about 6,000 tons which was exported to India.
- 16 Bale.
- 17 Average for four years.
- 18 India and Aden.
- 19 Cwt, bundles.
- 20 1903 only.

Table XI Rates of exchange at Muhammarch and Bushehr, 1888–1920

| Year | Muhammarch | | | Bushehr | | |
|-----------|--|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | <i>Qerans per 100 rupees (average)</i> | <i>Qerans per £1 (average)</i> | <i>Source</i> | <i>Qerans per 100 rupees</i> | <i>Qerans per £1</i> | <i>Source</i> |
| 1888–9 | | (36) ¹ | V/23/56 | | 37–37.5 | V/23/56 |
| 1889–90 | | (30) ¹ | V/23/58 | 230–252 | 34.5–36 | V/23/58 |
| 1890–1 | 250 | 33 | V/23/60 | | | |
| 1891–2 | 250 | 36 | V/23/61 | | 34–38 | V/23/61 |
| 1892–3 | | 40 | V/23/63 | | | |
| 1893–4 | | 41 | V/23/65 | | | |
| 1894–5 | | 50 | V/23/67 | | | |
| 1895–6 | | 55 | V/23/69 | | 52–58.5 | V/23/69 |
| 1896–7 | | 51 | V/23/71 | | | |
| 1897–8 | | 52 | V/23/73 | 345.75 | 54.25 | A&P 1909 xcvi |
| 1898–9 | | 52 | V/23/76 | 352.31 | 54.13 | A&P 1909 xcvi |
| 1899–1900 | | 53 | V/23/77 | 358.31 | 53.83 | A&P 1909 xcvi |
| 1900–1 | | 53 | V/23/79 | 352.87 | 52.82 | A&P 1909 xcvi |
| 1901–2 | | 53 | V/23/80 | 362.56 | 54.36 | A&P 1909 xcvi |
| 1902–3 | | 56 | V/23/81 | 387.19 | 57.51 | A&P 1909 xcvi |
| 1903–4 | | 56 | Admin. Report PG. 1900–5 | 379.62 | 57.25 | A&P 1909 xcvi |
| 1904–5 | | 58 | Admin. Report PG. 1900–5 | 402.62 | 60.20 | A&P 1910 ci |
| 1905–6 | | 60 | A&P 1906 cxxvii | 400.59 | 60.12 | A&P 1910 ci |
| 1906–7 | | 56 | A&P 1907 xci | 374.45 | 55.50 | A&P 1910 ci |
| 1907–8 | | 48 | A&P 1908 cxiv | 343.18 | 51.25 | A&P 1910 ci |
| 1908–9 | | 50 | A&P 1909 xcvi | 362.93 | 54.54 | A&P 1910 ci |
| 1909–10 | 380 | 56.67 | A&P 1910 ci | | 54.3–58.8 | A&P 1910 ci |
| 1910–11 | | 53.8–56 | A&P 1912/13, 98 | | | |
| 1911–12 | | 54 | A&P 1914/16, 74 | | 51.3–56 | A&P 1913, 71 |
| 1912–13 | | 56.8 | A&P 1914/16, 74 | | | |
| 1913–14 | | 57 | A&P 1914/16, 74 | | 55.8–57.8 | A&P 1914/16, 74 |
| 1914–15 | | | | | | |
| 1915–16 | | 55 | A&P 1916 | | | |
| 1916–17 | | 40 | A&P 1917 | | | |
| 1917–18 | | 30 | A&P 1918 | | | |
| 1918–19 | | 27.35 | A&P 1919 | | | |
| 1919–20 | | 26.69 | A&P 1920 | | | |

Note

- 1 Average for mid-1889 (see P.W. Avery and J.B. Simmons, 'Persia on a Cross of Silver', 1880–90: *Middle East Studies*, x, no. 3 (October 1974), pp. 250–86).

Table XII List of Governors-General of the province of Khuzestan, 1851–1912

| <i>Title and name</i> | <i>Tenure</i> | <i>Source</i> |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Ehtesham-us-Saltaneh, Prince Khanlar Mirza | 1851–60 | Lorimer, p. 1,675 |
| 2 Ziya-ul-Molk | 1860–2 | Lorimer, p. 1,677 |
| 3 Prince Farhad Mirza (Shah's uncle) | 1862–9 | Lorimer, p. 1,677 |
| 4 Heshmat-ud-Dowleh, Prince Hamzeh Mirza (Shah's uncle) | 1869–80 | Lorimer, p. 1,677 |
| 5 Zel-us-Soltan, Prince Masud Mirza (Shah's son) | 1880–7 | Lorimer, p. 1,677 |
| 6 Nezam-us-Saltaneh | 1887–March 1891 | V/23/56 |
| 7 Shahab-ul-Molk | March 1891–March 1893 | V/23/61 |
| 8 Hesam-us-Saltaneh | March 1893–March 1894 ¹ | V/23/63; V/23/67 |
| 9 Nezam-us-Saltaneh | March 1894 ¹ –1896 ² | V/23/71 |
| 10 Ala-ud-Dowleh | 1896–7 | V/23/73 |
| 11 Sad-us-Saltaneh, Sardar Akram | 1897–March 1898 | V/23/76 |
| 12 Ain-ud-Dowleh | March 1898–Dec. 1900 | V/23/79 |
| 13 Salar-ud-Dowleh | Dec. 1900–March 1904 | Admin. Report 1904: Admin. Report PG 1900–5 |
| 14 Azim-us-Saltaneh | March 1904–May 1905 | 1905–6: 1905–8 |
| 15 Salar Moazam (nephew of Nezam-us-Saltaneh) northern Khuzestan only (southern part was under Khazal). In Feb. 1906, Salar's title was changed to Sardar Mokarram | May 1905–May 1907 | 1907–8: 1905–8 |
| 16 Sheykh Khazal (temporarily, in the absence of Sardar Mokarram who had gone to Lorestan) | May 1907–November 1908 | 1908: 1905–8 |
| 17 Seyf-ud-Dowleh (brother of Ain-ud- Dowleh and grandfather of Khazal's wife. Sheykh's wife died in 1909) | November 1908–May 1909 | 1908: 1905–9 |
| 18 Khazal (temporarily) | May 1909–October 1909 | 1909: 1909–13 |
| 19 Fakhr-ul-Molk | October 1909–April 1911 | 1909: 1909–13 |
| 20 Shahab-ud-Dowleh (appointment not taken up) | May 1911 | 1911: 1909–13 |
| 21 Emad-ud-Dowleh (appointment not taken up) | June 1911 | 1911: 1909–13 |
| 22 Nezam-us-Saltaneh (II) ³ (appointment not taken up) | October 1911 | 1911: 1909–13 |
| 23 Ejlal-us-Saltaneh | November 1911–June 1912 | 1912: 1909–13 |

Notes

- 1 G.P. Churchill (Acting Oriental Secretary, Tehran Legation), *Biographical Notices of Persian Statesmen and Notables*, August 1905, Calcutta, Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1906, p. 70.
- 2 According to Kasravi, he held the office from 1311 AH (July 1893 to July 1894) up to the assassination of the Shah in 1313 AH (May 1896) (*Tarikh-e Pansad Saleh-ye Khuzestan*, p. 156).
- 3 After Nezam's death, his title was given to his nephew Sardar Mokarram.

Table XIII Return of principal articles of export from Muhammarah to Ahvaz and Shushtar,* 1890–1910 (all values in £ sterling)

| Year | Qty/value | Metals | Piecegoods | Sugar (loaf) | Sugar (soft) | Gunny bags | Dates | Tea | Sundries | Total |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------|
| 1890 ^a | Qty | | 350 ¹ | 968 ² | 350 ³ | 16 ¹ | | | | |
| | Value | 680 | 7,000 | 1,154 | 591 | 57 | | | 1,761 | 11,243 |
| 1891 ^a | Qty | | 60 ¹ | 1,022 ² | 64 ³ | 125 ¹ | 200 ⁴ | | | |
| | Value | | | 1,703 | 96 | 875 | 50 | | 1,000 | 5,989 |
| 1893 ^b | Qty | 1,242 | 1,023 | 1,603 ² | 1,506 ³ | | | 135 ² | | |
| | Value | 1,073 ⁵ | 1,271 ¹ | 2,439 | 2,299 | | | 292 | 4,292 | 30,882 |
| 1894 ^b | Qty | 1,224 | 20,336 | 2,941 ² | 1,058 ³ | | | 267 ² | | |
| | Value | 1,466 ⁵ | 1,626 ¹ | 4,396 | 1,058 | | | 534 | 5,830 | 34,940 |
| 1896 ^c | Qty | 1,690 | 22,432 | 8,816 ⁵ | 4,771 ³ | | | | | |
| | Value | 5,611 ⁵ | 2,328 ⁶ | 9,005 | 3,075 | | 1,735 ⁴ | | 12,569 | 72,498 |
| 1897 ^d | Qty | 4,072 | 43,777 | 2,597 ⁵ | 2,040 ⁵ | | | 70 ² | | |
| | Value | 993 ⁵ | 1,430 ⁶ | 2,143 | 1,530 | | 311 | 516 | 5,155 | 26,030 |
| 1898 ^d | Qty | 1,209 | 15,166 | 9,091 ⁵ | 3,804 ⁵ | | 84,756 ⁴ | 872 ² | | |
| | Value | 965 ⁵ | 1,556 ⁶ | 7,700 | 2,870 | | 22,002 | 2,797 | 10,872 | 72,817 |
| 1899 ^d | Qty | 1,606 | 24,970 | 12,840 ⁵ | 5,045 ⁵ | | 2,355 ⁴ | 410 ² | | |
| | Value | 2,149 ⁵ | 2,195 ⁶ | 11,286 | 4,188 | | 355 | 1,365 | 14,771 | 60,632 |
| 1900 ^e | Qty | 2,627 | 26,040 | 24,460 ⁵ | 5,700 ⁵ | 560 ¹ | 7,900 ⁴ | 680 ² | | |
| | Value | 3,585 ⁵ | 2,072 ¹ | 31,065 | 3,916 | 852 | 2,188 | 2,772 | 17,059 | 85,080 |
| 1901 ^e | Qty | 3,048 | 31,065 | 24,180 | 6,060 ⁵ | 400 ¹ | 5,320 ⁴ | 780 ² | | |
| | Value | 2,100 ⁵ | 1,601 ¹ | 11,240 ⁵ | 4,661 | 414 | 1,070 | 2,388 | 27,095 | 71,468 |
| 1902 ^e | Qty | 2,412 | 22,935 | 10,493 | 11,030 ⁵ | 346 ¹ | 8,820 ⁴ | 1,170 ² | | |
| | Value | 1,230 ⁵ | 2,593 ⁶ | 11,660 ⁵ | 8,462 | 282 | 2,521 | 4,220 | 16,237 | 85,902 |
| 1903 ^f | Qty | 1,464 | 41,660 | 11,056 | 5,058 ⁵ | 700 ⁵ | 2,873 ⁴ | 1,384 ² | | |
| | Value | | 10,130 ⁵ | 9,578 ⁵ | | | | | 93,549 | |
| 1910 ^g | Value | | | | | | | | 627,570 ⁷ | |

Sources: (a) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1891'; V/23/61. (b) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1894'; V/23/67. (c) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1896'; V/23/71. (d) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1899'; V/23/77. (e) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1902'; V/23/81. (f) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1903'; Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1900–5. (g) A.T. Wilson, 'Trade Report for the year ended 22 March 1910', Mohammerah: A&P, 1910, ci.

Notes

1 Bales.

2 Cases.

3 Bags.

4 Baskets.

5 Cwt.

6 Packages.

7 Total value of imports into Ahvaz (Nasiri) and Shushtar according to customs' houses. Of this total only £20,000 is for the latter place. Other details not given.

*Specie excluded. From statistics supplied by Messrs Lynch, for British vessels only.

Table XIV Return of principal articles of import from Ahvaz and Shushtar to Muham-mareh*, 1890–1910 (all values in £ sterling)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Quantity/ value</i> | <i>Carpets</i> | <i>Piecegoods and cotton</i> | <i>Wheat</i> | <i>Wool</i> | <i>Opium</i> | <i>Sundries</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1891 ^{a, 1} | Qty | 140 ² | 234 ² | 12,054 ³ | 345 ² | | | |
| | Value | 505 | 704 | 5,832 | 2,070 | | 1,606 | 10,014 |
| 1893 ^b | Qty | 252 ² | 470 ² | 9,400 ⁴ | 913 ⁵ | 17 ⁶ | | |
| | Value | 1,300 | 2,098 | 1,925 | 4,565 | 1,020 | 4,109 | 13,717 |
| 1894 ^b | Qty | 92 ² | 484 ² | 37,814 ⁴ | 1,309 ⁵ | 4 ⁶ | | |
| | Value | 460 | 1,798 | 3,453 | 5,234 | 240 | 2,588 | 13,773 |
| 1896 ^c | Qty | 68 ² | 2,426 ³ | 45,735 ⁴ | 4,330 ⁵ | | | |
| | Value | 700 | 14,812 | 12,931 | 8,470 | | 9,662 | 46,575 |
| 1897 ^d | Qty | | 1,600 ⁴ | 4,563 ⁴ | 7,257 ⁵ | | | |
| | Value | | 4,407 | 1,408 | 11,164 | | 13,234 | 30,213 |
| 1898 ^d | Qty | | 985 ⁴ | 48,053 ⁴ | 2,222 ⁵ | | | |
| | Value | | 4,874 | 12,348 | 4,444 | | 16,642 | 38,308 |
| 1899 ^d | Qty | | 739 ⁴ | 15,654 ⁴ | 3,888 ⁵ | | | |
| | Value | | 4,204 | 4,284 | 7,776 | | 11,519 | 27,783 |
| 1900 ^e | Qty | | | 6,960 ⁴ | 7,600 ⁵ | 149 ⁶ | | |
| | Value | | 8,637 | 3,172 | 12,760 | 14,900 | 19,338 | 58,797 |
| 1901 ^e | Qty | | | 3,060 ⁴ | 7,180 ⁵ | 312 ⁶ | | |
| | Value | | 9,570 | 766 | 13,524 | 24,960 | 10,373 | 59,193 |
| 1902 ^e | Qty | | | 1,380 ⁴ | 2,650 ⁵ | 829 ⁶ | | |
| | Value | | 8,791 | 906 | 5,016 | 66,320 | 15,434 | 96,467 |
| 1903 ^f | Qty | | | 102,446 ⁴ | 4,921 ⁵ | 270 ⁴ | | |
| | Value | | 3,616 | | | | | 94,026 |
| 1910 ^g | Value | | | | | | | 123,590 ⁷ |

Sources: (a) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1891': V/23/61. (b) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1894': V/23/67. (c) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1896': V/23/71. (d) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1899': V/23/77. (e) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1902': V/23/81. (f) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1903': Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1900–5. (g) A.T. Wilson, 'Trade Report of the Year ended 22 March 1910', Mohammerah: A&P, 1910, ci.

Notes

* Specie excluded. From statistics supplied by Messrs Lynch, for British vessels only.

1 No figures available for 1890.

2 Bales.

3 Ton.

4 Cwt.

5 Bundles.

6 Cases.

7 Total value of imports from Ahvaz (Naseri) alone. According to customs houses. Other details not given.

Table XV Total cargo carried on Karun between Muhammareh and Bandar-e-Nasari, 1890–1914 (tons)¹

| | | <i>Nationality</i> | | | <i>Total</i> |
|---------------------|------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------|
| | | <i>British steamers</i> | <i>Persian craft² (steam and sail)</i> | <i>German (Wonckhaus)</i> | |
| 1890 ^a | Up | | | | |
| | Down | | | | |
| 1891 ^a | Up | 3,880 | 985 | | 4,865 |
| | Down | 3,880 | 1,068 | | 4,948 |
| 1892 ^b | Up | 819 | 590 | | 1,409 |
| | Down | 833 | 550 | | 1,383 |
| 1893 ^c | Up | 2,650 | 150 | | 2,800 |
| | Down | 2,650 | 270 | | 2,920 |
| 1894 ^d | Up | 3,688 | | | 3,688 |
| | Down | 3,688 | | | 3,688 |
| 1895 ^d | Up | 3,388 | 815 | | 4,203 |
| | Down | 3,501 | 850 | | 4,351 |
| 1896 ^d | Up | 2,938 | 1,097 | | 4,035 |
| | Down | 3,051 | 4,605 | | 7,656 |
| 1897 ^e | Up | 2,899 | 1,260 | | 4,159 |
| | Down | 2,785 | 1,260 | | 4,045 |
| 1898 ^e | Up | 3,203 | 2,835 | | 6,038 |
| | Down | 3,317 | 2,835 | | 6,152 |
| 1899 ^f | Up | 3,091 | 1,890 | | 4,981 |
| | Down | 3,091 | 1,890 | | 4,981 |
| 1900 ^f | Up | 3,227 | 2,480 | | 5,707 |
| | Down | 3,431 | 3,800 | | 7,231 |
| 1901 ^f | Up | 2,840 | 60 | | 2,900 |
| | Down | 2,954 | 60 | | 3,010 |
| 1902 ^g | Up | 1,674 | 1,219 | | 2,893 |
| | Down | 792 | 510 | | 1,302 |
| 1903 ^g | Up | 1,302 | 525 | | 1,827 |
| | Down | 3,493 | 2,469 | | 5,962 |
| 1905–6 ^h | Up | 4,598 | | | 4,598 |
| | Down | 4,598 | | | 4,598 |
| 1906–7 ^h | Up | 6,751 | 3,081 | | 9,832 |
| | Down | 6,751 | 3,081 | | 9,832 |
| 1907–8 ^h | Up | 8,261 | 4,800 | | 13,061 |
| | Down | 8,068 | 4,800 | | 12,868 |
| 1908–9 ⁱ | Up | 6,115 | 3,850 | | 9,965 |
| | Down | 6,115 | 3,850 | | 9,965 |
| 1913 ^j | Both | 1,245 | 471 | 1,048 | 2,764 |
| 1914 ^j | Both | 1,347 | 406 | ³ | 1,753 |

Sources: (a) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1891': V/23/61. (b) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1892': V/23/63. (c) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1893': V/23/65. (d) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the year 1896': V/23/71. (e) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1898': V/23/76. (f) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1901': V/23/80. (g) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year 1903': Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1900–5. (h) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year Ended 20 March 1908': A&P, 1908, cxiv. (i) McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Mohammerah for the Year Ended 20 March 1909': A&P, 1909, xcvi. (j) Knox (Bushire) to Grant (Delhi), 27 Feb. 1915, no. Cf. 101: L/P&S/10/366.

Notes

1 Supplied by Messrs Lynch Bros, Ahvaz.

2 Only a portion of the total shipping available.

3 Not available.

Table XVI Statistics of traffic on Lynch-Bakhtiyari road, 1903–13¹

| Year | Ahwaz to Esfahan | | Esfahan to Ahwaz | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Packages | Animals | Packages | Animals |
| 1903 ^a | 4,215 | | 2,496 | |
| 1904 ^a | 7,889 | | 4,058 | |
| 1905 ^a | 10,881 | 5,077 | 4,089 | 2,202 |
| 1906 ^a | 13,972 | 6,210 | 5,474 ² | 2,880 |
| | <i>Cwt</i> | <i>Animals</i> | <i>Cwt</i> | <i>Animals</i> |
| 1909 ^b | 16,259 | 7,164 | 13,440 | 4,835 |
| 1910 ^b | 26,397 | 10,294 | 7,657 ³ | 2,561 ³ |
| 1911 ^b | 12,844 | 5,416 | 6,560 ³ | 2,293 ³ |
| 1912 ^c | 17,239 | 6,500 | 12,096 | 5,110 |
| 1913 ^c | 17,646 | 7,960 | 15,842 | 6,350 |

Sources: (a) Consul-General Barnham, 'Report on the Trade of Isfahan and Yezd for the Year 1906': A&P, 1908, cxiv. (b) Captain A. Grey, Consul and Assistant Resident, Ahwaz, 'Administration Report for the Ahwaz Consulate', 1911, 15 March 1912: Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1909–13. (c) Grey, 'Administration Report for the Ahwaz Vice-Consulate', 1913: *ibid*.

Notes

- Figures refer only to goods forwarded by Messrs Lynch Bros, which only represent approximately half of the total.
- Out of 5,474 packages, 46 cases were opium (average transport rate on same 34.15 *qerans* per case) and the remainder sundry goods. Average transport rate per *shahman* on above was 2.25 *qerans* downward (Esfahan–Ahwaz) and 3.85 *qerans* upward.
- Decline due to lack of security on the road. In 1911 alone, £10,000 worth of British goods were destroyed or stolen (Cox to Government of India, Bushire, 25 August (Received 2 September) 1912, no. 1950, Confidential: L/P&S/10/304).

Table XVII Average rates of hire on Lynch–Bakhtiyari road, 1910–13

| <i>Description</i> | | <i>1910</i> <i>qerans</i> | <i>1911</i> <i>qerans</i> | <i>1912</i> <i>qerans</i> | <i>1913</i> <i>qerans</i> |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ahvaz to Esfahan (per <i>shahman</i> ¹) | Camels | 4.17 | 5.49 | 6.55 | 5.70 |
| | Mules | 4.60 | 5.98 | 6.75 | 7.35 |
| | Donkeys | 3.17 | 3.00 | 4.60 | 4.40 |
| Esfahan to Ahvaz | Camels | 2.90 | | 3.00 | 2.55 |
| | Mules | 2.75 | 2.70 | 3.00 | 3.25 |
| | Donkeys | 2.00 | | 3.00 | |
| | Opium per chest | 37.50 | 48.33 | 63.90 | 52.50 |

Source: Administration Report, Ahwaz, 1913: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1909–13.

Note

1 1 *shahman* = 13½ lbs

Documents***Document I***

English text of the Life and Property Proclamation and the accompanying *farman* (enclosures 1 and 2 respectively, in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 25 May 1888, no. 68: FO 539/38).

Official Government Proclamation (translation)

The Great and Most High God having made our holy person the source of justice and benevolence, and the executor of his command and power, and having especially entrusted the protection of the lives and property of the subjects of the united countries of Persia into our well-skilled hands, in thanksgiving for this great bounty, we consider it incumbent on us in the execution of this trust not to draw back from or evade the distribution of justice and the protection of the lives and property of the people of this country from the encroachment of oppressors, and (we consider it incumbent upon us) to so properly endeavour and persevere that the people be masters of their lives and property, in order that they may, with the greatest ease and prosperity, engage themselves in enterprises which are the basis of civilization and the source of wealth; therefore, for the information and assurance of all the subjects and people, in order to make them acquainted with the watchfulness, tempered with justice, of our sovereign mind, by the issue of this great Proclamation and noble Address, we make it generally known to the people of the united countries of Persia, that all our subjects, as regards their lives and property, are free and independent, so that they may, without fear or apprehension, exercise any right of proprietorship they like over their own belongings, and any enterprise for which the combination of money and formation of companies for the construction of works and roads and any branch of the branches of civilization and wealth which they may undertake will give us satisfaction and pleasure, and the protection of such is our duty, and no one shall have the right or power to lay hands upon, or take possession of, or interfere with, the life or property, or punish or chastise the subjects of the Persian Government, except it be in execution of the religious and civil laws.

Month of Ramazan-ul-Mubarek, 1303 (1305).

Firman (translation)

(The *Firman*s contain the same words as the Proclamation, with an additional injunction, of which the following, addressed to the *Veliāhd*, or Heir Apparent, at Tabriz, is a specimen.)

It is commanded that the Dawn of the Soul's Light, the Key of the Gates of Victory, the Light of the Eyes of the Khilafet and Kingdom, Resplendence of the Face of Sovereignty and Empire, Dear and Most Noble Son, Light of the Eyes, Mozafer-ud-Din Mirza, *Veliāhd* of the Everlasting Kingdom of Persia, Governor-

General of the Province of Azerbaijan, will execute this world-respected Imperial *Firman*, and not allow it to be disregarded; and this very *Firman* is to be read in all *masjids* and meeting-houses, and is to be generally explained and instilled into the people, and published to all small towns, districts, and even villages and settlements, so that all the subjects of Persia be informed of this Imperial command, and bonds are to be taken from the petty authorities, binding them to carry out these commands, and any one disregarding this order will be so punished and chastised as to be the wonder of the spectators.

Document II

English text of the Karun River Navigation Regulations (Administration Report, 1888–9: (IOR) V323/56)

Regulations for the navigation of the River Karun

The Persian government, in order to facilitate commerce, increase the wealth of the country and render her lands profitable, has opened the River Karun, subject to the following regulations, and has allowed the navigation from Mohammarah to Ahwaz by the mercantile marine of all nations. The vessels navigating the Karun will carry out the regulations of the government, which regulations shall hold good for ten years without fail, after which they will be modified according to the exigencies of circumstances –

1. The commercial steamers of merchants of friendly governments must not remain at the landing-places or in the river longer than necessary for the purpose of loading, unloading and provisioning themselves for the journey.

2. Persons whose presence is detrimental to order, and who would cause difficulties by their presence, should not be taken on board the vessels; whoever comes should be provided with a passport from his own government; otherwise, if any one arrives without a passport, it is impossible to understand what his business may be.

3. Under no pretext whatsoever will any vessel have the right to protect any Persian subject in any way.

4. The transport of arms is absolutely prohibited, and if this rule is disregarded, the arms will be seized.

5. No explosive goods whatsoever shall be transported.

6. Ship-owners shall not erect any buildings whatsoever, such as coal depots, warehouses, shops, caravan-serais or manufactories, etc., on the banks of the river.

7. For the storage of merchandise and coal, depots and warehouses, as well as landing-places in sufficient quantity will be constructed on the part of the Persian government or Persian merchants.

8. Ordinary reasonable rates to be paid by the ship-owners will be fixed for the hire of the depots and warehouses.

9. The store-keepers of the coal stores shall be Persian subjects.

10. The ships shall not proceed higher than Ahwaz.

11. For the merchandise depots a trustworthy man shall be chosen in Persia, and another shall be chosen on the part of the whole of the ship-owners; together, they shall look after the depots.

12. The watchmen of the depots, such as guards, etc., shall all be appointed by the Persian government.

13. No one belonging to any vessel has any right whatsoever to buy, sell or mortgage, etc., any property from or to any Persian subject.

14. From the vessels navigating the Karun to Ahwaz, for going and returning, if a steam vessel, a tonnage of one kran per ton, and if a sailing vessel, ten shahis, as toll and right of way will be levied. Unladen vessels shall pay half tolls; sailing vessels belonging to Persian subjects under 30 tons will be exempted from these dues.

15. Porters for the portage from the landing-places to the vessels, and from the vessels to the loading-places, shall be provided by the Persian government, who will keep a register of them and supply them with a badge.

16. When a Persian subject who, with the permission of the Persian government, has entered the service of the vessels renders himself liable to the law, his trial and punishment shall be conducted by the Persian representative without any interference.

17. With reference to the flags of the vessels, they will be regulated by the general maritime laws on the subject.

18. Employés of the vessels are prohibited from lending Persians generally any sums of money in excess of two tomans, trading being excepted.

19. No friendly government has any right whatsoever to interfere with the depth, course or bed of the river.

20. The number, names and employment of persons who, with the permission of the government, are employed on the vessels of friendly governments shall be entered in the government books, and should have a Persian passport; otherwise, they are not allowed to take service.

21. As this permission to the mercantile marines of friendly governments to navigate the Karun is solely for the purpose of facilitating and stimulating trade and nothing else, this will by no means be allowed to be made a pretext for political discussions of any sort.

22. The regulations obtaining regarding wrecks on shores generally shall govern such cases, and the salvage shall be paid to the natives of the shore.

23. Dangerous goods, such as arms, etc., shall not be sold by the employés of vessels to Persian subjects, nomads or tribes; if sold, they will be seized and their value returned.

24. Should any one vessel of a friendly power violate these regulations, if a steamer, 600 tomans, and if a sailing vessel, 300 tomans fine will be inflicted, and the vessel shall be prohibited from the navigation for two years.

Addendum – In case of disputes the Persian text to be gone by.

Document III

English text of the Naseri Company concession ('Military Report on South-West Persia', vol. II, Appendix VII, Simla, 1910: L/Mil/17/15/10/2; and enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 20 December 1890: FO 539/47).

Abstract of the Concession granted to the Malek-ut-Tijjar and the Moin-ut-Tijjar of Bushire

ARTICLE 1

At Muhammerah at least 10,000 *zers* of ground adjoining the new Custom-house, to be constructed at Muhammerah, is granted to the Nasiri Company gratuitously, in order that it shall construct a building in accordance with the plans proposed by Messrs. Lynch, and that they shall lease the same to the Lynch Company from now to ten years at a rental of 15 per cent. After the expiration of ten years both parties shall have the right to renew or give up the lease. On the remainder of the land the Nasiri Company shall have the right to build for itself or in order to lease to others. The landing place at Muhammerah shall be constructed by the Government, or his Excellency the Nizam-us-Sultaneh may construct it on his own account, it becoming his private property. The Government shall construct the Government House.

ARTICLE 2

With reference to the Bender Nasiri:

1. The Nasiri Company shall construct a quay including a *caravanseraï* and shops in sufficient number at the Bender Nasiri, so that vessels shall be able to anchor alongside the quay in order to permit the landing of the passengers with ease and comfort, and as a compensation for the quay, merchandize, no matter where it originated from, each bale a toll of 100 dinars, and from other loads 1 shahi per half load (case); pilgrims are exempted.

2. From the quay below the obstruction to the quay above the obstruction, which is a distance of half a *farsakh*, they shall construct a *route chaussée*, and to have a number of carts for the transport of loads ready, so that the native and foreign merchandize may not be delayed. To compensate the Company for the construction of this road, on each box weighing from ten *tabriz* maunds to twenty *tabriz* maunds a tax of 2 shahis shall be levied, and on each bale 200 dinars shall be levied for transport expenses; in excess of twenty *maunds* in weight on bales 400 dinars shall be levied, and on other half loads (cases) 200 dinars shall be levied; they shall not have the right to levy in excess of this.

3. If the work shall not go easily on a cart road, the Nasiri Company is bound to lay down rails for a tramway in order not to delay the belongings of natives and foreign merchants.

4. On the eastern side of the cart-road along its whole length 100 *zers* of land, and on the western side on the bank of the river other than what is now

the property of the Royats, from the side of the lower quay half the land shall be made over gratuitously to the Nasiri Company to build on as their own property.

ARTICLE 3

From Bender Nasiri to Bender Shalili:

1. The Concession for the navigation from Bender Nasiri to Shuster and Dizful for the transport of native and foreign merchandize is given to the Nasiri Company, that for the present at an early opportunity they have two vessels ready, that the property of merchants be not delayed.

2. Should, on account of the increase of traffic, two vessels not be sufficient, the Nasiri Company is bound to increase the number until sufficiency is attained, so that the property of merchants be not delayed at Bender Nasiri.

3. Military transport is to be carried at half prices.

4. The Nasiri Company to have the right to navigate from Muhammarah to Bender Nasiri, and business to be done with them just as with the other Companies navigating the Karun.

ARTICLE 4

With reference to Bender Shalili – it is a bender in which vessels anchor, and from there to Shuster is about 2 *farsakhs*, and on account of the stony Banks of the Shatt-ul-Arab it is not possible for vessels to navigate to the town of Shuster.

1. The concession for a railroad from Bender Shalili is granted to the Nasiri Company for facilitating the transport of goods, in compensation for which undertaking the Company shall levy a tax of 2 *krans* per *kharwar* from the owners of the loads.

2. That 10,000 *zers* of ground at the foot of the Kaleh Selasel is granted to the Nasiri Company gratuitously for the purpose of constructing a building for Messrs. Lynch, in accordance with their plans, to be let to them in accordance with the agreement made at Muhammarah.

3. After the expiration or two years from the construction of the quays, the Government shall receive a payment after deduction of 5 per cent on the tolls on merchandise levied on account of the quays.

ARTICLE 5

With reference to the mines of Arabistan (Khuzestan) and Bakhtiari and the concession of coal mines in Arabistan and Bakhtiari is given to the Nasiri Company in order that they should facilitate the excavation of those mines and transport the produce to native and foreign ports, and after deduction of all expenses of the aforesaid Company in the exploitation of the coal mines, 20 per cent of the resultant profits is to be given to the Company.

Note – Article 5 refers solely to one coal mine which the late Hoseyn Qoli Khan, *ilkhani* of the Bakhtiari, discovered some years ago, and which the Khans of the Bakhtiari have made over to the Company, and they have no right whatsoever to interfere in Arabistan and Bakhtiyari.

The Government to have the right to have a vessel on the Upper Karun. The Company is prohibited from selling or transferring this Concession to foreigners.

Document IV

List of the British, Russian and Dutch Agents, Vice-Consuls and Consuls for Khuzestan, 1890–1911 (A.T. Wilson, ‘*Precis*’, Calcutta, 1912: L/P&S/20, no. C.108; and L/P&S/20, no. E.96)

British Vice-Consuls, and Consuls for Khuzestan, Muhammareh

| <i>Name</i> | <i>From</i> | <i>To</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|---|-------------|------------|---|
| Mr W. McDouall I.E.T.D. | Oct. 1890 | May 1896 | Vice-Consul at Muhammareh |
| Mr S. Butcher, I.E.T.D. | May 1896 | March 1897 | Acting Vice-Consul at Muhammareh |
| Mr W. McDouall | March 1897 | July 1903 | Vice-Consul at Muhammareh |
| Major E.B. Burton, 17th Cavalry, I.A. | July 1903 | Feb. 1904 | Acting Vice-Consul at Muhammareh |
| Mr W. McDouall | Feb. 1904 | July 1909 | Consul for Khuzestan to reside at Muhammareh |
| Lt A.T. Wilson, 32nd Sikh Pioneers, I.A. | July 1909 | Jan. 1911 | Acting Consul for Khuzestan to reside at Muhammareh |
| Capt. L.B.H. Haworth, I.A. | Jan. 1911 | | Consul for Khuzestan to reside at Muhammareh. |

British Vice-Consuls for Khuzestan to reside at Ahvaz

| <i>Name</i> | <i>From</i> | <i>To</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| Capt. D.L. Lorimer | Jan. 1904 | June 1905 | Acting |
| Major W.R. Morton, R.E. | June 1905 | Jan. 1906 | Acting |
| Capt. D.L.R. Lorimer, I.A. | Jan. 1906 | Jan. 1909 | With local rank of Consul, whilst at Ahvaz, from May 1908 |
| Lt J.G.L. Ranking, I.A. | Jan. 1909 | May 1911 | With local rank of Consul, whilst at Ahvaz |
| Capt. A.H.J. Grey | May 1911– | | With local rank of Consul, whilst at Ahvaz |

Consular Agents for Russia – Ahvaz

| <i>Name</i> | <i>From</i> | <i>To</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|------------------|-------------|------------|---|
| Mr P. Ter Meulen | June 1905 | March 1909 | Consular Agent, Ahvaz |
| Mr V. Gratema | March 1909 | April 1910 | (Also Hon. Netherlands Consul at Ahvaz) |
| Mr P. Ter Meulen | April 1910 | | Acting |

Consuls for The Netherlands for Khuzestan, Lorestan and Kordestan

| <i>Name</i> | <i>From</i> | <i>To</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|------------------|-------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mr V. Gratema | May 1908 | April 1910 | Consul |
| Mr P. Ter Meulen | April 1910 | | Acting (also Russian Consular Agent) |

Notes

1 Introduction

- 1 Col. M.S. Bell (Head of the Indian Intelligence Department) 'A Visit to the Karun River and Kum', *Blackwoods Magazine*, cxlv (July 1889), pp. 112–13.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid. (the political boundaries of these provinces later underwent some alterations).
- 4 W.B. Fisher (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran* (1968), i, pp. 33–6.
- 5 Ibid., p. 275.
- 6 The name Khuzestan may be derived from a Persian word meaning sugar cane (e.g. G.N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question* (1966), ii, p. 320).
- 7 Abd ul-Ghaffar Najm ul-Molk, *Ketabcheh*, p. 81: MFAA.
- 8 R.A. Adams, 'Agriculture and Urban Life in Early Southern Iran', *Science*, cxxxvi, no. 3511 (1962), pp. 109–22.
- 9 G.N. Curzon, 'The Karun River and Commercial Geography of South-West Persia', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, xii (1890), p. 513.
- 10 For further information see H. Rawlinson, 'A Note on a March from Zohab to Khuzistan in 1836', *JRGS*, 9 (1839), p. 102; and Lesan us-Saltaneh Sepehr, *Tarikh-e Bakhtiyari* (Tehran, 1355s/1976), p. 24.
- 11 Curzon, *Persia*, ii, p. 273.
- 12 For population statistics see Chapter 7.
- 13 F. Barth, *Nomads of South Persia* (1965), p. 1.
- 14 A.K.S. Lambton, 'Ilāt', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, iii, p. 1,090.
- 15 Fisher, *CHI*, i, p. 636.
- 16 For information on the Bakhtiyaris see G.R. Garthwaite's various works given in the bibliography; Curzon, ii, pp. 283–303; A.H. Layard, 'A Description of the Province of Khuzistan', *JRGS*, 16 (1846); Sepehr, op. cit. On the Lurs see Rawlinson, op. cit., Layard, op. cit.; Curzon, ii, pp. 273–83.
- 17 Curzon, ii, p. 321.
- 18 Lambton, 'Ilāt', p. 1,098.
- 19 For their history see *The History of Arabistan (Khuzestan)*, trans. from Arabic by W. McDouall: FO 460/4, File 20.
- 20 M. Ansari, 'The History of Khuzistan (1878–1925)'; unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1974, p. 23.
- 21 Curzon, ii, pp. 321–2.
- 22 A. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Pansad Saleh-ye Khuzestan* (Tehran, 1333s/1954), pp. 98–9.
- 23 J.R. Perry, 'The Banu Ka'b', *Le Monde Iranien et L'Islam* (Geneva and Paris, 1971), p. 131.
- 24 Kasravi, pp. 102–3.
- 25 Perry, pp. 149–50; idem, *Karim Khan Zand* (Chicago and London, 1979), pp. 161–6.
- 26 Curzon, ii, p. 325.

- 27 McDouall, p. 34.
- 28 Ansari, pp. 26–7.
- 29 Mohammad Hasan Khan Etemad us-Saltaneh, *Ruznameh-ye Khaterat* (Tehran, 1345s/1966), p. 142.
- 30 Ansari, p. 35.
- 31 G.S.F. Napier, 'Military Report on South Persia', Confidential, Simla, 1900, p. 71: L/Mil/17/15/8.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 British Vice-Consul, Muhammarah, 12 April 1898, Confidential, no. 44: FO 460/2.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Abd ul-Ghaffar Najm ul-Molk, *Safar Nameh-ye Khuzeestan*, M. Dabir Siyaqi (ed.) (Tehran 1341s/1962), p. 107.
- 36 Napier, op. cit.
- 37 E.g. between 1690 and 1811, out of 17 sheykhs of Fallahiyeh, only two died a natural death. One fled, one was killed in battle, and of the rest no less than nine are recorded as having been 'murdered' (McDouall, op. cit.). In 1878, the Sheykh ul-Mashayekh was assassinated by his cousin (P.J.C. Robertson, Assistant Political Agent, Basra, 'Southern Persia', Admin. Report, 1878–9: V/23/36; see also Najm *Safar*, p. 145).
- 38 I.e. Dezful, Shushtar, Hoveizeh, Ahvaz, Muhammareh, Fallahiyeh, Deh Molla, and Ram Hormoz (Curzon, ii, p. 321).
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Garthwaite, 'Unity', p. 149.
- 41 Russell Shaw, *Proceedings of the RGS*, v (1883), p. 136.
- 42 Curzon, ii, p. 331.
- 43 W.B. Selby, 'Account of the Ascent of the Karun and Dizful Rivers, etc.', *JRGS*, 14 (1844), p. 222.
- 44 Curzon, 'Karun and . . . SWP', p. 516.
- 45 J.U.B. Champain, 'On the Various Means of Communication between Central Persia and the Sea', *Proceedings of the RGS*, v (1883), p. 125.
- 46 Selby, p. 221.
- 47 Curzon, 'Karun and . . . SWP', p. 517.
- 48 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 94–5.
- 49 Ibid., p. 96.
- 50 Curzon, 'Karun and . . . SWP', p. 518.
- 51 Shaw, p. 136.
- 52 Curzon, 'Karun and . . . SWP', p. 518.
- 53 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, p. 95.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Curzon, 'Karun and . . . SWP', p. 519.
- 56 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, p. 95.
- 57 Major Wells' survey and map of these rapids were published in the *Proceedings of the RGS*, March 1883; Bell, M.S. 'A visit to the Karun River and Kum', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, April 1889, pp. 453–82.
- 58 Curzon, loc. cit.
- 59 Najm, op. cit., pp. 95–6.
- 60 Champain, p. 127.
- 61 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, p. 96.
- 62 Four-sixths (of water).
- 63 Two-sixths.
- 64 F. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864–1914* (New Haven and London, 1968), p. 148.
- 65 Ibid.

- 66 J.A. Saldana, *Persian Gulf Gazetteer*, Historical and Political Material, part i (1903), p. 2: L/P&S/20/C.242.
- 67 For further information see A.T. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf* (London, 1954), pp. 281–2.
- 68 Until the war of 1857, Macdonald Kinneir's *Geographical Memoirs of the Persian Empire*, enshrined the corpus of available geographical knowledge of Persia for the British.
- 69 J.B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1795–1880* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 292–3, 344, 347.
- 70 J.G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, i, Historical, part 2 (England, 1970), pp. 1,669–70.
- 71 *Ibid.*, pp. 1,670–1.
- 72 Kasravi, pp. 128–30; Lorimer, p. 1,670.
- 73 Lorimer, *Gazetteer* i, part 2, p. 1,692.
- 74 Wilson, pp. 257–8.
- 75 M.S. Smith to J. Stokes (FO), Edinburgh, 24 July 1885: FO 539/27.
- 76 Although the value of this route for British and Anglo-Indian commerce had been brought to the attention of the British officials long before that (e.g. Layard, *op. cit.*; Selby, *op. cit.*; Wilson, pp. 265–6).
- 77 Saldana, p. 28.
- 78 Col. E.C. Ross (Political Resident, Persian Gulf and Consul General for Fars), 'Report on the Karun River Navigation', Bushire, 12 January 1882.
- 79 R. Thomson to Salisbury, Tehran 30 July 1879, no. 3, Commercial, Confidential : FO 881/3968.
- 80 Saldana, p. 28.
- 81 W.F. Ainsworth, *The River Karun, An Opening to British Commerce* (London, 1890), p. 134.
- 82 R. Thomson to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 July 1879, *op. cit.*
- 83 Ainsworth, pp. x–xi.

2 British policy in Persia and Wolff's mission

- 1 *Novoe Vremya*, 2 December 1888, 'Abstract of Russian Press' (trans.), enclosure in Morier to Salisbury, St Petersburg, 3 December 1888, no. 414: FO 539/40.
- 2 R. Thomson left Tehran in November 1885 and Nicolson assumed charge of the Legation (Nicolson to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 November 1885, no. 125, I and IO: FO 60/47). Wolff arrived in Tehran in April 1888 (Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 17 April 1888, no. 40: FO 60/495); *Akhtar*, 7 June 1888; Etemad us-Saltaneh, *Ruznameh-ye Khaterat*, 5, 6 Shaban 1305/8, 9 May 1888, pp. 641–2.
- 3 Dolgorouki was named to Tehran in October 1886 (Nicolson to FO, Tehran, 26 October 1886, telegraphic, no. 198: FO 60/481) and arrived in May of the following year (same to same, Tehran, 4 May 1887, no. 60, I and IO: FO 60/486); Etemad, *Khaterat*, 5, 6, Shaban, 1304/29, 30 April 1887, pp. 562–3; *Akhtar*, 8, 29 December 1886.
- 4 Morier to Salisbury, St Petersburg, 14 November 1888, no. 383: FO65/1355; as cited by A.P. Thornton, 'British Policy in Persia', *The English Historical Review*, 69 (1954), p. 479.
- 5 Nicolson to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 January 1888, no. 12, Secret: FO 539/37.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 R.L. Greaves, *Persia and the Defence of India* (1959), p. 108.
- 8 Nicolson to Salisbury, Tehran, 5 January 1888, no. 9 (43), Secret : FO 539/37.
- 9 Nicolson to Salisbury, Tehran, 8 February 1888, no. 6 (48), Secret: FO 539/37; as cited in S. Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform, 1858–96* (1978), p. 209.
- 10 Greaves, p. 120.

- 11 FO to Wolff, 3 December 1887, no. 1, Consular: FO 60/488.
- 12 Nicolson to Salisbury, Tehran, 5 December 1887, no. 146, I and IO: FO 60/487.
- 13 T.P. Brockway, 'Britain and the Persian Bubble, 1888–1892; *The Journal of Modern History*, 13 (March–December 1941), p. 37.
- 14 Greaves, p. 121.
- 15 Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia* (1968), p. 184.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- 17 And the Persians were aware of this fact (e.g. Etemad, *Khaterat*, p. 707).
- 18 Sir H.D. Wolff, *Rambling Recollections* (1908), ii, p. 311.
- 19 *Dictionary of National Biography*, Supplement 1901–1911 (London, 1912), iii, pp. 700–1; cf. Brockway, op. cit.
- 20 Curzon, *Persia*, i, p. 483.
- 21 Kazemzadeh, p. 185.
- 22 Greaves, op. cit., e.g. Chapters IX, X and XI.
- 23 Wolf, *Recollections*, ii, p. 333.
- 24 J. Bertrand Payne, *England, Russia and Persia* (London, 1872), p. 30; cf. Brockway, p. 38.
- 25 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 May 1888, no. 51: FO 539/38
- 26 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 May 1888, no. 61: FO 539/38.
- 27 Wolff, ii, p. 344.
- 28 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 May 1888, no. 51: FO 539/38.
- 29 Col. Ross to Wolff, Bushire, 30 November 1888 (extract); enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 23 December 1888, no. 293: FO 539/41.
- 30 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, November 5 (received 13 December) 1888, no. 244, Most Confidential: FO 539/40.
- 31 Wolff, ii, p. 339.
- 32 Wolff, ii, p. 346.
- 33 Wolff to Dolgorouki, Gulahek, 13 June 1888, Very Confidential: Wolff, ii, pp. 347–50.
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 Wolff to Salisbury, Vienna, 14 October 1889, Secret and Confidential: Wolff, ii, pp. 368–70.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 346.
- 37 *Ibid.*, pp. 372–3.
- 38 E.g. Greaves, p. 157; Kazemzadeh, p. 186.
- 39 Salisbury to Wolff, Draft, 29 February 1888, no. 14, Very Confidential: FO 60/491.
- 40 E.g. Granville to R. Thomson, FO, 31 January 1882, no. 15, Very Confidential: FO 539/21; Thomson to Granville, Tehran, 14 June 1882, no. 106: FO 539/21; Granville to Thomson, FO, 11 March 1885, no. 25: FO 539/25; same to same, FO, 11 March 1885, no. 27: FO 539/25; Salisbury to Thomson, FO, 6 August 1885, no. 75A: FO 539/27; H. Walpole (IO) to P. Currie (FO), IO, 5 March 1887, Secret: FO 539/33; Nicolson to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 January 1888, no. 12, Secret: FO 539/37.
- 41 Government of India (Foreign Dept) to Viscount Cross (IO), Simla, 24 June 1887, Secret, External: FO 60/490.
- 42 H. Walpole to P. Currie, IO, 5 March 1887, Secret: FO 539/33.
- 43 Salisbury to Wolff, Draft, 29 February 1888, no. 14: FO 60/491.
- 44 Report by Mr. Herbert (2nd Sec. at HM Legation), Tehran, 7 December 1886, enclosure in Nicolson to Iddesleigh, Tehran, 8 December 1886, no. 149, Extract: FO 881/5392.
- 45 'Account of record of a conversation which took place at the IO on the 28th February between the Prime Minister . . . and . . . (Lord Cross) on the affairs of Persia', H. Walpole to P. Currie, Secret, IO, 5 March 1887: FO 539/33.
- 46 R.M. Smith on Herbet's 'Internal State of Persia', London, 14 March 1887: FO 60/490; and enclosure in IO to FO, 24 March 1887: FO 539/33.

- 47 *Marx and Engels on Colonialism* (Moscow, 1968), p. 314.
- 48 Curzon, i, p. 433.
- 49 Wolff, ii, p. 340.
- 50 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 April 1888, Private and Confidential: FO 881/5818, and FO 60/492.
- 51 H. Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East* (London, 1875), pp. 137–8; ‘Report on the Persian Army’, 1 August 1892: FO 60/539; Greaves, p. 158.
- 52 Smith on Herbert’s ‘Internal State of Persia’, 14 March 1887; FO 60/490.
- 53 Report by A. Herbert on ‘The Internal State of Persia’, Tehran, 7 December 1886; enclosure in Nicolson to Iddesleigh, Tehran, 8 December 1886, no. 149, Extract, Confidential: FO 881/5392.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 April 1888, Private and Confidential: FO 881/5818 and FO 60/492.
- 56 Observations of Col. Smith on Herbert’s ‘Report’, 14 March 1887: FO 60/490.
- 57 Curzon, i, p. 391.
- 58 Etemad, *Khaterat*, p. 526.
- 59 Curzon, i, p. 433.
- 60 Ibid., p. 391.
- 61 Ibid., p. 433.
- 62 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 May 1888, no. 60, Secret and Confidential: FO 539/38.
- 63 Curzon, i, p. 339.
- 64 Etemad, *Khaterat*, p. 709.
- 65 Ibid., pp. 142, 149.
- 66 Ibid., p. 144.
- 67 Ibid., p. 148.
- 68 Ibid., p. 168.
- 69 Ibid., pp. 540, 542, 545.
- 70 Ibid., pp. 16, 17, 29.
- 71 Ibid., pp. 540, 542, 545.
- 72 Ibid., pp. 610.
- 73 Ibid., pp. 643.
- 74 Ibid., pp. 541.
- 75 Ibid., pp. 604.
- 76 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 April 1888, Private and Confidential: FO 881/5818.
- 77 The author does not give any name, but this must have been the celebrated Hajji Amin uz-Zarb who was one of the wealthiest Iranian merchants.
- 78 A. Jali (tr.), *Khaterat-e Kolonel Kasakowsky* (Col. Kasakowsky’s Memoires) (Tehran, 1355s/1976), pp. 153–4.
- 79 Etemad, *Khaterat*, p. 156.
- 80 Ibid., p. 542.
- 81 E.F. Law (Commercial Attaché to the British Legation at St Petersburg) to Wolff, Gulahek, 19 July 1888; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 20 July 1888, no. 2, Commercial : FO 60/492.
- 82 Curzon, i, p. 445.
- 83 Etemad, *Khaterat*, p. 170.
- 84 Ibid., pp. 146, 166, 619.
- 85 Ibid., p. 167.
- 86 Ibid., p. 1,075.
- 87 Ibid., p. 315.
- 88 Ibid., pp. 313, 526.
- 89 Ibid., pp. 141, 156.
- 90 Curzon, i, p. 438.

- 91 General Maclean to Wolff, Hashtadan, 30 May 1888, Extract, enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 11 June 1888, no. 75, Secret and Confidential: FO 539/39.
- 92 Curzon, i, p. 445.
- 93 Etemad, *Khaterat*, pp. 908, 910, 1,069.
- 94 Ibid., p. 11; Jali, *Kasakowsky*, p. 169.
- 95 A. Ashraf, 'Historical Obstacles to the Development of a Bourgeoisie in Iran', in M.A. Cook (ed.), *Studies in The Economic History of the Middle East* (Oxford, 1970), p. 323.
- 96 Translation from *Pall Mall* journal: *Akhtar*, 9 June 1880.
- 97 Memo by Nawab Hassan Ali Khan to General Maclean, Confidential; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 25 June 1888, no. 97: FO 539/39.
- 98 E.F. Law to Wolff, Gulahek, 19 July 1888; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 20 July 1888, no. 2, Commercial: FO 60/492.
- 99 Ernesto Laclau, 'Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America', *New Left Review*, no. 67 (June 1971), pp. 25–6.
- 100 *Akhtar*, 13 September 1880.
- 101 *Akhtar*, 13 June 1888.
- 102 Ashraf, p. 323.
- 103 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 April 1888, Private and Confidential: FO 881/5818.
- 104 The observance of secrecy was so important that, at this time, even the Persian Minister in London, Malkam, was to be kept in the dark (Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 13 May 1888, Decypher no. 55, Secret and Confidential: FO 60/495).
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 General Maclean to Wolff, Hashtadan, 30 May 1888; (Extract) enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 11 June 1888, no. 75, Secret and Confidential: FO 539/39.
- 107 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 13 May 1888, no. 55: op. cit.
- 108 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 17 May 1888, Decypher no. 57: FO 60/495.
- 109 Ibid.
- 110 Up to this time, no formal treaty or agreement existed by which England and Russia mutually agreed to respect the integrity of Persian territory; but in 1834, an 'understanding' was come to by the two powers in this regard, which was reiterated in 1838 (see Greaves, op. cit. Appendix III, p. 255).
- 111 Amin ud-Dowleh, Mirza Ali Khan, *Khaterat-e Siyasi* (Political Memoires), Farman Farmayan (ed.) (1355s/1976), p. 135.
- 112 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 26 July 1888, telegraphic, no. 116, Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 31 July 1888, no. 129: FO 539/39.
- 113 Under the first heading of the immunities granted by the Act were 'the guarantees insuring to our subjects perfect security to life, labour, and fortune'. At the end of the Decree it was provided that 'this Imperial Rescript shall be . . . officially communicated to all the Ambassadors of the friendly Powers . . . that they may be witnesses to the granting of these institutions' (Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 31 July 1888, no. 129: FO 539/39).
- 114 Wolff, ii, p. 340.
- 115 M.P. Hornick, 'The Mission of Sir H.D. Wolff to Constantinople, 1885–7; cf. Thornton, p. 579.
- 116 Sidney J.A. Churchill was the man who, while in Iran, collected a lot of information on the country's nobility (see Sir D. Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians* (London, 1977), p. 81). In 1886, he was appointed 'Oriental Second Secretary' to Tehran (FO to S. Churchill, 17 July 1886: FO 60/484). Churchill, who was described by Wolff as the only 'really qualified officer' could speak, read, and write Farsi 'thoroughly', and by the time of Wolff's appointment, having spent a considerable portion of his life in Persia, had a very 'profound acquaintance not only with its history . . . but with the different men of eminence'. Before being connected with the Legation, he was charged with the collection of art specimens for Kensington Museum and was

- also employed by the British Museum to purchase and collate Persian manuscripts, a position which he held even when he worked for the Legation (Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 11 January 1889, Separate and Confidential: FO 60/500).
- 117 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 May 1888, no. 60, Secret and Confidential: FO 539/38.
- 118 Amin ud-Dowleh, p. 135.
- 119 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 May 1888, no. 60: op. cit.
- 120 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 23 May 1888, no. 64: FO 539/38 and FO 60/495.
- 121 Ibid.; Wolff, ii, p. 340.
- 122 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 26 May 1888, no. 63, sent to India: FO 60/495; and Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 25 May 1888, no. 68: FO 539/38. It was accompanied by the following note: 'For the propagation of justice, equity, and safety to the lives, property, honour . . . of all the subjects . . . of Persia . . . Numerous Firmans . . . are going to be transmitted to all the provinces . . . of Persia. A copy of that is enclosed in this official communication . . . so that having informed themselves of this great Imperial bounty to the subjects of this great Government they may also inform their own governments of it' (Minister of Foreign Affairs to Wolff, Tehran, 26 May 1888 (trans.); enclosure 1 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 26 May 1888, no. 70: FO 539/39). Replying to the Foreign Minister's 'Note', Wolff expressed the 'lively satisfaction' with which British government has heard of the Proclamation and observed that in this act the Shah has placed on record his 'benevolent wishes towards his subjects' which would increase their prosperity (Wolff to the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 26 May 1888; enclosure 2, *ibid.*).
- 123 Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 12 June 1888, no. 77: FO 539/39.
- 124 Consul-General Abbott to Wolff, Tabriz, 7 June 1888; and Col. Ross to Wolff, Bushire, 23 June 1888; (Extracts), enclosures 2 and 3 in Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 7 July 1888, no. 105: *Ibid.*
- 125 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 25 May 1888, no. 68: FO 539/38.
- 126 For the English texts of the Proclamation and the *farman* see Appendix I of this book. See enclosures 1 and 2 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 25 May 1888, no. 68: FO 539/38; and Wolff, ii, pp. 34–2.
- 127 Laclau, p. 22
- 128 Col. Ross to Wolff, Bushire, 30 November 1888; (Extract) enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 23 December 1888, no. 293: FO 539/41.
- 129 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 22 June 1888, no. 63: FO 539/38.
- 130 *Ibid.*
- 131 Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 31 July 1888, no. 129: FO 539/39.
- 132 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 23 December 1888, no. 293: FO 539/41.
- 133 At the beginning of the article the author, giving as his source of information the *Standard* of London, attributes this move to 'the new British Envoy to Tehran' (*Akhbar*, 13 June 1888).
- 134 *Ibid.*
- 135 *Ibid.*
- 136 For the list of its subscribers in Iran, Turkey, Europe, India, Arabia, and Russia see *Akhbar*, 10 March 1880.
- 137 Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 31 July 1888, no. 129: FO 539/39.
- 138 *Ibid.*
- 139 These rates were 6 per cent, 4 per cent, and 2 per cent on deposits of over a year, over six months, and under six months respectively (*Akhbar*, 28 August 1888).
- 140 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 16 October 1888, no. 225, Confidential: FO 539/40.
- 141 *Ibid.*
- 142 Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 31 July 1888, no. 129: FO 539/39.
- 143 For an account of this incident see Etemad, *Khaterat*, 16, 17 Shavval 1305/27, 28 June 1888, pp. 655–6.

- 144 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 28 June 1888, no. 85, telegraphic: FO 539/38. Etemad has put the number of demonstrators at 20,000 (op. cit., pp. 655–61).
- 145 A modern police force modelled after European concepts was founded by the Shah in Tehran after he returned from his second journey to Europe in 1878 (Etemad, *Al-Maatharu val-Athar* (Tehran, n.d.), p. 120; W.M. Floor, 'The Police in Qajar Persia', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Band 123 (1973), p. 299). Monteforte, who later received the rank of *Amir Tuman* (General) and the title of Nazm-ul-Molk (Etemad, *Athar*, p. 120 and Appendix, p. 27) was an Italian who was appointed by the Shah as the first Chief of Police in January 1880 (for the Shah's *Dastkhat* (Rescript), see *Akthar*, 14 January 1880; Curzon, i, p. 332). In 1883, Thomson referred to this man as 'an Italian, who has for some years been at the head of the Tehran Police Force', and who had caused someone to be tortured – the act which was against a *farman* issued by the Shah abolishing torture in his dominion (Thomson to Granville, Tehran, 19 March 1883, no. 35, I and IO: FO 60/453).
- 146 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 28 June 1888, no. 85: op. cit.
- 147 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 2 July 1888, no. 74, Ext. 33: FO 539/39.
- 148 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 2 July 1888, 2.50 p.m., telegraphic, no. 33: Ibid; Draft Telegraph, no. 33: FO 60/494.
- 149 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 July 1888, 9.30 a.m., telegraphic, no. 93: FO 539/39; FO 60/495.
- 150 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 July 1888, 11.45 a.m., telegraphic, no. 94: FO 539/39; FO 60/495.
- 151 Etemad, *Khaterat*, pp. 655–6.
- 152 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 July 1888, 11.45 a.m., telegraphic, no. 93: FO 539/39; FO 60/495.
- 153 Apparently referring to the cases of mob-lynching.
- 154 He was right since only eight months later the chief culprit was forgiven, and all his privileges, in addition to the governorship of (Persian) Iraq, were restored (Etemad, 25 Jamadi II 1306/26 February 1889, pp. 709–10).
- 155 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 17 Shavval 1305/28 June 1888, p. 656.
- 156 Ibid.
- 157 'Zin khaneh' or saddle-house.
- 158 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 14 Jamadi II 1306/15 February 1889, p. 708.
- 159 Ibid.
- 160 C. Issawi (ed.) *Economic History of Iran* (Chicago, 1971), p. 346.
- 161 Curzon, i, p. 473.
- 162 Ibid.
- 163 A.K.S. Lambton, 'The Case of Haji Abd al-Karim', *Iran and Islam*, C.E. Bosworth (ed.) (Edinburgh, 1971), p. 331.
- 164 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 May 1888, no. 51: FO 539/38.
- 165 Lambton, op. cit.
- 166 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 May 1888, no. 51: FO 539/38.
- 167 Ibid.
- 168 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 9 May 1888, no. 52, Confidential: FO 60/495.
- 169 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 May 1888, no. 51: FO 539/38.
- 170 Endorsement by Salisbury, 'S.10.5', *ibid*.
- 171 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 May 1888, *ibid*.
- 172 'The building belonged to Amin ud-Dowleh who was, as Wolff said, 'a considerable house proprietor' (Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 20 May 1888, no. 59, Confidential: FO 539/38, Etemad, *Khaterat*, p. 678).
- 173 Thomson to Wolff, Tehran, 4 July 1888; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 5 July 1888, no. 103: FO 539/39.
- 174 Thomson to Wolff, Tehran, 4 July 1888; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 5 July 1888, no. 103: FO 539/39.

- 175 This branch was opened on 18 July 1888. See Attorney to the New Oriental Banking Corporation Ltd to Ross, Bushire, 17 July 1888; same to same, Bushire, 18 July 1888; Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 18 July 1888, no. 109, Decypher: FO 60/495; Ross to Wolff, Bushire, 19 July 1888, Confidential, Service Telegram: FO 60/497.
- 176 Thomson to Wolff, 4 July 1888: op. cit.
- 177 Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 14 August 1888, Confidential, no. 145: FO 60/493.
- 178 Thomson to Wolff, 4 July 1888: op. cit.
- 179 Wolff to Salisbury, 4 February 1890, no. 42: op. cit.
- 180 Curzon, i, p. 474.
- 181 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 15 March 1809, no. 81, Most Confidential: FO 60/510.
- 182 He was away for almost four months.

3 Assurances, the Karun Proclamation and the Imperial Bank of Persia

- 1 Wolff, ii, p. 343.
- 2 Salisbury to Nicolson, FO, 18 February 1888, 4 p.m., no. 7, Telegraphic: FO 539/37.
- 3 Saldana, op. cit.
- 4 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 5 May 1888, no. 46, Most Secret and Confidential: FO 539/38.
- 5 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 May 1888, no. 61: *ibid.*
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 1 June 1888, no. 71, Secret and Confidential: FO 539/39.
- 8 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 May 1888, 10.40 a.m., no. 66, Most Confidential, Telegraphic: FO 539/38.
- 9 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 1 June 1888, no. 71: op. cit.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 23 June 1888, no. 81, Secret and Confidential, Telegraphic: FO 539/38.
- 13 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 12 August 1888, no. 129, Decypher, Most Confidential: FO 60/495.
- 14 'Statement by the Ameen-es-Sultan (on behalf of the Shah, Tehran, 14 September 1888)', trans.: enclosure 3 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 15 September 1888, Very Secret and Confidential: FO 539/40.
- 15 Nicolson to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 January 1888 (received 17 February), no. 12, Secret: FO 539/37.
- 16 Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 5 September 1888, no. 171: FO 539/40.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 6 September 1888, no. 174, Secret and Confidential: *ibid.*
- 19 Memo by Churchill, Tehran, 14 September 1888, trans. Very Secret; enclosure 1 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 15 September 1888, Very Secret and Confidential: *ibid.*
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 'Statement by the Ameen-es-Sultan (Tehran), 14 September 1888', trans; enclosure 2 in Wolff to Salisbury, 15 September 1888: op. cit.
- 22 Wolff to Amin, Tehran, 18 September 1888: Lorimer, i, part 2, p. 1,717.
- 23 (1831 to January 1892), previous titles Ajudan-e Makhsus, Motamed ul-Molk and Vazir-e Makhsus successively. He was the third son of Mirza Nabi Khan-e Qazvini, Amir Divan, and the younger brother to Sepah Salar. Originally from a humble background (his grandfather being a *dallak* or bath attendant) he was sent,

- together with this brother Hoseyn Khan, to study in Europe. In the mid-1850s he entered the Foreign Ministry service, became a protégé of Mirza Yusef, Mostowfi ul-Mamalek, with whose assistance he married the Shah's sister, Ezzat ud-Dowleh (1285/1868–9), which no doubt augmented his wealth and influence. He was a member of the royal entourage on the Shah's first European journey (1873), a governor of Fars (1292/1875–6) and later of Mazandaran (1294/1877–8). In 1878 Sepah Salar accompanied the Shah to Europe and left his brother, Yahya Khan, in temporary charge of the War and Foreign Ministries. In 1299/1881–2 he became the Justice Minister and received the title of his brother, Moshir-ud-Dowleh, who had died, or been murdered on the Shah's order, the previous year. Due to his close family link with the Shah, in 1301/1883–4 he was sent on a special mission to St Petersburg where he was received with great consideration, and where he is supposed to have imbibed Russian ideas. Around this time Mirza Said Khan, who had monopolized the Foreign Ministry portfolio for a quarter of a century, died, and probably with Russian assistance Yahya Khan managed to receive this coveted office (1885). In 1887, he was replaced by Abbas Khan, Qavam ud-Dowleh. Curzon has described Yahya Khan, who spoke French 'admirably', as 'probably one of the cleverest of the public men in modern Persia . . .' (M. Bamdad, *Sharh-e Hal-e Rejal-e Iran dar Qorun-e 12, 13 va 14 Hejri* (Tehran, 1345–51s/1966–72), vol. iv, pp. 438–72; Curzon, i, pp. 429–30).
- 24 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 September 1888, no. 199: FO 60/495.
 - 25 Nicolson to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 January 1888 (received 17 February), no. 12, Secret: FO 539/37).
 - 26 Succeeded his brother as the new Amir in 1879. Amid seeming calm all the members of the British Mission in Kabul were suddenly killed (Greaves, op. cit., pp. 49–50) which led to the renewal of the war with Afghanistan and to the deposition of Ayub Khan (Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 29 February 1887 (Etemad, *Khaterat*, p. 582)).
 - 27 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 September 1888, no. 199: op. cit.; Etemad, *Khaterat*, 3, 6 Zi Hajjeh 1304/23, 26 August 1887, pp. 582–3.
 - 28 (?–1897). Mirza Abbas Khan-e Tafreshi entered the government service as one of Mirza Aqa Khan-e Nuri's secretaries and a functionary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the early 1850s. He then became, like Yahya Khan, a protege of Mostowfi ul-Mamalek to whom Abbas Khan's subsequent achievements are attributable. In 1275/1858–9 he became Deputy Foreign Minister, hence his first title, i.e. Muaven ul-Molk. In 1290/1873–4, again with Mostowfi's help, he was granted the title of Qavam ud-Dowleh. In 1301/1883–4, when Yusef Khan became Sadr Azam, Qavam was given the Interior portfolio, and in 1887 he succeeded Yahya Khan as Foreign Minister, a position he held until his death. Curzon has referred to him as 'a man of rough manners and appearance, and a typical representative of the old school' and little more than a political cypher'. (Bamdad, ii, pp. 211–15; Curzon, i, pp. 428–9).
 - 29 Etemad, *Khaterat*, II Zi Hajjeh 1304/31 August 1887, p. 583; *Akhbar*, 7 September 1887.
 - 30 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 September 1888, no. 199: FO 60/495.
 - 31 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 14, 15 Zi Hajjeh 1304/3, 4 September 1887, p. 584.
 - 32 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 September 1888, no. 199: op. cit.
 - 33 In the English translation it is 'Month of Zi Hejjeh 1384' which must be a mistake. In the second 'Secret Undertaking' which the Shah gave to Dolgorouki (Rajab 1306/March 1889) the former has referred to this 'Agreement', and has declared it null and void.
 - 34 Memo., Secret and Confidential (trans.); enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 1 October 1888, no. 201, Secret and Confidential; Asia: Secret (Section no. 2): FO 60/495.

- 35 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 September 1888, no. 199: op. cit.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 1 October 1888, no. 201: op. cit.
- 38 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 11 October 1888, Very Secret, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 39 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 5 Moharram 1306/12 September 1888, p. 675.
- 40 Ibid., 6 Safar 1306/10 October 1888, p. 682.
- 41 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 12 October 1888, 9.45 a.m., Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 10 October 1888, no. 77, Telegraphic: Ibid.
- 44 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 16 October 1888, no. 198, Secret and Confidential, Telegraphic: *ibid.*
- 45 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 16 October 1888, no. 81, Telegraphic: Ibid.
- 46 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 16 October 1888, no. 198, op. cit.
- 47 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 16 October 1888, no. 81: op. cit.
- 48 Saldana, op. cit.
- 49 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 11 October 1888: op. cit.
- 50 Ibid.; Saldana, op. cit.
- 51 'Paper read to Sir H.D. Wolff by the Ameen-es-Sultan (Tehran, 17 October 1888/ 11 Safar 1306): enclosure 1 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 29 October 1888, no. 233: FO 539/40.
- 52 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 21 Safar 1306/27 October 1888, p. 685.
- 53 At this time Etemad was the Minister of the Press (see *ibid.*, Jamadi II 1304/February–March 1887, p. 555), and therefore in charge of the Official Gazette.
- 54 Ibid., 14 Zi Hajjeh 1306/22 August 1888, p. 671.
- 55 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 29 October 1888, no. 233: op. cit.
- 56 Wolff to Amin, Tehran, 25 October 1888, Confidential; enclosure 5: *ibid.*
- 57 Enclosure 3: *ibid.* For further correspondence regarding the preparation of this text see Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 13 October 1888, 6.45 p.m., no. 78, Very Secret, Telegraphic; Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 15 October 1888, no. 197, Telegraphic; Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 15 October 1888, 3.40 p.m., no. 79, Telegraphic; Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 16 October 1888, no. 199, Telegraphic; Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 16 October 1888, 3.30 p.m. no. 80, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 58 'The Amin-es-Sultan to Sir H.D. Wolff (Tehran), 19 Sefer 1306 (25 October 1888)', trans. enclosure 2 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 29 October 1888, no. 233: op. cit.
- 59 Paragraph added to 'Note' from Minister for Foreign Affairs of 19 Safar 1306, trans.; enclosure 6; *ibid.* For the English text of the 'Regulations for the Navigation of the River Karun' see 'The Minister for Foreign Affairs to Sir H.D. Wolff, Tehran, 27 December 1888' (trans.); enclosures 1 and 2 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 31 December 1888 (received 7 February 1889), no. 308: FO 539/41; Saldana, pp. 53–4; Lorimer, i, part 2, pp. 1,718–19. For the Persian text of the 'Regulations' see *Akhbar*, 27 February 1889; for the English text see Appendices, Document II, of this book.
- 60 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 16 October 1888, no. 81, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 61 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 25 October 1888, no. 93, Very Secret, Telegraphic: *ibid.*
- 62 Lorimer, i, part 2, p. 1,720.
- 63 Saldana, op. cit.
- 64 Salisbury to Mr Beaucherk (Berlin); Salisbury to Sir A. Paget (Vienna); Salisbury to J.G. Kennedy (Rome), 30 October 1888, no. 31, Telegraphic, 'Reply of Minister for Foreign Affairs to Russian Chargé d' Affaires (dictated by the Shah), trans.(30 October 1888)'; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 November 1888 (received 13 December), no. 242: FO 539/40.
- 65 The Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs to Wolf, Tehran, 24 Safar 1306 (30 October 1888), trans.; enclosure 1 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 31 October 1888

- (received 13 December), no. 238: *ibid.*; also see Wolff, ii, p. 344; 'Opening of the Karun Route into Persia 1888-1891': FO 460/1; Persian text of the 'Circular' and the 'Regulations', original copy recovered from Bushehr, and its translation into English: FO 460/1, File 4, p. 231 (reproduced in Appendix II below).
- 66 Wolff to the Persian MFFA, Tehran, 31 October 1888, enclosure 2 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 31 October 1888, no. 238: *op. cit.*
- 67 Salisbury to Mr Beaucherk (Berlin) and Sir A. Paget (Vienna), and J.G. Kennedy (Rome), 30 October 1888, no. 31, Telegraphic: *ibid.*; Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 21 November 1888, 5.35 p.m. no. 144, Telegraphic: *ibid.*
- 68 Sir E. Paget to Salisbury, Vienna, 18 November 1888 (received 20 November), no. 354; Salisbury to Paget, FO, 24 November 1888, no. 152; Paget to Salisbury, Vienna, 2 December 1888 (received 4 December), no. 366: *ibid.*
- 69 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 8 December 1888, no. 276, Confidential: FO 60/493.
- 70 Signor Damiani to J.G. Kennedy, Rome, 16 November 1888; enclosure in J.G. Kennedy to Salisbury, Rome, 19 November 1888 (received 23 November), no. 300: FO 539/40.
- 71 FO to Wolff, 10 November 1888, Telegraphic: *ibid.*
- 72 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 17 November 1888, 3.55 p.m. no. 113, Telegraphic: *ibid.*
- 73 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 13 February 1889, no. 33, Most Confidential (print Asia): FO 60/500.
- 74 Amin ud-Dowleh, p. 122.
- 75 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 29 October 1888, no. 212, Very Secret, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 76 Died in Tehran on 25 December 1889 (Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 26 December 1889, no. 254: FO 60/502).
- 77 Known in Iran as 'Arab Saheb, he being of Arab origin (Persian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives; and enclosure 1 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 11 April 1890, no. 99: FO 539/48).
- 78 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 29 October 1888 (received 13 December), no. 234, Secret and Confidential: FO 539/40.
- 79 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 22 Rabi ul-Avval 1306/27 November 1888, p. 692.
- 80 Amin ud-Dowleh, p. 120.
- 81 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 7 Rabi ul-Aval 1306/12 November 1888, p. 689.
- 82 Sir W. White to Salisbury, Constantinople, 12 December 1888, no. 89, Confidential, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 83 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 November 1888 (received 13 December), no. 242: *ibid.* This was repeated, almost word for word, by Etemad in answering the Shah's question in this respect. This official was in daily contact with the Russian Legation (Etemad, *Khaterat*, 20 Rabi ul-Avval 1306/25 November 1888, p. 691).
- 84 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 November 1888, no. 242: *op. cit.*
- 85 *Ibid.*
- 86 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 16 Safar 1306/22 October 1888, pp. 683-4.
- 87 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 November 1888, no. 242: *op. cit.*
- 88 'Reply of Minister for Foreign Affairs to Russian Charge d'Affaires (Dictated by the Shah)', trans.; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 November 1888, no. 242: *op. cit.*
- 89 Saldana, *op. cit.*
- 90 'Reply of Minister for Foreign Affairs to Russian Charge d' Affaires (Dictated by the Shah)', enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 November 1888, no. 242: *op. cit.*
- 91 Sir. R. Morier to Salisbury, St Petersburg, 14 November 1888, no. 65, Secret, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 92 Morier to Salisbury, St Petersburg, 21 November 1888, no. 66, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.

- 93 Morier to Salisbury, St Petersburg, 21 November 1888 (received 22 November), no. 396. Ext. 55: *ibid.*
- 94 Salisbury to Morier, FO, 23 November 1888, no. 64, Telegraphic: *ibid.*
- 95 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 20 Rabi ul-Avval 1306/25 November 1888, p. 691.
- 96 'Extract from the *Tehran Gazette* (*sic*; 'Iran') of 1 November 1888, trans.; enclosure 7 in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 November 1888 (received 13 December), no. 242: FO 539/40; *Akhtar*, 5 December 1888 and 23 January 1889.
- 97 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 24 November 1888, no. 231, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 98 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 13, 16 Safar 1306/19, 22 October 1888, pp. 683–4; FO to Wolff, 21 October 1888, no. 84, Draft Tel.: FO 60/494.
- 99 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 24 November 1888, no. 231: *op. cit.*
- 100 Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 24 November 1888, 5 p.m., no. 119, Telegraphic: *ibid.*
- 101 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 24 Jamadi ul-Avval 1306/27 January 1889, p. 704.
- 102 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 20 January 1889, no. 16, Confidential: FO 60/549: FO 539/41.
- 103 *Novoe Vremya*, 1 December 1888, Abstract of Russian Press; enclosure in Morier to Salisbury, St Petersburg, 3 December 1888, no. 414: FO 539/40.
- 104 *Novoe Vremya*, 2 December 1888: *ibid.*
- 105 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 25 October 1888, no. 206, Confidential: FO 60/495.
- 106 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 4 December 1888, no. 242, Telegraphic: FO 539/40; *Akhtar*, 5 December 1888; for the railway question see 'Memo', by S.J.A Churchill (Tehran), 27 August 1888; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 10 September 1888 (received 8 October 1888), no. 180: FO 539/40.
- 107 *Novoe Vremya*, 1 December 1888, enclosure in Morier to Salisbury, 3 December 1888, no. 414: *ibid.*
- 108 For material which appeared in this regard in *Akhtar* see, for instance: *Akhtar*, 'A letter from a [Persian] patriot regarding the Karun Concession, and the Russian opposition', 5 December 1888; 'Iran and Russia, the Karun Question and Dolgorouki's bad behavior', 12 December 1888; 'Iran and Russia', 19 December 1888; 'The Russian Press (and their criticism of the Karun Concession)', 19 December 1888; 'The Views of the European Press on Russia, the Mashad Consulate and the Karun Question', 26 December 1888; 'The Increase of the Russian influence at the Court of Persia', and 'Iran and Russia, the River Karun and Concession', 2 January 1889; 'Progress and Development in Bulgaria and the Non-progress in Iran', 9 Jan 1889, 'Iran and Russia', 'The Russians and the Karun, Prince Dolgorouki, etc.', 27 March 1889, 'Iran and Russia', 'Askabad–Mashad Carriage Road, and Railway Schemes', 23 December 1889, 'Iran and Russia', translations of articles by Curzon which appeared in *The Times*, 31 March 1890.
- 109 Amin ud-Dowleh, pp. 122–3.
- 110 *Akhtar*, no. 102, 5 December 1888, pp. 103–4; translation of this article is enclosed in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 22 January 1889, no. 25: FO 60/549; Kazemzadeh, pp. 196–7.
- 111 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 23 December 1888, no. 293: FO 539/41.
- 112 Salisbury to Wolff (quoted from the Secretary of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy), FO, 12 December 1888, no. 173, Confidential: FO 539/40.
- 113 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 12 December 1888, no. 252, Secret, Telegraphic: FO 539/40.
- 114 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 21 Rabi ul-Thani 1306/25 December 1888, p. 697.
- 115 *Ibid.*, 23 Rabi ul-Thani 1306/27 December 1888, pp. 697–8. It is significant that as soon as Dolgorouki returned to Tehran (8 February 1889, *ibid.*, pp. 706–7) and had meetings with the Shah, Amin, who disliked Yahya Khan very much, caused the Shah to dismiss his son and appoint Baha ud-Dowleh in his place. As a result of this, Yahya Khan himself resigned his posts (*ibid.*, 22 Jamadi ul-Thani 1306/23 February 1889, p. 709). The reason for this was apparently the Shah's confidence in the

- possibility of coming to an understanding with Dolgorouki, and also the fact that he distrusted Yahya Khan, who had in any case played his role.
- 116 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 23 December 1888, no. 293: FO 539/41.
 - 117 12 February 1889 (*ibid.* 11 Jamadi ul-Thani 1306/12 February 1889, p. 707); Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran 13 February 1889, no. 33, Most Confidential (Print Asia): FO 60/500.
 - 118 Wolff to Salisbury, 13 February 1889: *ibid.*
 - 119 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 12 Jamadi ul-Thani 1306/13 February 1889, p. 707.
 - 120 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 13 February 1889: *op. cit.*
 - 121 I.e. Tehran-Pir-e Bazar (or Pileh Bazar) on the Mordab.
 - 122 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 10 Jamadi ul-Thani, 1306/11 February 1889: Amin ud-Dowleh, p. 122.
 - 123 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 2 February 1889, no. 29, Confidential, Telegraphic (Print Asia): FO 60/500; FO 539/41; Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 30 June 1890, no. 224, Most Confidential: FO 60/511; Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 2 July 1890, no. 174, Secret, Telegraphic: FO 539/48.
 - 124 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 29 Rabi ul-Thani 1306/2 January 1889; 6 Jamadi ul-Avval 1306/9 January 1889, pp. 699–700.
 - 125 ‘Persian Railways’ – extracts from the *Grajdanim* of 21 June 1888, trans.; enclosure in Morier to Salisbury, St Petersburg, 25 June 1888, no. 29: FO 539/37.
 - 126 ‘Memo.’, by J. Mitchell, St Petersburg, 6 February 1889; *op. cit.*
 - 127 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 8–9 Rajab 1306/11–12 March 1889, p. 713.
 - 128 ‘Precis of Article in the “Novoe Vremya” of March 21 (2 April) 1889’ (communicated by the Intelligence Department, 8 April), 6 April 1889: FO 539/42.
 - 129 Above, p. 40.
 - 130 Dated [8] Rajab 1306/[11] March 1889.
 - 131 *Akhtar*, 12 April 1883.
 - 132 ‘Memo.’ by J. Mitchell, St Petersburg, 6 February 1889: *op. cit.*
 - 133 ‘Memo. on Askabad, Kuchan, Meshed Road’, by Mr. Wells, Officiating Director, Persian Section, Indo-European Telegraph; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 21 January 1890, no. 18: FO 60/510; Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 6 August 1890, no. 200, Telegraphic; Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 2 September 1890, no. 214, Very Secret, Telegraphic: FO 539/49; FO 60/513.
 - 134 For communications regarding Tehran–Tabriz road see Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 4 March 1889, no. 51: FO 60/500; Kennedy to Salisbury, Gulahek, 7 September 1889, no. 176, Confidential: FO 60/501; Kennedy to Salisbury, Tehran, 10 March 1891, no. 64: FO 539/53; Kennedy to Salisbury, Gulahek, 21 March 1891, no. 107, Secret, Telegraphic: FO 539/34; Etemad, *Khaterat*, 29 Jamadi ul-Avval 1306/1 February 1889, p. 705.
 - 135 Kennedy to Salisbury, Gulahek, 17 July 1889, no. 44: FO 60/501.
 - 136 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 6 Rajab 1306/9 March 1889, p. 713.
 - 137 *Ibid.*, 29 Rajab 1306/1 April 1889, p. 721. For the views of *Akhtar* regarding the opening of the *Mordab* to Russia see *Akhtar*, 7 April 1890.
 - 138 Amin ud-Dowleh, pp. 123–4.
 - 139 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 13 Safar 1306/19 October 1888, p. 683.
 - 140 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 December 1888, no. 241, Very Secret: FO 60/494.
 - 141 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 5 November 1888, no. 244: *op. cit.*
 - 142 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 3 December 1888, no. 241: *op. cit.*
 - 143 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 12 December 1888, no. 251, Decypher, Very Secret: FO 60/494.
 - 144 Etemad says it was signed on the eve of this day; *Khaterat*, 24 Jamadi ul-Avval 1306/27 January 1889, p. 704.
 - 145 See the text of the concession in FO 60/506; FO 60/507.

- 146 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 1 February 1889, no. 28: FO 60/500; Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 1 February 1889, no. 14 (Print Asia): FO 60/499.
- 147 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 28 Jamadi ul-Avval 1306/31 January 1889, p. 705.
- 148 For the English translation of the concession see: FO 60/506; FO 60/507; FO 881/5808 (Confidential, Communicated by Baron de Reuter, 28 March 1889); FO 539/41. For the Persian text of the concession see *Akhtar*, 27 March 1889 and MFFA.
- 149 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 1 February 1889, no. 28: FO 60/500.
- 150 *Akhtar*, 27 February 1889; 'Memo.' By Lt Gen. Brackenbury on the construction of a railway from Quetta to Sistan by Baron Reuter: FO 60/517.
- 151 1 to 29 July 1889 (Wolff, ii, p. 352; Etemad, *Khaterat*, 2 Zil Qadeh 1306, 28 June 1889, pp. 743–8).
- 152 FO to Wolff, London, 17 July 1889: FO 60/499; FO to Wolff, London, 2 August 1889: FO 60/501; FO to Kennedy (British Charge d' Affaires at Tehran), 14 August 1889: FO 60/499.
- 153 FO to Treasury, 2 July 1889; Treasury to FO, 13 July 1889; Draft Charter, 'The Imperial Bank of Persia, Charter of Incorporation', 15 August 1889, 'Imperial Bank of Persia, Charter', Deed of Settlement Concession, 1889 (in Book Library, 8N, 9982): FO 60/507.
- 154 Curzon, i, p. 475.
- 155 Wolff, ii, p. 363; Etemad, *Khaterat*, 20 Zil Qadeh 1306/19 July 1889, p. 746.
- 156 Wolff, ii, p. 350.
- 157 Kennedy to Salisbury, Tehran, 29 October 1889, no. 191: FO 539/44.
- 158 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 2 January 1890, no. 5: FO 60/510.
- 159 Curzon, i, p. 480.
- 160 *Ibid.*, p. 479.
- 161 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 17 October 1890, no. 300: FO 60/512.
- 162 L/P&S/11/3, p. 300, 1912. Some figures of the trade of southern Persia financed by the Imperial Bank of Persia in 1912 were (in £ sterling) as follows:

| | <i>Imports</i> | <i>Exports</i> | <i>Grand total</i> |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Province of Khuzestan, branches of the bank in Muhammarch and Ahvaz | 616,904 | 341,046 | |
| Bushehr and Fars | 675,614 | 348,950 | |
| Bandar Abbas District | 436,328 | 190,115 | |
| Total | 1,728,846 | 880,111 | 2,608,957 |

Source: (IO) L/P&S/11/3, P.300/1912.

The Note circulation of the Imperial Bank as on the 20 September each year, 1890–1900 (thousand tumans) was as follows:

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Tumans</i> | <i>Year</i> | <i>Tumans</i> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1890 | 29 | 1896 | 415 |
| 1891 | 99 | 1897 | 203 |
| 1892 | 194 | 1898 | 365 |
| 1893 | 207 | 1899 | 589 |
| 1894 | 334 | 1900 | 1,058 |
| 1895 | 254 | | |

Source: J. Rabino, 'An Economist's note on Persia' *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 64, part II, 29 June 1901, pp. 265–91.

By 1913 its note issue stood at £962,000, its deposits at £906,000, and it paid regular dividends to shareholders and a small amount to the Iranian Government (Issawi, op. cit., p. 346). But, as a result of its competition, many of the leadings *sarrafs* went out of business. Under the agreement of 30 May 1930, the note issue rights of the bank were transferred to the Government-owned Bank Melli Iran, which had been formed in 1928. In 1948 the Imperial Bank of Persia changed its name to British Bank of the Middle East and continued its activities in Iran until 1952 (ibid.). Later, it again changed its name to the Bank of Iran and the Middle East, and was still active until June 1979 when, after the Iranian Revolution, all the banks in Iran were nationalized by the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

- 163 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 2 February 1889, no. 29, Confidential: FO 60/500.
- 164 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 15 February 1889, no. 36, FO 60/500; Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 5 July 1890, no. 177, Very Secret, Telegraphic: FO 539/49; Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 9 July 1890, no. 230, Secret: FO 60/512.
- 165 Kazemzadeh, p. 199.
- 166 Issawi, p. 346.
- 167 Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 6 September 1888, no. 174, Secret and Confidential: FO 539/40.
- 168 Wolff to Salisbury, Tehran, 18 March 1889, no. 57, Secret and Confidential: FO 60/500. As a result of this, and perhaps because of his diplomatic failures, Dolgorouki was recalled to Russia and replaced by M. Butzow (Salisbury to Wolff, FO, 7 July 1890, Telegraphic, no. 75: FO 60/513) who arrived in Tehran in July 1890 (Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 25 July 1890; Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 5 August 1890, no. 199: ibid. *Akhtar*, 19 May 1890).
- 169 Above, p. 40.
- 170 Etemad, *Khaterat*, 16 Jamadi ul-Thani 1306/17 February 1889; and Amin ud-Dowleh, p. 122.

4 Socio-economic conditions in Khuzestan prior to, and on the eve of, the Karun opening

- 1 A quantity of water sufficient enough for turning a millstone (A.K.S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (Oxford, 1969), p. 408).
- 2 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 81–4.
- 3 H.W. Maclean, 'General Report on British Trade and Enterprise in Persia': A&P, 1904, xcv.
- 4 Abd ullah Khan Qaragozlu, *Ketabcheh-ye Mahumat* (1890), p. 29: MFAA
- 5 Saldana, op. cit., Preface.
- 6 Najm, *Safar*, p. 66.
- 7 E.g. A.T. Wilson, 'Report on the Trade and Commerce of Arabistan (Khuzestan) for the year ended 22 March 1910': A&P, 1910, CI.
- 8 W. Baring, 'Report on a Journey to Shushtar (etc.)', Tehran, 24 January 1882: FO 60/444; FO 60/449; Najm, *Safar*, p. 158.
- 9 M. Durand, 'Notes on a Journey from Tehran to Ahvaz (etc.)'; enclosure 2 in Durand to Salisbury, Tehran, 18 January 1900 (received 19 February), no. 5: FO 416/2.
- 10 Baring, op. cit.
- 11 Najm, *Safar*, p. 15.
- 12 Ibid., p. 20.
- 13 Qaragozlu, p. 8.
- 14 T.E. Gordon, 'Report of a Journey from Tehran to Karun (etc.)', Persian Gulf, 9 January 1891: FO 881/9233*: FO 60/528.
- 15 Durand, op. cit.
- 16 Baring, op. cit.
- 17 Qaragozlu, pp. 77–8.

- 18 Najm, *Safar*, p. 158.
- 19 Ibid., p. 48.
- 20 *Idem*, *Ketabcheh*, p. 91.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 21–85; *Safar*, pp. 64–141.
- 22 Wilson, Report, 1910: op. cit.
- 23 Curzon, ii, p. 327.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Kasravi, p. 145.
- 26 Saldana, p. 7.
- 27 Kasravi, loc. cit.
- 28 See Najm, *Safar*, pp. 47, 55–7; Baring, op. cit.
- 29 Qaragozlu, p. 98.
- 30 Ibid., p. 87.
- 31 Najm, *Safar*, p. 21; Baring, op. cit.
- 32 W. McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Muhammarah (etc.)' for 1890: V/23/60.
- 33 Najm, *Safar*, p. 30.
- 34 Maclean, 'General Report', 1904: op. cit.
- 35 Najm, *Safar*, p. 96.
- 36 Gordon, 'Report', 1891: op. cit.
- 37 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 119–20.
- 38 Ibid., p. 9.
- 39 See Wilson, 'Military Report on (SW) Persia'. V, Luristan, 1912, p. 54: L/Mil/17/15/10/5; I. McIvor, 'Notes upon the . . . Persian Mule', Report for 1879–80: V/23/37.
- 40 Qaragozlu, pp. 77–8.
- 41 Baring, op. cit.
- 42 Qaragozlu, pp. 77–8.
- 43 Baring, op. cit.
- 44 Qaragozlu, p. 98.
- 45 Ibid., pp. 157–8.
- 46 Baring, op. cit.
- 47 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 140–1.
- 48 Baring, op. cit.
- 49 Qaragozlu, p. 50.
- 50 Ibid., p. 169.
- 51 Najm, *Safar*, p. 84.
- 52 Ibid., p. 110.
- 53 Ibid., pp. 26–7, 67.
- 54 Ibid., pp. 144–7.
- 55 Ibid., pp. 93–4.
- 56 Gordon, op. cit.
- 57 Najm, *Safar*, p. 80.
- 58 'Trade Report', South Persia and Persian Gulf, 1888: V/23/56; FO 60/505.
- 59 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 26–7.
- 60 Gordon, op. cit.
- 61 Najm, *Safar*, p. 44.
- 62 Ibid., p. 59.
- 63 McDouall, 'Report on the Trade of Muhammarah', 1893: V/23/65; *idem*, 1894: V/23/67.
- 64 *Idem*, 1897: V/23/73.
- 65 Baring, op. cit.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Najm, *Safar*, p. 131.
- 68 Baring, op. cit.

- 69 Qaragozlu, pp. 85–6.
- 70 See Chapter 7.
- 71 Qaragozlu, pp. 85–6.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Ibid.; Najm, *Safar*, p. 13.
- 74 Qaragozlu, pp. 83–7; Najm, *Safar*, p. 131.
- 75 Najm, *Safar*, p. 23.
- 76 Baring, op. cit.
- 77 Qaragozlu, p. 83.
- 78 Lorimer, 'Administration Report of the Ahvaz Vice-Consulate', 1907–8: Administration Report, Persian Gulf 1905–8.
- 79 Baring, op. cit.
- 80 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 133–4.
- 81 Qaragozlu, p. 98.
- 82 Ibid., 90.
- 83 Najm, *Safar*, p. 27.
- 84 Qaragozlu, p. 113.
- 85 M.A. Jamal Zadeh, *Ganj-e Shaygan* (Berlin, 1335/1916–17), p. 31.
- 86 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 27, 139.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 W. Baring. 'Report on Trade and Cultivation of Opium in Persia', Tehran, 23 September 1881: FO 60/440; FO 60/449.
- 89 See Appendices, Table X.
- 90 Baring, 'Opium': op. cit.
- 91 Baring, 'Journey': op. cit.
- 92 Najm, *Safar*, p. 27.
- 93 Qaragozlu, pp. 113–15.
- 94 Ibid., pp. 115–17.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Ibid., pp. 118–9.
- 97 Lambton, p. 157.
- 98 Najm, *Safar*, p. 33.
- 99 Qaragozlu, p. 122.
- 100 Najm, *Safar*, p. 41.
- 101 Qaragozlu, p. 125.
- 102 Qaragozlu, p. 128; Najm, *Safar*, pp. 43–6.
- 103 Qaragozlu, p. 135; Najm, *Safar*, p. 97.
- 104 Gordon, 'Report', January 1891: op. cit.
- 105 Qaragozlu, pp. 134–5.
- 106 W. McDouall, 'Conditions of Date Cultivation in Persian Arabia', Muhammarah, n.d., Administration Report of 1894–5; V/23/67.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, p. 11; *idem*, p. 64.
- 109 Najm, *Safar*, p. 62.
- 110 Qaragozlu, p. 63.
- 111 Ibid.
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 Najm, *Safar*, p. 65.
- 114 Qaragozlu, pp. 51–2.
- 115 Ibid., pp. 54–5.
- 116 Najm, *Safar*, p. 145.
- 117 Qaragozlu, p. 154.
- 118 Najm, *Safar*, p. 143.
- 119 Ibid., pp. 143–5.

- 120 Ibid., p. 144.
- 121 Qaragozlu, pp. 159–61.
- 122 Ibid., pp. 161–2.
- 123 Ibid., pp. 162–3.
- 124 Ibid., p. 174.
- 125 Najm, *Safar*, p. 105.
- 126 Qaragozlu, pp. 135, 174–6.
- 127 Ibid., p. 175.
- 128 Ibid., p. 166.
- 129 Ibid., pp. 170–2.
- 130 Najm, *Safar*, p. 108.
- 131 Ibid., pp. 103–4.
- 132 Qaragozlu, p. 135.
- 133 Najm, *Safar*, p. 65.
- 134 Qaragozlu, pp. 82–3 (though, it seems that Najm has included these areas in the *khaleseh*: see *Safar*, p. 136).
- 135 Lambton, p. 253.
- 136 Ibid., pp. 236–8.
- 137 Napier, ‘Military Report’, 1900: op. cit.
- 138 Lambton, pp. 238–9.
- 139 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 70–86.
- 140 Najm, *Safar*, p. 136.
- 141 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 86–7.
- 142 Lambton, p. 239.
- 143 Qaragozlu, p. 115.
- 144 Sepehr, *Tarikh-e Bakhtiari*, p. 20: Lorimer gives the date as 1896, op. cit., i, part 2, pp. 1,753–4.
- 145 See Chapter 7 of this book.
- 146 Najm, *Safar*, p. 70.
- 147 McDouall (trans.), ‘The History of Arabistan (Khuzestan)’, 1894: op. cit.
- 148 Ibid.; *idem*, ‘Conditions for Date Cultivation’, 1894: op. cit.
- 149 Qaragozlu, pp. 140–1.
- 150 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 106–8; Lambton, p. 157.
- 151 Napier, ‘Military Report’, 1900: op. cit.
- 152 For further details see Lambton, pp. 167–70.
- 153 E.g. Najm, *Safar*, pp. 18–25.
- 154 Baring, ‘Journey’: op. cit.
- 155 Ibid.
- 156 On the revenue of some districts of Khuzestan, and the whole province in general, the following figures are available; the source is Najm’s *Safar*, all in tumans. Ram Hormoz, 13,000 (p. 142); Hoveizeh, 20,800 (p. 117); Fallahiyeh, 12,000 (p. 109); Miyanab-e Shushtar, *daym* 5,000 (p. 119) plus 2,000 (p. 135), ostensibly for *faryab*; Bavi tribe, 6,000 (p. 46); Muhammareh, 7,000 (p. 119); Ahvaz 1,200 (p. 34); Shushtar, 18,000 and Dezful 32,000 (p. 138). For the combined revenue of Khuzestan and Bakhtiari in 1886–7 the following figures are given: 142,595 tumans in cash: 1,797 *kharvar* grain and 800 *kharvars* straw (source: *Ketabcheh-ye Jam-o Kharj-e saneh-ye 1304*, Majles Library, no. 776/111, Tehran). In the late 1880s, immediately after his appointment as Governor-General of Khuzestan, Nezam us-Saltaneh collected 169,335 tumans in cash and 1,600 *kharvars* of grain from the province. Of this sum, the Persian Government received 146,335 tumans plus the entire revenue in kind, and the Governor-General kept the rest (see enclosure in ‘List of the names of the Governors-General . . . of Persia’, Tehran, 3 April 1890: FO 60/511). *1 *kharvar* = 300 k.g.
- 157 ‘Military Report on S.W. Persia’, vol. ii, Arabistan (Khuzestan), Simla, 1910, The Army Headquarters, pp. 8–9: L/Mil/17/15/10/2.

- 158 Qaragozlu, pp. 34–5.
- 159 *Ibid.*, pp. 35–6.
- 160 Najm, *Safar*, p. 169.
- 161 ‘Political Report for Ahwaz’, 1905–6: Administration report, Persian Gulf, 1905–8.
- 162 Najm, *Safar*, p. 103.
- 163 *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 67, 117.
- 164 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- 165 Qaragozlu, pp. 68–9.
- 166 Najm, *Safar*, p. 119.
- 167 Qaragozlu has given the total revenue, including customs, as 40,000 tumans (p. 137).
- 168 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 169 Najm, *Safar*, p. 135.
- 170 *Ibid.*, pp. 142–4.
- 171 *Ibid.*, pp. 143–5; *idem*, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 82–3.
- 172 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, p. 102.
- 173 Lambton, p. 306.
- 174 For details see Lambton, pp. 306–28.
- 175 Qaragozlu, pp. 56–7.
- 176 Lambton has defined them differently (*op. cit.*, p. 432).
- 177 Najm, *Safar*, p. 76.
- 178 Qaragozlu, pp. 65–9.
- 179 McDouall, ‘Date Cultivation’: *op. cit.*
- 180 Qaragozlu, p. 136.
- 181 *Ibid.*, pp. 174–6.
- 182 McDouall, ‘Date Cultivation’: *op. cit.*
- 183 Wilson, ‘Report’. 22 March 1910: *op. cit.*
- 184 McDouall, ‘Date Cultivation’: *op. cit.*
- 185 Lambton, pp. 210–12.
- 186 Baring, ‘Journey’, January 1882: *op. cit.*
- 187 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 79–80.
- 188 Kasravi, p. 156.
- 189 Najm, *Safar*, p. 27.
- 190 Qaragozlu, pp. 101–8.
- 191 Gordon, ‘Report’, January 1891: *op. cit.*
- 192 *Ibid.*
- 193 Qaragozlu, pp. 94–6.
- 194 Gordon, ‘Report’, January 1891: *op. cit.*
- 195 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 25–7; Kasravi, p. 145.
- 196 Gordon, *op. cit.*
- 197 Qaragozlu, pp. 104–5; Kasravi, p. 146; Ross, Administration Report, 1889–90: V/23/58.
- 198 Gordon, *op. cit.*
- 199 Lorimer, Administration Report, Ahwaz, 1907–8: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1905–8.
- 200 Above, p. 55.
- 201 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 27–8.
- 202 *Ibid.*, pp. 146–7.
- 203 E.g., *ibid.*, pp. 19–20; Qaragozlu, pp. 16–20.
- 204 Durand, ‘Notes’, January 1900: *op. cit.*
- 205 Urban insecurity stemmed from other conditions (see Chapter 7).
- 206 ‘Trade Report’, Persian Gulf, 1897: V/23/73.
- 207 ‘Trade Report’, Muhammarah, 1892: V/23/63.
- 208 Qaragozlu, p. 22.
- 209 *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3.

- 210 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 48–9.
- 211 Qaragozlu, pp. 32–3.
- 212 ‘Administration Report’, 1900–1: V/23/79.
- 213 ‘Administration Report’, Muhammadar 1897–8: V/23/73.
- 214 ‘Trade Report’, Persian Gulf, 1897: *ibid.*
- 215 Saldana, ‘Persian Gulf Gazetteer’: *op. cit.*
- 216 Durand, ‘Notes’, January 1900: *op. cit.*
- 217 *Ibid.*
- 218 McDouall, ‘Report’, 1896: V/23/71.
- 219 Administration Report, 1897–8, ‘Fars and the Persian Coast’, V/23/73.
- 220 Administration Report, 1904–5; Administration Reports, Persian Gulf, 1900–5.
- 221 Gordon, ‘Report’, January 1891: *op. cit.*
- 222 Durand, ‘Notes’, January 1900, *op. cit.*
- 223 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 85–6.
- 224 Gordon, Addendum to ‘Report of Journey’, Secret, Persian Gulf, January 1891: *op. cit.*
- 225 Najm, *Safar*, p. 49.
- 226 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 85–6.
- 227 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 107–8.
- 228 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, pp. 85–6.
- 229 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 48–9.
- 230 Gordon, ‘Report’, January 1891: *op. cit.*
- 231 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, p. 67.
- 232 Najm, *Safar*, p. 47.
- 233 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, p. 89.
- 234 *Ibid.*
- 235 Najm, *Safar*, p. 26.
- 236 Above, p. 62.
- 237 Political Report, Ahvaz, 1905–6, 1906–7: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1905–8.
- 238 For Janaki see Sepehr, p. 27.
- 239 Najm, *Safar*, p. 31.
- 240 Baring, ‘Journey’, January 1882: *op. cit.* (other sources do not seem to have alluded to this distinction).
- 241 Najm, *Safar*, p. 101; Qaragozlu, pp. 74–5.
- 242 Najm, *Safar*, p. 66.
- 243 Najm, *Ketabcheh*, p. 86.
- 244 *Ibid.*, pp. 88–90; *idem*, *Safar*, p. 108.
- 245 These developments are discussed in Chapter 7.

5 Patterns of trade in south Persia up to 1889

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- 2 Kelly, p. 1.
- 3 Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago and London, 1973), p. 324.
- 4 Napier, *op. cit.*
- 5 Issawi, *EHI*, p. 82.
- 6 J.A. Saldana, ‘Précis on Commerce and Communication in the Persian Gulf (1801–1905)’, part iii, 1906: L/P&S/20/C.248A.
- 7 Ross to A. Arnold (MP), Bushire, 2 April 1885: FO 60/475.
- 8 Ross, ‘Report on Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1878’: V/23/36.
- 9 J. Rabino, ‘An Economist’s Note on Persia’, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 64, part II, 29 June 1901, pp. 265–7.

- 10 Ross, 'Report on Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1889': V/23/58.
- 11 F. Adamiyat, *Andisheh-ye-Taraqqi* (Tehran, 1351s/1972), pp. 119–22.
- 12 Issawi, *EHI*, p. 18.
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- 14 Dickson, 'Memo.', March 1880.
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- 16 Ibid.
- 17 R. Thomson to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 July 1879, no. 3, Commercial, Confidential: FO 881/3968.
- 18 Dickson, 'Memo.', March 1880.
- 19 WO, 'Military Report on S.W. Persia', including the provinces of Khuzistan, Luristan and parts of Fars, Simla, 1885, p. 174: WO 106/186.
- 20 Ross, 'Report on Trade of the Persian Gulf for 1877': V/23/32.
- 21 WO, 'Military Report on South West Persia', 1885.
- 22 Ross, 'Report on Trade of the Persian Gulf 1878': op. cit.
- 23 Thomson to Salisbury, Tehran, 30 July 1879: op. cit.
- 24 Ross, 'Report on Trade of South Persia and the Persian Gulf for 1889': op. cit.
- 25 G.S. Mackenzie to R. Thomson, Tehran, 10 September 1878, enclosure in Thomson to Salisbury, Tehran, 27 September 1878, no. 1, Commercial: FO 60/426.
- 26 Ross, 'Memo.', enclosure in Report on the Trade and Commerce of the Persian Gulf, 1879, Bushire, 26 May 1880: A&P, 1880.
- 27 H.W. Maclean, 'General Report on British Trade and Enterprise in Persia': A&P, 1904, xcv.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Haj Mohammad Hoseyn, Amin-uz-Zarb, 'Yadgar-e-Zendegani-ye . . . Amin-uz-Zarb' (The Memoire of the life of . . .), 1347 A.H./1928–9: *Yaghma* (Tehran, Mordad 1341s/1962), p. 7.
- 30 First Secretary, French Legation, Tehran (1854–8) and Minister (1862–4).
- 31 A. de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie* (Paris, 1859), pp. 392–4; Issawi, *EHI*, pp. 35–7.
- 32 F. Adamiyat, *Amir Kabir va Iran* (Tehran, 1348s/1969), Chapters XX and XXI.
- 33 *Idem*, *andishe-ye-Taraqqi*, Chapters XI and XII.
- 34 Ross to Arnold, 2 April 1885: op. cit.
- 35 Ross, 'Report', 1888, part III, Table no. 2: FO 60/505; and Administration Report 1888–9: V/23/56.
- 36 Ross to Arnold, 2 April 1885: op. cit.
- 37 *Persia*, Handbook, FO, Confidential, June 1919, p. 113: L/P&S/20/C.188.
- 38 Rabino, 'An Economist's Note', p. 268.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ross, 'Report', 1887: V/23/53.
- 41 Thomson to Granville, Tehran, 3 October 1881, no. 12: op. cit.
- 42 For further information regarding the costumes of different classes of people in Iran see Wills, *Land of the Lion and the Sun* (London 1891).
- 43 Law, 'Notes on British Trade and Foreign Competition in North Persia', Constantinople, 6 December 1888: FO 60/508.
- 44 For further information on the cultivation and trade of opium in Iran see the author's 'Afyun' in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. 1, Fascicle 6, pp. 594–8.
- 45 Petrushevsky, in Fisher *CHI*, v., p. 502.
- 46 Adamiyat, *Amir Kabir*, pp. 230–2.
- 47 Kelly, p. 44.
- 48 Mohammad Mehdi (Arbab) Esfahani, *Nesf-e-Jahan fi Tarif-ul-Esfahan*, M. Sotudeh (ed.) (Tehran, 1340s/1961), pp. 124–5.
- 49 Najm, *Safar*, p. 177.
- 50 R. Thomson, 'Memorandum on the Opium Trade of Persia', Tehran, 6 March 1869 FO 60/321; Issawi *EHI*, pp. 240–1; Saldana, 'Précis'.

- 51 Each case containing 10–10½ *shah man* of 13½ lbs each: Thomson, 'Memo.', loc. cit.
- 52 G. Lucas, 'Memo. on the Cultivation and Exportation of Opium in Persia', 25 January 1875; enclosure Ross, Report, 1874–5: op. cit.
- 53 Mirza Hoseyn Khan, Tahvildar, *Joghrafiya-ye-Esfahan*, M. Sotudeh (ed.) (Tehran, 1342s/1963), p. 115.
- 54 Ross, 'Report', 1878: op. cit.
- 55 See Appendices, Tables I and IV, b; and Najm (*Safar*, p. 177) who says the main revenue of Iran in 1882 is from the opium and the tax levied on it.
- 56 Ross, 'Report', 1873: op. cit.
- 57 Ross, 'Report', 1878: op. cit.
- 58 Law, 'Notes', 6 December 1888.
- 59 A. Herbert, 'Report on Present State of Persia and her Mineral Resources', Tehran, 7 May 1886: FO 60/482.
- 60 Law, 'Notes', 6 December 1888.
- 61 A mail steamer service with eight voyages a year was established in 1862 between Bombay and Basra but in 1865 the runs became fortnightly (Lorimer, i, part 1A, p. 238).
- 62 Dickson, 'Report on the Trade of Persia'; enclosure in Thomson to Granville, Tehran, 31 October 1884: FO 60/463.
- 63 Ross, 'Report', 1884: V/23/47.
- 64 Law to Wolff, Gulahek, 19 July 1888, Commercial; enclosure in Wolff to Salisbury, Gulahek, 20 July 1888, no. 2, Commercial: FO 60/492.
- 65 Ross, 'Report', 1884: op. cit.
- 66 Law, 'Notes', 6 December 1888.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 For information and some statistics on the foreign trade of these two ports see Saldana, 'Précis' op. cit.; and A. Houtum-Schindler in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 13th edn, p. 312.
- 69 Dickson, 'Trade of Persia', 31 October 1884.
- 70 E.g. Ross, 'Report', 1878; and Ross to Arnold, Bushire, 2 April 1885: op. cit.

6 Trade of the south, Muhammareh (1890–1910)

- 1 William McDouall went to the Persian Gulf on appointment to the Indo-European Telegraph Department. He was appointed the first Vice-Consul at Muhammareh in 1889. Later he was promoted to become the British Consul at Muhammareh where he was stationed for over 18 years. In 1909 he was transferred to Kermanshah, and Captain L.B.H. Haworth, the Consul at Kermanshah was appointed Consul for Khuzestan. The Muhammareh Consulate was now brought within the sphere of the Persian Gulf Residency. McDouall left Muhammareh to take up his post in July 1909, having handed over charge temporarily to Lt Wilson, at the time in charge of the Indian Oil Guards. McDouall, who was married to an Iranian, retired from the Consular Service in 1917 and became Assistant Political Officer at Badrai in Iraq. In 1921 he returned to Khanegin, where at the time of his death he was adviser on local affairs to the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. He was for nearly 40 years a member of the Royal Asiatic Society. He died on 2 November 1924, aged 69 (see *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, January 1925; A.T. Wilson, *South West Persia* (London, 1942), pp. 20–1; J. Ranking, British Consul at Ahvaz, 'Report for Muhammareh for the Year 1909': Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1909–1913).
- 2 See McDouall, 'Report', 1890: V/23/60; 'Report', 1891: V/23/61; 'Report', 1892: V/23/63; 'Report', 1894: V/23/67 respectively.
- 3 McDouall, 'Report', 1891: op. cit.
- 4 Ibid.

- 5 Najm, *Safar*, p. 89.
- 6 Maclean, 'General Report', 1904: op. cit.
- 7 McDouall, 'Report', 1904: Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1900–5. At Muhammareh, however, the new regulations did not come into effect till the autumn of 1902. Until then the duties levied at Muhammareh were comparatively nominal. For example, a case of opium paid only 12 *qerans* as against 160 elsewhere (Preece, 'Trade of Isfahan', 1901–3, October 1904).
- 8 McDouall, 'Report', 1891: op. cit.
- 9 From 1907 onwards, however, McDouall reported that his statistics were for the whole of the province. The merchandise was arranged under the headings used by the Persian customs and included foreign coasting trade which had not been attainable before (McDouall, 'Report' ending 21 March 1907: A&P, 1907, xci).
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 McDouall, 'Report', 1902: V/23/81.
- 12 McDouall, 'Report', 1907: op. cit.
- 13 McDouall, 'Report', 1902: op. cit.; *idem*, 'Report', 1904: Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1900–5; *idem*, 'Report', 21 March 1908: A&P, 1908, cxiv.
- 14 McDouall, 'Report', 1907: op. cit.
- 15 Administration Report, 1901–2: V/23/80.
- 16 Dr Aganoor (Acting British Consul-General), 'Trade of Isfahan and Yezd', 1905–6: A&P, 1907, xci.
- 17 McDouall, 'Report', 1890: op. cit.
- 18 Below, pp. 112–16.
- 19 McDouall, 'Report', 1902: V/23/81.
- 20 Maclean, 'General Report', 1904: op. cit.
- 21 For details see P. Avery and J.B. Simmons, 'Persia on a Cross of Silver, 1880–90', *MES*, 10, no. 3 (October 1974), pp. 259–86; J. Rabino, 'Banking in Persia', *Journal of the Institute of Bankers*, 13, part I (13 January 1892), p. 31; E.B. Yeganegi, *Recent Financial and Monetary History of Persia* (New York, 1934), pp. 63–6.
- 22 Talbot, Acting Consul-General, 'Report', 1890, Bushire, 20 July 1891: V/23/60.
- 23 For the effects of these wide fluctuations on the Persian currency during the period under study see Appendices, Table XI.
- 24 Avery and Simmons, p. 278.
- 25 Talbot, 'Report', 1890: op. cit.
- 26 Rabino, 'Banking in Persia': op. cit.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Preece (Consul-General), 'Trade of Isfahan', 1901–3: op. cit.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1908: A&P, 1908, xciv.
- 31 Gordon, 'Report', 9 January 1891: op. cit.
- 32 McDouall, 'Report', 1908: op. cit.
- 33 C.A. Kembal (Acting Consul-General for Fars and Khuzestan), Bushire, 'Report on the Persian Gulf', 1900–1: V/23/79.
- 34 Kembal, 'Report on the Persian Gulf', 1901–2: V/23/80.
- 35 Kembal, 'Report on the Persian Gulf', 1903: Administration Reports, Persian Gulf, 1900–5.
- 36 Kembal, 'Report on the Persian Gulf', 1901–2: *ibid*.
- 37 McDouall, 'Report', 1891: V/23/61.
- 38 McDouall, 'Report', 1892: V/23/63.
- 39 'Report' Persian Gulf, 1898: V/23/76.
- 40 McDouall, 'Report', 1895: op. cit.
- 41 McDouall, 'Report', 1901: V/23/80.
- 42 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1908: cxiv.
- 43 McDouall, 'Report', 1899: V/23/77.

- 44 McDouall, 'Report', 1900: V/23/79.
- 45 McDouall, 'Report', 1906: A&P, 1906, cxxvii.
- 46 McDouall, 'Report', 1905: Administration Report, Persian Gulf 1900–5.
- 47 Aganoor (Acting Consul-General), 'Trade of Isfahan and Yazd', 1905–6: A&P, 1907, xci.
- 48 McDouall, 'Report', 1900: op. cit.
- 49 McDouall, 'Report', 21 March 1907: op. cit.
- 50 McDouall, 'Report', 21 March 1908: op. cit.
- 51 McDouall, 'Report', 21 March 1909: A&P, 1909, xcvi.
- 52 'Trade of the Persian Gulf', 1897: V/23/73.
- 53 'Trade of the Persian Gulf', 1898: V/23/76.
- 54 McDouall, 'Report', 1898: op. cit.
- 55 McDouall, 'Report', 1900: op. cit.; *idem*, 'Report', 21 March 1909: op. cit.
- 56 McDouall, 'Report', 1899: V/23/77.
- 57 'Trade Report of the Persian Gulf', 1898: V/23/76.
- 58 McDouall, 'Report', 21 March 1909: op. cit.
- 59 McDouall, 'Report', 21 March 1907: op. cit.
- 60 Jamalzadeh, *Ganj-e Shaygan*, p. 13.
- 61 *Ibid.*
- 62 McDouall, 'Report', 1890: op. cit.
- 63 McDouall, 'Report', 1891: V/23/61.
- 64 *Ibid.*
- 65 McDouall, 'Report', 1893: V/23/65.
- 66 *Ibid.*
- 67 McDouall, 'Report', 1894: V/23/67.
- 68 McDouall, 'Report', 1895: V/23/69.
- 69 McDouall, 'Report', 1899: V/23/77.
- 70 McDouall, 'Report', 1900: V/23/79.
- 71 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1909: A&P, 1909, xcvi.
- 72 Preece, 'Trade of Isfahan', 1901–3, A&P, 1905, 91.
- 73 *Ibid.*
- 74 McDouall, 'Report', 1893: op. cit.
- 75 McDouall, 'Report', 1897: op. cit.; *idem*, 1898: op. cit.
- 76 McDouall, 'Report', 1900: op. cit.
- 77 McDouall, 'Report', 1904: Administration Report, Persian Gulf 1900–5.
- 78 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1908: op. cit.
- 79 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1909: op. cit.
- 80 No names given.
- 81 McDouall, 'Report', 1897: op. cit.
- 82 McDouall, 'Report', 1898: op. cit.
- 83 Majid Yektai, *Tarikh-e Gomrok-e Iran* (The History of Iran's Customs) (Tehran, 1355s/1976), pp. 45–6.
- 84 Ch. 3, Turkamanchai Treaty, 1243 A.H./1828 (see Jamalzadeh, p. 38).
- 85 Qaragozlu, p. 137.
- 86 Maclean, 'General Report', 1904: op. cit.
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 McDouall, 'Report', 1895: op. cit.
- 89 McDouall, 'Report', 1897: op. cit.
- 90 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1908: op. cit.
- 91 McDouall, 'Report', 1904: op. cit.
- 92 Preece, 'Trade of Isfahan', 1901–3: op. cit.
- 93 Barnham (Consul-General), 'Trade of Isfahan and Yezd', 1906: A&P, 1908, cxiv.
- 94 Preece, 'Trade of Isfahan', 1901–3: op. cit.
- 95 McDouall, 'Report', 1904: op. cit.

- 96 Barnham, 'Trade of Isfahan and Yezd', 1906: op. cit.
- 97 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1907: A&P, 1907, xci.
- 98 McDouall, 'Report', 1900: op. cit.
- 99 Preece, 'Trade of Isfahan', 1901–3: op. cit.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Below, Chapter 7.
- 102 Apart from the articles of import mentioned in the table (see Appendices, Table IX) and in addition to them there was a good deal of the Russian kerosene oil (Najm, *Safar*, pp. 140–1) and a few other articles which were imported by non-British boats and by row-boats from Basra, the amount of which was not obtainable (McDouall, 'Report', 1890: op. cit.).
- 103 McDouall, 'Report', 1890: op. cit.
- 104 Najm, *Safar*, p. 83.
- 105 McLean, 'General Report', 1904: op. cit.
- 106 McDouall, 'Report', 1899 and 1900: op. cit.
- 107 'Report on the Trade of Southern Persia and the Persian Gulf', 1891: V/23/61.
- 108 McDouall, 'Report', 1891: op. cit.
- 109 Ross, 'Report', 21 June 1889: V/23/56; Jamalzadeh, pp. 32–3.
- 110 McDouall, 'Report', 1895: op. cit.
- 111 McDouall, 'Report', 1896: op. cit.
- 112 McDouall, 'Report', 1892: op. cit.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 McDouall, 'Report', 1893: op. cit.
- 115 Ibid.
- 116 Wilson, 'Report', 22 March 1910: op. cit.
- 117 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1909: op. cit.
- 118 Wilson, 'Report', 20 March 1910: op. cit.
- 119 McDouall, 'Report', 1898: op. cit.
- 120 McDouall, 'Report', 1891: op. cit.
- 121 McDouall, 'Report', 1897: op. cit.
- 122 McDouall, 'Report', 1898: op. cit.
- 123 McDouall, 'Report', 1896: op. cit.
- 124 McDouall, 'Report', 1897: op. cit.
- 125 McDouall, 'Report', 1905: op. cit.
- 126 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1908: op. cit.
- 127 Ibid.
- 128 Qaragozlu, p. 85.
- 129 There were some extensive date groves (*nakhlestan*) in the district of Fallahiyeh, too. There, on an annual average, each date produced between 15–40 *man-e-Tabriz* which was of better quality than the Muhammareh or Basra produce (Qaragozlu, p. 175).
- 130 1 *man-e-Tabriz* equals 3 kg.
- 131 Qaragozlu, p. 135.
- 132 McDouall, 'Report', 1893: op. cit.
- 133 Jamalzadeh, p. 19.
- 134 McDouall, 'Report', 1892: op. cit.
- 135 McDouall, 'Report', 1904: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1900–5.
- 136 McDouall, 'Report', 1895: op. cit.
- 137 Ross, 'Report on the Trade of South Persia and the Persian Gulf, 1889',: op. cit.
- 138 McDouall, 'Report', 1903: op. cit.
- 139 McDouall, 'Report', 1907: op. cit.
- 140 McDouall, 'Report', 1907–8: op. cit.
- 141 Administration Report for 1895–6: op. cit.
- 142 McDouall, 'Report', 1900: op. cit.

- 143 Durand, 'Report', 18 January 1900: FO 416/2.
- 144 Administration Report for 1898–9: *op. cit.*
- 145 McDouall, 'Report', 1898: *op. cit.*
- 146 McDouall, 'Report', 1899: *op. cit.*
- 147 McDouall, 'Report', 1894: *op. cit.*
- 148 McDouall, 'Report', 1895: *op. cit.*
- 149 See 'Navigation on the Karun', Ch. 8.
- 150 McDouall, 'Report', 1890: V/23/60.
- 151 McDouall, 'Report', 1892: V/23/63.
- 152 McDouall, 'Report', 1898: V/23/76.
- 153 Here it should be noted that figures quoted from Tables (Appendices, Tables XIII and XIV) are based on statistics supplied by Messrs Lynch for British vessels only, while throughout this period Persian steamers and other craft, too, carried cargo on the Karun. Thus, the figures do not represent the entire river trade.
- 154 McDouall, 'Report', 1898: *op. cit.*
- 155 Almost 30 per cent of this trade was for Kuwait.
- 156 After 1903, statistics on the river trade do not appear in the Trade Reports.
- 157 No figures available for 1890.
- 158 McDouall, 'Report', 20 March 1908: A&P, 1908, cxiv.
- 159 Below, pp. 163–8.
- 160 Administration Report, Muhammarah, 1910: Administration Report, Persian Gulf 1909–13.
- 161 Administration Report, Muhammarah, 1911: *ibid.*
- 162 For the text see A.T. Wilson, 'Précis', 1912: *op. cit.*, Appendix IV, pp. 93–4.
- 163 For the printed English text see *ibid.*, pp. 94–6.
- 164 Lorimer, i. part 2, p. 1,769.
- 165 McDouall, 'Report', 1899: V/23/77; Saldana, 'Gazetteer', part 1, p. 76.
- 166 Lorimer, i. part 2, p. 1,769.
- 167 See below, p. 167.
- 168 Durand, 'Report on a Tour', 18 January 1900: FO 416/2.
- 169 McDouall, 'Report', 1900 and Administration Report, 1900: V/23/79.
- 170 McDouall, 'Report', 1902: V/23/81.
- 171 McDouall, 'Report', 1904: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1900–5; A&P, 1906, xcvi.
- 172 McDouall, 'Report', 1902: *op. cit.*
- 173 McDouall, 'Report', 1907: A&P, 1907, xci.
- 174 McDouall, 'Report', 1901: *op. cit.*
- 175 Preece, 'Report on the Trade of Isfahan and District', 1901–3, Esfahan, 4 October 1904: A&P, 1905, 91.
- 176 *Ibid.*
- 177 *Ibid.*
- 178 Lorimer, i. part 2, p. 1,769.
- 179 Maclean, 'Report', 1904: *op. cit.*
- 180 The discrepancy between these figures and those given in the Table (see Appendices, Table XVI) seems to stem from the fact that these are for the Persian fiscal year, beginning 21 March, while the latter refer to the Roman calendar.
- 181 Preece, Esfahan, 1901–3: *op. cit.*
- 182 Aganoor, Esfahan, 1905–6: A&P, 1907, xci.
- 183 Political Report, Ahvaz, 1905–6: Administration Report, Persian Gulf 1905–8.
- 184 Above, p. 112–13.
- 185 Administration Report, Ahvaz, 1908: *op. cit.*
- 186 Administration Report, Ahvaz, 1909: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1909–13.
- 187 *Ibid.*

- 188 Administration Report, Ahvaz, 1910: *ibid.*
- 189 Administration Report, Ahvaz, 1911: *ibid.*
- 190 Preece, 'Trade of Isfahan', 1901–3: *op. cit.*
- 191 Jamalzadeh, p. 53.
- 192 Preece, 'Trade of Isfahan', 1901–3: *op. cit.*
- 193 Administration Report, Ahvaz, 1913: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1909–13.
- 194 Administration Report, Ahvaz, 1911: *ibid.*
- 195 *Ibid.*
- 196 Administration Report, Ahvaz, 1913: *ibid.*
- 197 Durand, 'Report', January 1900: *op. cit.*

7 Social and economic changes in Khuzestan after the Karun opening

- 1 Administration Report, 1910: *op. cit.*
- 2 Unless one counts the attempts by Sepah Salar in 1874–5, to establish the *Majles-e Tanzimat* one of whose many tasks would have been the *sar shomari* (lit. head-counting) in various provinces of the kingdom (see Adamiyat, *Andisheh-ye Taraqqi*, pp. 218–21; and Bakhash, *Iran, Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, pp. 166–8).
- 3 Thomson, 'Report on Persia': A&P 1867–8, xix.
- 4 H. Nateq, 'Tathir-e Ejtemai va Eqtesadi-ye vaba dar Dowreh-ye Qajar' (Socio-economic effects of cholera in the Qajar period), *Majelleh-ye Tarikh*, 1356s/1977, pp. 30–62; and 'Cholera in Persia', App. C to part I, Report of 1889–90: V/23/58.
- 5 'Cholera in Persia': *op. cit.*
- 6 Administration Report, 1898–9: V/23/76.
- 7 Administration Report, 1893–4: V/23/65.
- 8 McDouall, 'Report', 1895: V/23/69.
- 9 McDouall, 'Report', 1901: V/23/80.
- 10 Administration Report, 1902: V/23/80.
- 11 Administration Report, 1904–5: Administration Reports, Persian Gulf 1900–5.
- 12 Hardinge to Lansdowne, Tehran, 11 September 1904, no. 173: FO 60/683. For further information see R.M. Burrell, 'Aspects of the Reign of Muzaffar al-Din Shah of Persia 1896–1907', unpublished PhD thesis, SOAS, 1979, pp. 138–70.
- 13 Persian Gulf Diaries, 19 November 1904: FO 248/819.
- 14 Persian Gulf Diaries, 29 July 1904: FO 248/818.
- 15 McDouall to Hardinge, Muhammadar, 4 August 1904, no. 6, Commercial : FO 60/686.
- 16 McDouall, 'Report', 1904: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1900–5.
- 17 McDouall, 'Report', 1911: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1909–13.
- 18 J. Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran* (London, 1971), p. 3.
- 19 A. Houtum-Schindler, 'Persia', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, xxi (1911), p. 192.
- 20 J.C. Chasteland *et al.*, *Etude sur la fécondité et quelques caractéristiques démographiques des femmes mariées dans quatre zones rurales d'Iran* (Tehran, 1968), p. 111.
- 21 C. Gelbar, 'Demographic Developments in Late Qajar Persia, 1870–1906', *Asian and African Studies*, 11, no. 2 (1976), p. 132.
- 22 A. Houtum-Schindler in Dickson, 'Report', October 1884; see Table 7.2, sources.
- 23 Kasravi, p. 150.
- 24 Najm, *Safar*, p. 38.
- 25 Thomson to Allison, 'Report on Persia', Tehran, 20 April 1868, A&P, 1867–8, 19.
- 26 At Yazd the population was about 100,000 and the revenue about 300,000 tumans (Ross, Administration Report, 1887–8: V/23/53).
- 27 Above, p. 61.
- 28 Najm, *Safar*, pp. 142–3.

- 29 'Persia', FO, Confidential, June 1919, pp. 85–6: L/P&S/20/C.188.
- 30 Najm, *Safar*, p. 54.
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8 Consolidation of Britain's influence in Khuzestan

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- 7 Consul-General Loch to Sir P. Currie, Bagdad, 11 June 1897; enclosure in Currie to Salisbury, Constantinople, 8 July 1897, no. 452: FO 539/77.
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- 11 Sir P. Cox to Khazal (Bushire), 21 November 1914: 'Treaties and Undertakings in force between the British Government and the Shaikh of Mohammarah, 1899–1919', Calcutta, 1919: L/P&S/20, no. C.158A.
- 12 Army HQ, India, 'Military Report on South-West Persia', vol. II, Arabistan (Khuzestan), Simla, 1910, pp. 8–9: L/Mil/17/15/10/2.
- 13 Haji Muhammad Ali, Rais ut-Tojjar (also known as Haj Rais) was from Behbahan (Fars). A Consular official described him as an 'excessively acute' man and 'a born diplomatist'. By 1904 he was about 50 years old, 'weak and fragile' and had lived in Muhammareh for 20 years. His son, Moshir ut-Tojjar, who was at that time 21, was praised as 'a worthy son of his father'. Haj Rais himself was a large merchant and grew very rich under Khazal over whom he had 'great influence'. Khazal's eldest son, Chasib, was betrothed to Haj Rais' daughter (see Burton, 'Diary', 28 February 1904: op. cit.).
- 14 Below, pp. 152–62.
- 15 Qaragozlu, pp. 133–4.
- 16 Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, i, part 2, pp. 1,753–4; Administration Report, Muhammarah, 1912: op. cit.
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- 18 Administration Report, Muhammarah, 1913: op. cit.
- 19 *Dang* is one-sixth part of any piece of real estate (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, p. 426).
- 20 Wilson (Ahvaz) to Cox (Bushire), 5 May 1913; enclosure Cox to Government of India, 17 May 1913, no. 1544, Confidential: L/P&S/11/35.
- 21 McDouall (Muhammarah) to Fagan (?), 2 June 1897, p. 244: FO 460/1, file 6, and Administration Report, 1897–8: op. cit.
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- 32 Below, pp. 171–3.
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- 35 Administration Report, 1898–9: *op. cit.*
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- 37 See 'Persian Gulf, Historical Section of the FO, June 1919, Confidential, pp. 57–8: L/P&S/20/C.189; and 'Treaties and Undertakings', 1919: *op. cit.*
- 38 'Treaties and Undertakings', 1919, p. 1: *op. cit.*; and FO 460/1&2.
- 39 'Treaties and Undertakings', 1919, p. 11: *op. cit.*
- 40 For the presentation proceedings see Cox to Sir G. Barclay, Bushire, 23 October 1910, no. 73, Confidential; enclosure 1 in Cox to Grey, Bushire, 23 October 1910, Confidential, no. 6: L/P&S/10/133.
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- 42 Administration Report, Muhammarah, 1913: *op. cit.*
- 43 Wilson, 'Precis', 1912: *op. cit.*
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- 45 Ibid., Appendix V, p. 44.
- 46 Administration Report, 1903–4: *op. cit.*
- 47 Administration Report, 1902–3: *op. cit.*
- 48 Administration Report, Muhammarah, 1911: *op. cit.*
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- 56 Sir. G. Barclay to Grey, Tehran, 9 December 1910, Telegraphic, no. 499, Confidential: L/P&S/10/133.
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- 331 Chick, 'Report on German Shipping . . .', 1911–12: op. cit.
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- 345 Ahvaz Vice-Consul to Muhammarah Consul, 12 May 1914: *ibid*.
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- 347 Chick, 'Memo', 31 January 1914: op. cit.
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 356 Viceroy to FO, 10 June 1914: L/P&S/10/366.
 357 Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1910: Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1909–13.
 358 Ibid.

9 Conclusions

- 1 Extract from Despatch of Instructions to General Gordon by Wolff, 'Railway from Quetta to the edge of Seistan', n.d., Annex 2, 'Report', Gordon, 9 January 1891: op. cit.
- 2 Ross, 1884; V/23/47.
- 3 Gordon, 'Report', January 1891: op. cit.
- 4 K. Marx, *Capital*, i, 13.
- 5 Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (Pelican, 1973), p. 270.
- 6 Marx, *Capital*, i, 823.
- 7 It was a small banking establishment, conducted 'entirely by Persian merchants', which was opened in Bushehr in 1897. Similar institutions were also opened by the Company in Shiraz, Esfahan, and Tehran. The Bank strongly protested against their existence, on the ground that they infringed the concession made to the Bank. The objections became even more vehement when the Persian company began issuing *bijaks* (notes made payable to bearer) which, in the absence of sufficient quantities of Persian *qerans*, became popular in the south. However, due to strong pressure from the Bank and most likely the British Legation, barely a year later the enterprise had to be abandoned and the *bijaks* withdrawn (see Trade Reports, Persian Gulf, 1897: V/23/73; and for 1898–9: V/23/76).

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Sources

Notes on sources

This study is in the main based on the original documents deposited in the archives of the Iranian Foreign Ministry (Tehran), in the Public Record Office (London), and the records of the Government of India at the India Office Library (London). Since the British sources are fairly well known to scholars of the field, here we concentrate on the first category of documents.

Persian primary sources

It might be necessary to point out that in Iran there are no State Archives as such. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in possession of masses of very valuable documents on the Qajar period. These could be divided into four broad categories.

1. Bound volumes: these contain various series of original documents which are divided by the Ministry as follows:

- 1 *Asl-e Mokatebat* (original correspondence)
- 2 *Safar Nameh-ha* (travel books)
- 3 *Gozarashat va Rasael* (reports and letters)
- 4 *Motefarreqeh* (miscellaneous)

These documents, which number a few hundred volumes, were bound but not indexed during the reign of Naser-ud-Din Shah. The Ministry's *markaz-e bar rasi va tanzim-e asnad* (Centre for Study and Arrangement of Documents) has only provided a general catalogue (in 2 vols) to these series. The utilization of some of the correspondence is rendered even more difficult by a somewhat erratic classification scheme for most of the volumes of the *Asl-e Mokatebat*, which makes it difficult to locate the relevant material. Also in most volumes the papers are not chronologically arranged. Some of the documents have been bound in such a way that the date, place of origin and name of the sender or the addressee are often hidden from view, and in most cases the envelopes which originally contained this information are not kept. It should be noted that, by and large, these

difficulties apply to the first and last categories of the above documents. The other two, i.e. *Safar Nameh-ha* and *Gozareshat* are much better arranged and very usable. Some of the material in these series are, no doubt, of interest and contain detailed and valuable information on a wide range of topics. For example, in one of the files (*Motefarreqeh*, File no. 4) detailed information regarding the number of the expatriates, their dependents, occupations, etc. in Tehran (for 1886–7) is given. If carefully studied, these series could provide a very rich source for the study of Iran's diplomatic and social history during this period.

2. In the second category are documents which at the time of my research were still unsorted and kept in boxes and miscellaneous files. They were neither catalogued nor indexed. During the eight months of research (in 1977/8) at the Foreign Ministry's Centre, the author noticed that a team of two individuals was trying to arrange and catalogue some of these documents. At normal speed, it would probably have taken them a good decade to study and sort out the papers. With the 1979 Revolution, one presumes that even this small-scale activity at the centre was interrupted, if not halted.

3. The third class of documents contains the *Ahd Nameh-ha* (Treaties) and Agreements between Iran and other countries.

4. Finally there are the *Emtiyaz Nameh-ha* (Concessions) which contain the official texts of the concessions granted by the Qajar governments to Persians and non-Persians. Here, the interesting point is that the first of these is not, as generally believed, the Reuter concession, but a concession granted to M. Jean de Savalan Khan in 1281 AH/1864–5 for the construction of a road between Tabriz and Jolfa (see Concessions, no. 1).

The author was fortunate enough, not only to have access to all these series, but also to photocopy many of the original documents for the first time. For instance, in general over 100 volumes of the *Asl-e Mokatebat*, and many of the papers in other series were both consulted and copied. The author is also in possession of almost all Treaties and Agreements (with the exception of the secret ones of course) and all the Concessions. These will gradually be used for the forthcoming works.

The following point, which is both interesting and saddening, might also be of some note. As the introductory notes at the beginning of some of the volumes (e.g. *Asl-e Mokatebat*, nos 40, 78, 99) indicate, the entire papers therein were found after the death of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mirza Said Khan in 1301 AH/1883–4, 'unopened'. This episode shows a tendency on the part of some Persian officials to regard all state papers as private property. It also indicates the practical value of some of this correspondence. Finally, it is probably just as well that Said Khan did not open these envelopes, since it is reported that the same functionary was also in the habit of throwing official letters into the stream which ran through his garden.

From the mid-1900s onward, and especially after the establishment of the *majles* the documents, still mostly uncatalogued, were much better preserved. All those pertaining to the Pahlavi Dynasty are well-catalogued and indexed.

In addition to other documents from these series, two reports from the *Safar Nameh-ha* series proved of particular importance for the preparation of the present work. These are the accounts of the official missions to Khuzestan of Najm and Qaragozlu. Haj Mirza Abd ul-Ghaffar, Najm ul-Molk, who was described by Thomson as 'an engineer of reputation',¹ was commissioned by the Persian government to draw up a report on the advantages of opening the Karun to international navigation, and of reconstructing the dam at Ahvaz. He proceeded to Khuzestan on 15 November 1881² and returned to the capital 'eight months and twenty days' later.³ He handed his report (*Ketabcheh-ye Dastur ul-Amal*, which in the text of this work is referred to as *Ketabcheh*) to Zel us-Soltan in Esfahan on 2 July 1882. The latter immediately gave a copy of this supposedly secret document to the British minister. Thus an extract of this report, which was translated into English, appears in the above Foreign Office file.⁴ Najm also supplemented this work by his *Safar Nameh* (see Bibliography), which contains more interesting and relevant information on Khuzestan and South-West Persia generally.

Immediately after the Karun was thrown open, namely 'in the winter of 1888-89' another Surveying Commission was sent to the province, which was again headed by Najm. It was charged with the duty of reporting on roads and irrigation projects, and other engineering works important to the province.⁵ Unfortunately no trace of the commission's report could be found in the Foreign Ministry's archives.

However, this was more than compensated by the use of another authoritative work which was completed in Rabi ul-Avval 1308 AH/November to December 1890 by Abd Ullah Ebn-e Mostafa Qoli Khan, Etemad-us-Saltaneh Qaragozlu. His *Ketabcheh-ye Mahumat* contains detailed and generally accurate information on the social and economic transformation of the area, which was the result of his two and a half years' stay in Khuzestan as the chief military official of the province under Nezam. Furthermore, the beginning of his stay coincided with the Karun opening and different enterprises related to it. This work, too, has been used extensively for the present study.

Among chief primary sources which have been utilized, mention should also be made of the Persian-language paper *Akhtar*. As will be seen in the Bibliography, various collections of Persian papers, mostly of copies kept at the *majles* library (the microfilms are to be found at the Central Library of the University of Tehran) were consulted. But in terms of quality of work, originality, and its independent line, *Akhtar* appears to have been in a different league. Along with a few other Persian papers, *Akhtar* was published outside Iran, and since its head office was in Constantinople it could not have been very easily suppressed by the Shah and his officials. Nevertheless, when the royal wrath was aroused by the critical articles of *Akhtar*, even this advantage did not count for much. Usually all copies were seized at the border and internal circulation was banned. This occurred at least twice, namely in 1882 and 1891.⁶ At the same time,

Akhtar's independent and nationalistic line also got it into trouble with both Russia and Britain. In the text of this work the vehement opposition of *Akhtar* to Russian influence in Iran has already been referred to. It is also generally expected that a despotic regime such as the Tsarist Russia would try to suppress freedom and criticism. But when, in 1882, *Akhtar* published articles which were critical of 'Her Majesty's Government and England', the enlightened British too put the Shah under pressure to stop this through the Persian envoy at the Porte. As a result of this and other articles which were very critical of the Persian government, *Akhtar's* Tehran correspondent, who was none other than Mirza Yusef Khan, Mostashar-ud-Dowleh who was a patriot, was arrested and put in prison.⁷ These instances should be enough to establish the paper's solid credentials. Thus its use as a source, which at this time reflected the aspirations of the Iranian intelligentsia as well as the merchants, is justifiable.

Another source, though published, which in the course of the study proved to be of significant importance was *Ruznameh-ye-Khaterat*. Mohammad Hasan Khan, Etemad-us-Saltaneh was the son of the infamous Haji Ali Khan, Hajeb-ud-Dowleh who achieved an unenviable historical notoriety in connection with the murder of Iran's greatest statesman in the nineteenth-century, i.e. Amir Kabir, who was tragically enough Hajeb-ud-Dowleh's patron too. Hajeb's son has been labelled by a very prominent Iranian scholar, Qazvini, a charlatan, a scoundrel, ignorant, illiterate, and pretentious person who could not even spell decently. He maintains that the works published in Etemad's name were all 'written by men of learning acting under compulsion and prompted by fear of his malice'.⁸ Here it is not our intention to prove or refute these charges. But Etemad has produced many books of which by far the most important is his *Khaterat* (diaries). Unlike other high dignitaries of the day, like Amin-ud-Dowleh, Etemad was not often a participant in major policy meetings and councils. However, in addition to being a very inquisitive statesman, for many years he was almost daily at the court, and in constant attendance on the Shah. His diaries, therefore, contain daily entries for the period between 1875 and 1895. It thus provides the reader with valuable and consecutive information on a wide range of topics. For the present work it also proved to be a worthy and reliable source for the checking and cross checking of some of the British documents.

Another Persian source which has been utilized is Kasravi's *Tarikh-e Pansad Saleh-ye Khuzestan*, and which must be regarded as virtually the only reliable secondary source on the subject. The author was stationed in Khuzestan as head of the Justice Department between the years 1923-5. During this time, with his typical investigative mind and characteristic dedication to scientific research, he collected first hand and documentary material on the history of Khuzestan.

Mention should be made of the works of F. Adamiyat who might be regarded as one of the authorities on the nineteenth-century history of Iran. His works have generally been consulted for background information. I have also benefited greatly from the pioneering work of M. Ansari on the subject.

Finally, throughout this study the use of the name Khuzestan has been preferred to Arabestan or Persian Arabia which has also been used by some

sources. This was done for several reasons: first, the name Khuzestan is very old and predates the advent of the Arabs who, unlike the Kurds and Lors, were relative newcomers to this area of Iran. Second, until the middle of the nineteenth century the province continued to be called Khuzestan. A good indication of this is that the works of Rawlinson (1830s) and Layard (1840s) refer to the province as Khuzestan. Another indication of this official recognition of the province by its old name is that throughout the period under study and well into the twentieth century, the official designation of the British dignitary responsible for the area was 'Her (His) Britannic Majesty's Consul General for Khuzestan and Fars, etc.' Third, to the Persian mind Arabestan would be confusing if used for this province since it means Saudi Arabia. Finally, it allows us to achieve uniformity in the citation of sources used in this work.

Notes

- 1 R. Thomson to Granville, Tehran, 26 December 1882, no. 18, Commercial: FO60/448; and FO881/4733
- 2 Safar, p. 1
- 3 Ibid., p. 183
- 4 Enclosure in Thomson to Granville, 26 December 1882; op. cit.
- 5 Lorimer, i, part 2, p. 1,731; and Administration Report, Persian Gulf, 1888–9: V/23/56
- 6 Thomson to Granville, Tehran, 4 October 1882, no. 176: FO60/446; and FO to Thomson, 7 December 1882, no. 104: FO60/443; and Kennedy to Salisbury, Tehran, 25 February 1891, no. 47: FO60/522
- 7 Thomson to Granville, Tehran, 4 October 1882: op. cit.; FO to Thomson, 7 December 1882: op. cit.
- 8 E.G. Brown, *The Persian Revolution 1905–1909* (London, 1966), p. 405

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