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978-0-521-14811-5 - Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative
Policy in Madras 1792-1818

T. H. Beaglehole

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THOMAS MUNRO

from the painting by M. A. Sice

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IN MADRAS
1792-1818

THE ORIGINS OF 'THE MUNRO SYSTEM'

BY

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PREFACE

Following the great territorial acquisitions in south India made by the British at the end of the eighteenth century, a system of administration emerged in many ways markedly different from that established in Bengal. The present book is a study of how a body of ideas on administration grew up, was adopted by the home government and eventually put into effect; and more especially it deals with the part played in this process by Thomas Munro. It has long been recognised that these changes in Madras, and the development of the ryotwari system of revenue settlement, were the result of administrative ideas in contrast with those of Cornwallis which had preceded them; that they influenced subsequent administrative practice, not only in Madras, but in British India as a whole; and that in some measure Munro was responsible for the change. Although the importance of Madras and Munro has been recognised, there seems to be no full study of the way in which the ideas of the man developed, or of how far they were his alone, or of the exact manner in which they were adopted as administrative policy by the home government.

I am grateful to Dr Kenneth Ballhatchet for the advice and criticism he gave while guiding the research on which this book is based. The library staffs at the India Office Library and Record Collection, Commonwealth Relations Office, London, at the British Museum, the Nottingham University Library and the Madras Record Office were generous with their help. The frontispiece is reproduced by courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery. Mr John Saltmarsh, Mr Christopher Morris, Professor F. L. Wood and Professor J. C. Beaglehole have all been good enough to read and comment on the typescript, or early drafts of it. I am deeply indebted to King's College, Cambridge, for its

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T. H. B.

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*Superior figures in the text refer to notes, which begin on p. 140.
A glossary will be found on pp. 172-3.*