APPENDIX - I

The Statesman, Calcutta, dated 24th May 1925

MARRIAGE REFORM
Quaint Custom Among Simla Hill Tribes

A Pamphlet headed "Himalayan Tragedy of Marriage" is being widely distributed here. The object of the movement is a laudable one. It proposes to rid the Hill States of Simla of the custom of marriage called "Rit" under which the matrimonial tie is very loose. The wife is purchased by the husband and both parties are free to break it off when they like.

The organizers of the movement are appealing to the Deputy Commissioner, Simla, who is also the Superintendent of Hill States, to influence the Hill Chiefs to follow the example of Patiala and others to abolish this custom. Some of the Hill Chiefs imposed a tax on such marriages which did not, however, minimise the evil.

The hill tribesmen are all Hindus, and it is pointed out that Hindu shastras do not permit of such marriage. In the words of the Pamphlet the evil is thus described :

"This is a form of marriage without any ceremony, contracted by paying a money price-varying according to beauty, generally from Rs. 100 to Rs. 500 and has recently been as high as Rs. 2,000 to the guardian of a girl if unmarried or to the husband of that girl if married. There is no limit of such marriages, and as is evident from their
nature can be as easily dissolved as they are freely undertaken. This one custom is more responsible for the steadily increasing degeneration of the people than all the other evils put together. Under its baneful influence marriage has lost its sanctity, domestic relations, all their felicity and society, all those ties which make it a means to civil welfare. It allows too wide a latitude to the people in selecting and divorcing their mates, and, unrestricted by any of the forces of virtue, the entire population is being guided by one instinct alone - that of lust, and one object alone - that of fomenting disaffection between a married couple otherwise happy. Education is already rare, and among the females it is unknown. Added to it, notions of chastity and morality are queer and low."

Indian Daily Mail, Bombay, dated the 26th May 1925.

A HIMALAYAN TRAGEDY

"The Himalayan Tragedy of Marriage" is the striking name of a small pamphlet published by the General Secretary, Thakur Surat Singh, of Social Reforms Association in Simla. It does not, however, contain any slashing indictment of the ways of modern youth as any one would have expected. The Tragedy mentioned in it is Himalayan really and not figuratively since it occurs among the people of the Himalayan regions. The matter referred to is the custom of "REET," a survival from an early age when marriage in the modern sense was unknown and which is still followed by uncivilised tribes in obscure nooks and corners of India. The tribes in the Himalayan District near Simla and the
surrounding Hill States known only of marriage by purchase. No religious or social significance attaches to the event. Girls are bought for a money price, varying from Rs. 100 to Rs. 2,000 according to their personal attraction and the status they occupy in the society. But unfortunately the evil of the system does not stop here. A married women may herself often induces him to club his resources with those of their men. The looseness of society under the extraordinary condition is having a very bad effect on an otherwise excellent stock of people. The population of the district and States concerned is gradually going down and all forms of disease are prevalent among the emasculated survivors. We are glad that the Rulers of some of the Hill States are taking steps to root out the custom which will before long completely ruin the people of their territories.

"Liddel's Weekly," dated 30th May 1925

THE HIMALAYAN TRAGEDY OF MARRIAGE

Thakur Surat Singh the General Secretary of the Local Himalaya Vidya Parbandhani Sabha, sends us a seventeen page pamphlet with the above sensational heading. The Tragedy is the Hill system of contract marriage known as "Reet". The brochure, which is far too long to reproduce in full, is intensely interesting so we can only publish a few extracts, clarified a little, from the unvarnished phraseology necessary, no doubt, in dealing with such a subject.

In the course a foreword Thakur Surat Singh says :-

"My letter of June 12th, 1924, published in Liddell's last year to high Government officials, regarding the system of
'Contract Marriage' popularly called "Reet" or "Rit" stated the urgency of the case for administrative action against this traffic in female slaves among the Himalayan Highlanders. Since then the Hindu Conference, held in June 1924 at Simla, has passed a Resolution, condemning the practice; while the local press has also taken up the matter; and now one of the seven first class journals in India, the Indian Social Reformer, Bombay, has come to our support. His Highness the late Rana Dalip Singh Bahadur, C.I.E., Chief of Baghat State, Solan, was the first Highland Prince, to enact a Law for the abolition of the custom of "Reet,"

The State of utter ignorance, illiteracy ad superstition in which the Simla District and is neighbouring States live, is owing solely to the want of schools, colleges and proper educative institutions. It is a matter of satisfaction, pride and good fortune that we have enlightened ruling Princes like that of Patiala, Sirmoor, Bilaspur, Bashahar, Jubbal, Baghat, and others, who have begun to take genuine interest in the social amelioration of the people and are endowed with true matronly feelings and possess great administrative faculties.

With one of the great British Monarchs as our Emperor; with one of the greatest Englishmen, diplomats and jurists as our Viceroy; with one of the greatest men of action as our Governor and under them the immediate supervision of such talented Agent to the Governor General and Deputy Commissioners as Colonels A.B. Minchin, H.B. St. John, J.C. Coldstream and Mr. Abraham, who besides having a wide outlook and broad vision,
do also possess true sympathy with the land of their adoption, we do hope that the British who already have to their credit such achievements as the abolition of Slavery throughout the world, suppression of Sacred Sati and of female Infanticide in India, would now hail with delight the opportunity of gaining the glory of eradicating this inhuman practice of the sale of mothers, sisters and daughters like cattle which prevails in the Himalayas. Public bodies, editors of newspapers and every Indian worth the name should also co-operate and do their utmost to remove this blot on the fair name of this land of the highest mountains and of great and sacred rivers, where nature has spared nothing to beautify it, and make it one of the best regions of the world and the inhabitants on the contrary nothing to make them cursed in spite of all this.

So to our Rulers and Statesman, to our Princes and Chiefs and to the public we appeal that they move in the matter of the eradication of this social evil which is corroding into the vitals of the society in the regions of the Himalayas.

I need not dilate on the immediate and consequential effect of this evil custom. Woman is a key-stone to the whole fabric of society and as long as this custom of "Reet" prevails, no efforts to improve society can bear fruit. Where woman is lightly treated; where matrimonial ties are so flimsy; where sentiments of conjugal bliss and obligations are thus prostituted, there it is easy to notice the demon of Destruction burying with mouth agape to swallow up all before it. Suffice it to say that the first and foremost step in regenerating these tribes is improvement in the relations of man and woman, establishment
of the sacredness and glory of woman and appreciation of the powers she has to make or mar a nation. The child is the father of the man; but the former is what its mother is. If you want good citizens, if you aspire after nation-building, do but only these three things:—the first, improve the mother; the second, improve the mother; and the third, improve the mother. Leave aside all other reforms, let the worst of evils persist for a time as they cannot persist long; for where once you have improved the womanhood, you have improved all. Illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, sickness, high death-rate, imbecility, etc., etc., proceed, but only from the laxity of morals that dominates in these hills and by applying remedies to elevated the morals you apply remedies for the removal of all the rest.

I have no words to convey the depth of feelings which animate me; but if once the evils of this custom of "Reet" are fully comprehended, I feel sure that none who has the least feeling of humanity in him will hesitate to come forward and help in putting a stop to it whether by active participation, or otherwise, by suggestions or money.

I earnestly request that any opinion, whether expressed through the press or otherwise, may kindly be communicated to me at the Punjab Hotel, as that will greatly assist me in furthering the mission of stopping this evil custom which I have at heart.
APPENDIX II

Extract from The Servant of India Poona, 4th June 1925

SCANDALOUS TRAFFIC

One is shocked to learn that more than eighty years after slavery was abolished in British India and Indian States, a particularly odious form of slavery is tolerated in the Simla Hill states. These States are not independent like Nepal, but are under the Punjab Government, and therefore, the responsibility of British Government for the continuance of the evil cannot be shaken off. The practice is known as "Rit" and consists in the sale of girls and young women for sexual purposes, for sums usually ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 500, but sometimes going up to Rs. 2,000, by the parents or other guardians in the case of unmarried girls and by husbands in the case of married ones. It is sometimes described as a form of marriage, but one finds no essential feature of the marriage relations in it. There is no limit to the number of girls that one might purchase, nor any restriction as to selling any of them again, and in this way they may change hands any number of times. If the sale and purchase were confined to the hill tribes one might recognise it a form of marriage and allow it to undergo change in the natural process of time. But it is not so, the girls are purchased by the people of the plains for immoral purposes, a notorious traffic in them exists, and they finally swell the ranks of prostitutes. The practice was stopped in British India long ago. Some of the States have followed the example of British India and prohibited it; but several of them have put no check on it because
according to Himalaya Vidya Prabandhani Sabha of Simla, which is making commendable efforts for the suppression of the evil, those States are making revenue out of the traffic by claiming a percentage of the sale money. What is most surprising is that the practice has been allowed to exist so long around the summer capital of the government of India and of the Punjab, without the Political Department putting an end to it. What can be more scandalous?

Cuttings from the Times of India Bombay, dated the 2nd July 1925

SALE OF GIRLS

Question in the Commons

(Special Cable - Copyright)

London, June, 30th

In the Commons Colonel Wedgwood asked Lord Birkenhead would enquire whether the system called "Reet" prevails in Simla Hill States, under which girls were sold for immoral purposes even outside those States and, if such traffic did exist, whether he would recommend to the Political Department to end it.

Earl Winterton replied that at present he was without official information but he would make enquiries.
Extract from the Legislative Assembly List, No. 15-A, dated the 3rd August 1925

Mr. C.S. Ranga Iyer :-
(a) Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the question asked in the House of Commons on June 30th, 1925 and published in the Times of India of the 2nd July 1925, regarding the immoral traffic in girls in Simla Hill States and even outside those States?
(b) Are the Government aware that there is a widespread feeling among the Hindus that the traffic should be abolished.
(c) If the answer to (a) and (b) are in affirmative, have the Government taken any steps to remove the system of "Reet"? If so, what?
(d) If the answer to (c) is in negative, will the Government be pleased to take steps towards the abolition of this system? If not, why not?

(Partap)

Extract from the Hindu Conference, Simla District 1924.

Rana Jagjit Chand, (Chief of Kuthar State) Chairman of the Reception Committee, in a short speech welcomed the delegates who were not less than 500 and had come from all the hill States. In doing so he said that there was a time, when the great range of Himalaya was celebrated not only for being the prince of mountains, but also as the home of Rishis and cultured and happily people. But want of education, elementary as well as high, and harmful full customs had brought about unhappiness, misery and eventual decay among the people of the hills. He
said that the officers of the benign British Government were sympathetic and willing to help hillmen but unless the Ruling Chiefs of the hill States came forward to do their duty to spread education among their people and assist them to root out evil customs, there was not hope of bettering the condition of the masses, that it was a happy sign that the ruling Princes had shown their willingness to associate themselves with the Conference, the object of which was to ameliorate the condition of the people of the Simla Hills. . . . . Another great necessity was the abolition of the evil custom of "Reet" by which women in the hills were treated like cattle and sold like slaves for money to persons, willing to make them their wives. In conclusion, he requested his brother Chiefs to encourage education among their subjects, to better their economic condition, and to raise them in the scale of civilisation.

In his presidential address Rana Durga Singh Chief of Baghat State. . . . . He emphatically condemned the demoralising custom of "Reet". He said that it was necessary to root out venereal diseases which were sapping the health of men and women of the hills and were one of the chief causes of depletion in the population owing to decrease in the number of births and increase in the number of deaths.
MISERABLE CONDITION OF SIMLA HILL-WOMEN

The hill women belonging to the neighbouring hills of Simla are in no way inferior in beauty or complexion to English girls. While, however, fate has endowed the former with such beauty, the pity is that there exists no means of its protection. They are unable to understand their true religion on account of poverty and want of education prevailing among them. The result is that they do not now realise that adultery is a sin. In a very short period they change husbands twice or thrice. This, however, is not done by them of their own accord. The husband himself hands them over to other people on receipt of some money either for some limited period or for good, as it may be settled. Unmarried girls are also sold by their parents without any reluctance or consideration. All these abuses have taken the garb of a social custom which is termed "Reet" by the hill people and in the name of "Reet" good many atrocities are being committed. Fidelity of wives towards their husbands has lost its significance. Mostly the women have come to lead the life of prostitutes. Then again many degenerated men from the plains—neighbouring districts of the Punjab and the United Provinces come and spoil the chastity of these poor, simple uneducated women, purchase them and make heavy profits by selling them to prostitutes or other people in the plains. All these causes are contributing to the degradation of the hill women, may, not
only of the hill women, but in a way of the entire Hindu Nation, because all these unfortunate women belong to his race.

There is in Simla a society for promoting education in the hills called the Himalaya Vidya Parbandhani Sabha, Simla, which is doing a good deal of work in this connection. This society has directed the attention of the Government and the Rulers of the Hill States to these abuses and is trying its level best to have the most deplorable custom of "Reet" abolished by all possible means. We express our hearty co-operation with the Sabha and its able Secretary - Thakur Surat Singh - and desire that the Almighty may soon grant the Sabha success in removing this great blemish from the women.

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From

Thakur Surat Singh
General Secretary,
Himalaya Vidiya Parbandhani Sabha,
Simla.

To

The Superintendent of Hill States, Simla
And
The Deputy Commissioner, Simla District.

Simla, the 12th June 1924

Abolition of the Custom of "Rit"

Sir,

In the capacity of General Secretary, the Himalaya Vidiya Prbandhani Sabha, Simla, I have the honour to approach you in
the fervent hope of eliciting your support to the Sabha's efforts in the matter of eradicating a most pernicious custom, popularly known as "Rit," prevalent in the hill tracts under your supremeintendence. An effective way of combating this obnoxious custom is to get the rulers of the hill tracts interest themselves in this most crying sphere of reform, and if you be good enough to exhort them to take the matter up, the problem will be easily solved and to you will redound the credit of having done the subjects ruled over by you an act of inestimable good.

2. First of all, permit me to assure you that this body is loyal to the core and prescribes to itself only such lines of action as are for the social uplift of the hill people inhabiting the Himalayas. It has no concern what-so-ever with politics. Next, let me define 'Rit'. This is a form of marriage, without any ceremony, contracted by paying a money price, varying according to beauty generally from Rs. 100 to 500, and has recently been as high as Rs. 2,000 to the guardian of a girl, if unmarried, or to the husband of that girl, if married. There is no limit to such marriages, and, as is evident from their nature, can be as easily dissolved as they are freely undertaken. For a further explanation of the practice, a reference is invited to the Gazetteers of the Simla and Kangra districts and also of the neighbouring Hill States.

3. This one custom is more responsible for the steadily increasing degeneration of the people than all the other evils put together. Under its baneful influence, marriage has lost its sanctity, domestic relations all their felicity and society all those ties which make it a means to civic welfare. It allows too
wide a latitude to the people in selecting and divorcing their mates and unrestricted by any of the forces of virtue, the entire population is being guided by one instinct alone — that of lust — and one object alone — that of fomenting disaffection between a married couple, otherwise happy. Education is already rare and among the females it is unknown. Added to its poverty, the notions they have of chastity and morality are queer and low. Debauchery gets hold of the people from an early age and the custom of 'RIT' gives them a care blanche to revel in it without incurring any social or moral stigma. The inevitable is therefore already coming about in that a large majority of the people is affected with those diseases which arise from sexual indiscretions and several become barren, with the result that their numbers are fast dwindling away. Constitutionally too, they are fast growing symptoms of decline, so much so that during the 1914-19 War most of the recruits from the Simla hills were rejected as unfit on account of their suffering from venereal diseases, which deprived the people of this district of an opportunity for rendering service to the King-Emperor, on the one hand, and winning glory for their country on the other.

4. Social and moral principles having been warped, as stated above, the women are extremely prone to temptation. Rich and unscrupulous people from the plains and elsewhere find these tracts especially fertile field for enticing away the lewd girls and, having first made them the victims of their evil passions, treat them afterwards, as they best deserve, worse than women-slaves. Most the bolder type traffic in these girls and passes
them on like current coin from one hand to another and often through several hands at one and the same time.

5. The existence of this custom given rise also to bad relations in society and strife among its members. The rich amongst the local inhabitants very easily outbid the other rivals and carry off the prize while they, in turn, have often to yield it up in favour of the richer people from the plains.

6. Such, in short, Sir, are the evil consequences of the custom under reference. The British Government which is always forward in matters of social uplift have realised this state of affairs and your predecessors took steps to advise, on the suggestion of the Sabha whom now I represent, more than once, the Chiefs of the Hill States to put an end to this evil custom. Some of them seem, however, to have suffered it to continue unchecked, perhaps because of the handsome income they derive in the shape of percentage they levy on the sale-money of the women. This percentage was intended to serve as a deterrent of the custom by throwing additional liability on the party concerned, but is now looked upon as no more than a tax, like several others, leviable by, and due to, the State.

7. The Himalaya Vidiya Parbandhani Sabha, Simla, has never been slow to realise the magnitude of this evil and has been doing all it can in the matter if impressing upon the people the gravity of the situation. They have been convening meetings at several places to bring home to the people the vices of the custom and condemning it as one most harmful. Among others, they passed the following resolutions :-
(3) that no woman shall remarry in her husband's life time.

.....

* In fairness to the Patiala Durbar, Bilaspur, Bashahr, Jubbal and Baghat States it must be recognised, that the initiated measures to discourage the practice; but their efforts seem to have borne but little fruit. In Baghat State, the late Sri Rana Dalip Singh, Bahadur, C.I.E., framed certain legislation, published it in a treatise and enforced the same in his State. The first three sections run as below:–

(i) This Act shall be called the 'ABOLITION OF RIT CUSTOM' and shall come into force in the State with effect from the 23rd July 1917.

(ii) Any one who shall infringe this law on or after the 233rd July 1917 shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(ii) To marry a woman by Rit is forbidden. Neither men nor woman shall perform RIT, nor a woman whose husband is alive shall become another man's wife by RIT. No man shall keep as wife any woman whose husband is alive. Whoever will commit breach of these provisions, shall be punished under Sections 497, 498, 363, 366, 494 and 496 of the Indian Penal Code and any one proved to be an accomplice in a RIT affair shall be liable to be punished under Act XXV of 1856.

9. It is out of question to hope to stamp out this evil through private efforts alone, and the Sabha is decidedly of the opinion that much good will result if prohibition be enforced, through legislation, by the States affected, on the lines initiated by some
of them as stated above, making infringements punishable so as to have a deterring effect. In the absence of any such measures, it is not too much to say that this region of the hills, with all the gifts of nature lavished upon it in profusion, with climate invigorating and highly bracing, endowed with all that makes life happy and worth living, will mark the habitation, despite all the charms, of a race of people, dwarfed in all their faculties and fast degeneration into utter extinction. Pitiable spectacle this and the world will blame not the victims themselves, as they know not what is eating into their vitals, but those who have the means and opportunities of weaning them from their ways. The British Government have already served humanity in such philanthropic deeds as the abolition of SATI (the sacred old custom of the wife burning herself on the funeral pyre of her husband), Thuggee (the equally old practice of the people despoiling the wayfarers and their neighbours of their belongings), female infanticide and offerings of human beings before the gods. They have also been the pioneers in the eradication of slave-trade from the face of the earth, and the only explanation why they have so far been indifferent in the matter of abolishing this custom of RIT, seems to be that they have not yet been seized of the havoc this evil has done, is doing and has the potentiality of yet doing. Here is a chance of adding another feather to their crown and of raising the cloud that is blighting all under its ominous shade.

10. It may also be observed that the inhabitants of the regions in question are only Hindus. The custom of RIT is against the very scriptures and tenets of the Hindu religion and although by
themselves the people are incapable of getting out of its clutches, they will welcome efforts from outside and, being peaceful and law-abiding, will calmly submit to legislation.

11. In conclusion, Sir, I take this opportunity of requesting, on behalf of the Himalaya Vidiya Parbandhani Sabha, Simla, the favour of your being kind enough to take suitable steps in the matter of uplifting the people of the Simla Hills and freeing them from a most prevalent corruption which is marring their progress and stigmatising them in the eyes of the civilised world. The Sabha would, therefore, urge your enlisting the cooperation of the Hill Chiefs this time with a view to their undertaking effectual measures to wiping out by legislation this black spot on the fair name of the territories they rule over. The Sabha does hope and trust that the British Government will welcome this chance of adding to the manifold services they have rendered the humanity and thus establish its well-deserved claim to the eternal gratitude of the people of these hill whose destinies are in their charge.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

SURAT SINGH
General Secretary,
Himalaya Vidiya Parbandhani Sabha,
Simla.
APPENDIX - III

To

The Political Agent
Punjab Hill States,
Simla.

Subject: Reforms - Beth and Begar

Memorandum

Kindly refer to your Memorandum No. R.2/2/46, dated the 17th January, 1946, on the above subject.

There can be no going back on the undertaking already given. Necessary changes in our revenue records will be made when the Settlement Report which is still pending in the Agency, is finally disposed of. The Bethus who are my subjects are treated as occupancy or non-occupancy tenants according to the conditions they fulfill to entitle them to belong to the former or the latter category.

As regard the petition (herewith returned) on which you have invited my comments, I think the position has already been explained clearly enough in my Memorandum No. 285/A.O.1/9-44 dated the 28th October, 1945. As you will notice the petitioners mainly stress the question of Begar. This was abolished long ago, and it is a down-right lie on their part to say that anyone of them or their family members has been ever subjected to it. They are, however, duty bound to make labour available on payment for purposes specified in my Notification No. 1/255 dated the 5th July, 1946, a copy whereof already exists in your office. What they want is that even the paid labour should not be taken from them. I would like it to be left
to you for consideration whether in a hill territory such as mine, any work will be possible if we were to agree to such an absurd request of theirs. I can, however, assure you that I always act with commiseration in my dealings with these people, and even compulsory paid labour is asked for only when it is otherwise not practicable to do without it.

I have made enquiries about the alleged "illegal recoveries" to which they have vaguely referred in their petition. The allegation appears to be completely unfounded. If they can bring any specific cases to my notice and substantiate their allegation, I will look into the matter again immediately.

It is not for me to offer any comments on their request that I should be "advised to desist from penalising any of the Bethus for moving the higher authorities for redress of their grievances". The right course for them always would be to first refer their grievances to me. If I cannot redress any of their genuine hardships, they can appeal to the higher authorities. Their present action of petitioning to you direct is I think objectionable. If they are not discouraged, others will get emboldened, and we may be faced with serious difficulties in our day to day administration. I hope that you will give your careful consideration to this aspect of such petitions being entertained in your office.

Should you have any other point for clarification I am at your disposal.

Sd/-
Thakur Sahib
Dealt State
APPENDIX - IV

From

Thakur Surat Singh
General Secretary, Himalaya Vidiya Parbandhani Sabha,
Shimla.

To

The Superintendent of Hill States, and Dy. Commissioner,
Shimla.

Shimla the 4th September 1924

Abolition of the custom of 'REET'

I am directed by my Sabha to thank you for your letter
No. 3680, dated the 22nd July 1924 on the above subject. I am
also to state that the Simla District Hindu Conference which was
held on the 29th June 1924, also passed a resolution - copy
enclosed to abolish this custom.

I am further to suggest that the proper method to
eradicate this evil is to convene a conference which should
consist of the following people: -

(a) Representatives of the Chiefs in whose territories this
custom is prevalent.

(b) Election delegates of the public from each State and
British territory like Kotkhai, Kotgarh and Bharauli
wherever this custom is more prevalent.

(c) Representatives of Government for Government
territory like the Tehsildar of Simla and Kotkhai.

(d) Representatives of the Himalaya Vidiya Parbandhani
Sabha, Simla, and

(e) Representatives of the Hindu Sabha, Simla.
If such a conference is convened, the representatives should come prepared with the following information which should also be communicated by the States to you and the General Secretary of the Sabha at least 15 days before the conference:

1. What are the different kinds of marriages in the State, e.g., REET, KHEET, HAR, ETC.?

2. In how many forms do the people pay taxes to the State on the sale of women, (unmarried girls, widows and those whose husbands are alive)? What is the percentage on each form or whether it is a fixed amount per marriage? In the latter case how much amount is fixed? Since when has this tax been levied.

3. What is the average total income to the State through such taxes for the last 5 years?

4. What action, if any, has been taken by the States on the Muraslas of Major Douglas and Mr. Kettlewell, later Superintendents of Simla Hill States? A copy of the correspondence and orders should be brought to the conference, if possible.

5. What induces or compels the hill-people to sell their girls and women to the non-hill men?

6. Whether this custom is against the scriptures and tenets of the Hindu religion?

7. Whether it is desirable to stop this practice of REET, allowing, of course, widow marriage according to the dictates of Shashtras.

8. Whether it is a fact that women are also sold by third parties who are not related to them?

9. What reasons are there in support of this custom?

10. What are its vices?
This Sabha will be obliged if you will please consider the proposal and arrange to hold a Conference somewhat on the above lines.

A copy of this letter, together with a copy of my letter dated the 12th June 1924 to your address, is being sent to the Agent of the Governor-General, Punjab States, and to the Deputy Commissioners, Ambala, Kangra and Hoshiarpur districts.

HINDU CONFERENCE - DISTRICT SIMLA
28TH AND 29TH JUNE 1924.

1. President Conference - Rana Durga Singh, Chief of Baghat State
2. Chairman Conference - Rana Jagjit Chand, Chief of Kuthar State
3. General Secretary - Dr. Kedar Nath, Simla.
4. Propaganda Secretary - Thakur Surat Singh, Simla
5. Reception Secretary - Lala Puran Chand, BA. LL.B., Vakil, Simla.
6. Financial Secretary - Seth Sulakhan Mal, Simla.

The Custom of Reet which prevail in the Highlands and the presence of which is the root cause of the degradation of the Hills and is the reason for depopulation, poverty, misery and outranges, and which is contrary to the Shashtras, should be stopped by all those Rulers of States, Deputy Commissioners, Agents to the Governor-General, Punjab States, in whose jurisdiction this custom is present and the Conference requested them to abolish it by legislation for which the Hindu Community will be grateful to them.
Letter dated 4th September to the Agent to the Governor-General, Punjab States, and Dy. Commissioners, Ambala, Kangra & Hoshiarpur.

Abolition of the custom of Reet

I am directed by the Sabha to enclose a copy each of my letters dated the 12th June 1924 and 4th September 1924 to the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Simla Hill States, on the above subject and to say that the Himalaya Vidiya Parbandhani Sabha, Simla, will be obliged if you will please see your way to co-operate in rooting out the evil custom which is marrying the progress of a large number of Indian States/British subjects.